

Essay on vertigo by alfred hitchcock

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Probably Hitchcock's greatest achievement, *Vertigo* tells the tale of a troubled detective who becomes obsessed with the woman he intends to shadow. Once again James Stewart is a magnificent actor who plays about with the audience especially where it concerns the fear of heights and which is the film's major strongpoint.

The beautiful Kim Novak is also a central part of the film and the mystery of her disappearance makes the audience constantly yearn for more all the time. Yet again as in *Rear Window*, Hitchcock plays upon the voyeuristic instincts of the audience who are constantly looking at the film from different angles.

Hitchcock also uses the locations in San Francisco to his advantage especially where it regards deserted monasteries and hotels. The fantasy and obsession with heights is another important apex of the movie which eventually leads us to believe that the woman is dead as she has thrown herself from a bridge.

The audience is also tricked into believing that Judy and Madeleine are different women when in actual fact they are the same. The scene where Scottie uncovers Madeleine's tombstone in the cemetery is a poignant one as Scottie eventually realizes that he is slowly but surely going mad and without any hope for returning to normality. The innovative camera techniques which are used in *Vertigo* show that the audience can be captivated and kept in line with certain intriguing effects.

The scene at the tower of the monastery is also haunting as here when Scottie experiences agrophobia, he is rooted to the spot as Madeline plunges

to her death after running up the steps. We are made to feel Scottie's helplessness by the camera techniques which are used and the sense of involvement is absolutely unmistakable.

The film's twist at the end is also very poignant as Scottie eventually realizes that he has been tricked by his best friend Midge who had already murdered his wife before. The tragic twist of luck that eventually leads to Judy's death is also part of the film's vertigo and the audience is left to absorb the shock as everything happens extremely quickly.

Comparing Vertigo to the other classic Hitchcock films such as Rear Window and Psycho shows that the movie is probably the best of the trilogy. The original angles which focus on Scottie's agoraphobia are perhaps not initially appreciated but when the re-enactment of Madeline's death happens we begin to appreciate everything with a clearer eye.