

Alfred hitchcock

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Alfred Hitchcock is renowned for his films, which are full of suspense. Films like *Psycho*, *Rear Window* and *Birds* demonstrate many of his cinematic techniques. The techniques Hitchcock uses include lighting in many ways, camera shots including reverse shots, perspective shots and many others. All of the techniques used in his films add to suspense. The films I have chosen to compare are '*Psycho*'- a suspense thriller with some horror. And '*Rear Window*'- which is a suspense film but with a touch of romance. Many directors today now imitate his work or have adapted to, many of Hitchcock's techniques. This shows the significance of Hitchcock's work was of a very high standard.

Lighting in *Psycho* is very hard to spot as it is in black and white. Even though you can spot in many scenes that lighting is used to create suspense or to give us an unpleasant situation. As Marian drives the car and it is raining the lighting dims out the background and focuses on Marian- this lets us see clearly that Marian is nervous because she is gripping the steering wheel and biting her lips- this is also an example of pathetic fallacy. Here Hitchcock's makes us feel as if Marian is trapped.

Even though '*Rear Window*' is in colour the audience will be surprised to see the lighting in both films are very similar. As Jeff is looking out the window and realises the murderer is looking at him, he goes back and turns the light off- you can see there that the background has been faded out and the lighting is on Jeff. Also many times backdrops were used to show us a time of day and lighting to represent it very well. Like when Jeff is talking to Lisa a sunset backdrop has been used which shows the mood of both characters. I think lighting has been used very well in both films to create suspense.

The soundtrack in 'Psycho' is very important. It creates suspense and warns us of upcoming actions in a scene. In the shower scene the stabbing of the knife goes with the rhythm of the soundtrack. When this sound appears the second time- as the detective goes into the house we know that he is going to get killed, and he is! Whereas in 'Rear Window' the soundtrack is more realistic or played live- from another flat. Also many times we are left with a juxtaposition- when " Ms Lonely Hearts," is about to commit suicide the flat next to her is playing jolly jazz music. The soundtracks are used very well in both films to create suspense, but in 'Psycho' probably has more significance.

In both films camera shots and movements have been used to create tension in a scene. Also in 'Psycho' the camera is tilted to make a person look evil. When Bates is dining with Marian the camera is shot from under Bates neck- this gives him a sinister feel, and makes us believe something is going to happen in the scene. In 'Rear Window' the camera is equally well. Most of the time the camera is respectively used in Hitchcock's cubist form. Like as Jeff looks out of his window the camera is just tilted not moved- this keeps us locked on to a scene because we're just seeing what Jeff sees, and that's not a lot! Hitchcock also uses aerial shots to keep us in suspense like when Jeff is writing a letter to the murderer the aerial shot is used make sure we don't see what he is writing until the camera zooms in- this was used very well to create suspense.

The narrative in 'Psycho' has a massive twist towards the end of the film. Hitchcock makes us believe that Norman Bates has got a mother. He does

this by showing a motherly figure walking past the window, when Marian first goes into the motel. Also when Marian's sister goes to " Mothers," room, Hitchcock shows a bed that someone has slept in- we'll find out later that Bates Schizophrenic behaviour made us believe this. The narrative in 'Rear Window' is very simple and maybe a bit too slow for some. When Jeff is in his room by himself and the murderer is coming up the stairs, the suspense may be too slow for many people now. Hitchcock also uses dramatic irony in this scene because the audience have a faint feeling that the man will throw Jeff out of the window- because of the title.

The mise-en-scene of the scene where Marian is driving her car is very simple- just Marian, the steering wheel and a dark background. The mise-en-scene in the scene where Marian and Bates are having dinner is much more complex- with the stuffed birds and candle fire. This scene gives us an early clue about what's going to happen to Marian and Bates even says that

" Marian eats like a bird," very intriguing. Unlike psycho most of the mise-en-scene in " Rear Window," is very simple but effective. When Jeff and the murderer are in the same room it is very dark and we can't see the murderer until Jeff flashes his camera. This simple scene builds a lot of tension because we don't see the murderer for a long time. The mise-en-scene in both films has been affectively used to build suspense even though many times the scene hasn't even got much in them!

The shower scene in Psycho has a bit of everything in it. The soundtrack in this scene plays a very important role- maybe the most important. This is because the soundtrack helps to show the stabbings even though we don't

see them many times. The soundtrack goes in a rhythm with the stabbing so every time we hear that screechy violin we think Marian is being stabbed. This was done brilliantly because if it wasn't the film would have had a high age certificate. Also Hitchcock's amazing directing and Marian's great performance made sure we didn't see parts of the body that would make the film pornographic.

The scene in 'Rear Window' where the lady finds out that her dog is killed, gives us a very good clue about the unknown murderer. We only know then, or get a good idea that the salesman could be the murderer- of the dog and his wife! Hitchcock makes us believe this by showing every one in the flats coming out to see what's happening except the salesman. Also many times Hitchcock lulls us in to a false sense of security. In the scene where Lisa and the nurse go to check the flower bed for the victim's body, we find out its not there, so the salesman didn't kill his wife after all. Also the scene where Lisa is assaulted by the murderer the audience are put in extreme amount of suspense because we know Jeff can't go and help because his got a cast on is leg.

Fade in and editing have been used very well and effectively in both of Hitchcock's films. I think he has used fade in more often in 'Rear Window' because the film overall is very slow and editing is too fast. Fade in is an excellent way to change the setting or time of a scene- when it was very hot in the beginning of the film the weather and time is changed by using a fade in.

In 'Psycho' editing was used more often to switch from one scene to another- this creates friction between the two objects or things. When Marian sees the Bates Motel billboard for the first time, the camera switches from Marian to the sign- this creates an airy feel about the Motel. I believe editing was used in 'Psycho' because it is a thriller and editing was faster paced than fade in. I think both fade in and editing was used very well by Hitchcock to create and build suspense.

I think Hitchcock has succeeded in creating suspense in both films. Some may find the suspense leading to the climax too slow but the techniques used to build suspense are like a piece of art- very unique. Today if you watch a film you'll be amazed to find many of Hitchcock's techniques still in use by modern directors. Even the soundtrack from the famous 'Psycho' has been used hundreds of times in many films- including many modern classics like 'Scream,' and the unforgettable spoof 'Scary Movie.' So next time you see techniques like aerial shots, cubist shots and the ever famous soundtracks- remember who created all this- 'The master of suspense,' Alfred Hitchcock.