

Hitchcock is called
'the master of
suspense' to what
extent do you agree



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The film Psycho by Alfred Hitchcock was based on the book of the same name written by Robert Bloch in 1959. The word psycho brings about a scary image in the mind.

The way the word is split up on the poster is as if saying the psycho of the film has a split personality, 2 sides to him. The bits in the word " Psycho " which have been separated are also like cuts of a knife in the word. On the front cover the actors in the pictures are separated. Marion is wearing a white bra, white signifies good. John Gavin ' Sam' is underneath Marion, he is her support; the background around him is dark and gloomy. Anthony Perkins " Norman Bates" is cropped in the picture and is wearing a dark jumper with a dark background, the main focus point is his head which is staring at Janet Leigh " Marion Crane" with lustful eyes, this picture of Norman is somewhat representing voyeurism.

I don't believe this film will ever become old fashioned because all the horror films, which are modern and are just being made use all the elements and techniques that psycho used. The film psycho was ground breaking in its content and the way it was set about. Killing one of the main characters in the first half an hour shocked many people, as well as showing women in bras and a toilet seat and even showing an unmarried couple on the same bed together. This film used a lot of irony and dramatic irony. In the film, an unmarried couple who are in troubled times, but who are deeply in love are pulled apart slightly.

Beginning with Marion stealing money and ending with murder. This film involves a few sub-stories that all combine to the final big picture. This also

drew some of the attention away from the murders so the film wouldn't be banned. This film was gory and very bad for its time and still is known as one of the greatest shockers of all time. After Marion steals the money she goes and stays in a quiet secluded Motel "The Bates Motel", which a policeman told her to do to be safe, ironically he was trying to keep her safe and she dies in the Motel.

A lustful Norman Bates is alone in the Motel with his 'Mother' who is very ill. He gets aroused by Marion and wants her. The mother gets jealous and kills her. The rest of the film involves a frantic search for Marion who is dead in the swamp.

There is dramatic irony here, we know where Marion is, but a part of us doesn't want people to find out where she is. Norman infiltrates your mind and affects you into thinking like him. More people die in this search for Marion. The shocking truth comes to light in the end that Norman is his Mother. He killed his mother and her lover when he was younger.

This turned him insane, he couldn't live without his Mother, so he stole her body and a weighted coffin was eventually buried. He preserved his Mother's dead body as well as he could. This still wasn't enough, so he started to talk and dress like his mother. The opening music by Bernard Herrmann is some of the most memorable music in history of film.

The violins are like cuts. The techniques the credits are displayed through the "stripe fade effect" represent Norman Bates' duality. They also remind the viewer of cuts because of the way the words and names separate look

like they have been slashed down the middle. The music also has a sense of <https://assignbuster.com/hitchcock-is-called-the-master-of-suspense-to-what-extent-do-you-agree/>

duality to it, the way it is sharp and quick one second, then slow and mellow the next. This could also represent Norman Bates' mind.

When the actual film starts the camera looks around a city, and then zooms in on one window. The technique they used to make the camera seem like it travels through a wall was done by pulling the set apart down the middle and the camera being brought through. Even though this is not a part of the film people recognize, the "pulling of the set apart to make halves", is like Alfred Hitchcock's mind. Alfred Hitchcock himself had a dark side to him.

He was a master of practical jokes and was quite perverse in his ways. The way the camera moves in is like it is creeping in; a sense of voyeurism comes over you when you are watching it. This is the scene when you see a woman wearing a bra and an unmarried couple on bed together, this was very shocking for everyone to see this much flesh on film in 1960. When Marion is getting changed she is wearing a white bra.

Now this scene is before she has stolen the money and white is generally symbolized with good, black also has a certain connotation to it, which is that it symbolizes trouble and evil. When she is in her room after she has stolen the money she is wearing a black bra. Hitchcock used black and white for the colours of the film so certain things would stand out, using this black and white affect made the film less gory than if you were to see red blood. Fewer colours also cut back on budget costs.

When Sam speaks about his wife he opens the blinds of the window all the way up but he still looks through the little bit of glass at the top of the

window with shadow covering his face. Maybe he doesn't want to say to the <https://assignbuster.com/hitchcock-is-called-the-master-of-suspense-to-what-extent-do-you-agree/>

world what he thinks of his wife and just wants Marion to know. I think he is slightly embarrassed. The shadow covering his face makes him look very sinister. When the money comes into the film it is very tempting.

That large amount in notes has more affect on the audience than if it were a cheque. You want to be Marion so you can take it. There is a close up of the money on her bed. The camera pans around the room to reveal an open suitcase. Marion has fallen for her temptations and is taking the money.

There are a lot of close up shots of the money in this film.

This film portrays rather a lot of misogyny e. g. the person who steals the money is a women, the first person to die is a women and the whole reason she dies is because of another women, Normans mother. The ghostly echoes of the voices and the music by Bernard Herrmann combine to produce a brilliant effect used by Alfred Hitchcock. They mix to create a frustrated atmosphere.

The audiences also start to feel frustrated and they want Marion to get out of the traffic and leave town. When Marion sees her boss I'm sure the viewer at home or in the cinema slouched attempting to hide from him unknowingly. When people are watching films it is all they concentrate on, nothing else is visible to the audience, just the screen. The way Hitchcock uses the camera as the actors/actresses eyes make the audience believe that they are that person. This technique was made famous in Hitchcock's 1954 masterpiece 'Rear Window' which was also all about voyeurism. Once she drives away the music is playing again quite low.

When she closes her eyes, the camera fades out, the audiences don't know if she has had an accident, another little piece of suspense by Hitchcock. When the screen fades back in it is the scene when the Policeman is introduced and he confronts Marion. This scene becomes ironic when the Policeman suggests she stay the night in a Motel, this suggestion is the reason for the first murder of the film. When Marion is driving off, the Policeman in his car follows her for a long time.

Finally at one point the Police car turns off onto a different road. The audiences sigh with relief. Once Marion has met the salesman at the used car lot (California Charlie) he says " I'm in no mood for trouble," " There's a saying the first customer is always the most trouble. " This is a great line because the viewer immediately thinks he knew something, and so does Marion. When Marion is in the ladies room sorting out her money there is a mirror on the wall, the mirror is cutting half of her body off in the reflection, again here is duality on Marion's part, Marion and the money are both in this shot, stealing the money is something she has done wrong, the Mirror is reflecting her bad side. Marion buys the car and leaves.

The music is playing again and the day is turning to night, Marion has been driving for a long time. It starts to rain and the windscreen wipers are like the cuts of a knife with the music. The blur of other cars lights coming towards Marion's car through the rain also cloud her view. With the ghostly thoughts in her head again, the annoying car lights and the really heavy rain, the audiences should be getting very restless and anxious to get out of the rain.

When Marion is frustrated, anxious, nervous or scared there always seem to be a close up of her face. Reverse shot is used a lot in this film for suspense. Seeing things through the eyes of Marion, Norman and other people such as the policeman help you to understand more about the film. Seeing things through the eyes of Marion help you to understand how scared she is and the reason for it. The policeman's view let you see why he is suspicious of her.

Normans view and the way he acts around people tell you that there is something wrong with him. Tony Perkins acting in this film has got to be the single best acting performance in a horror film ever. This is why the remake by Gus Van Sant wasn't a success. Even though it was shot for shot, that didn't change anything because it was the acting that made this film so unique in the horror genre, the chemistry between Janet Leigh and Anthony Perkins was too great to be replicated by Vince Vaughn and Anne Heche. In the remake the colours took away some of the creepiness of the film. When Marion is checking into the " Bates Motel", Norman is choosing which cabin key to give her.

He reaches for cabin key 3 then stops himself and reaches for number 1, the audience would be wondering why he has chosen that specific key. When Marion is in her Cabin there is another close up of the money. Norman's hobby is taxidermy and as he is sitting down eating there are birds of prey all around him. It is in this scene that three very famous lines in the film are spoken.

They are, " Mother isn't feeling quite herself today", " we all go a little mad sometimes" and the other one being " a boys best friend is his mother". These lines are a little bit of dark comedy in the film and show a little of Normans psychotic side. When Marion and Norman are speaking to each other and eating they are in the parlour, this reminds me of the children's rhyme " come into my parlour said the spider to the fly". It's as if Norman is the predator and Marion is victim, which turns out later to be true. In the parlour the camera moves to a low shot at the side of Norman. In the top left hand corner of the shot you can see an owl with huge wings, and the shadow is very large.

This is a very scary image and it is linked with voyeurism the way it is watching over them. It looks as if the owl is staring directly at you. Hitchcock is known for never looking through the camera, he would know exactly what would be seen on film, his eye became the lens. When Marion mentions to Norman about the prospect of putting his mother in " some place", he immediately thinks of a mental institution. His tone of voice changes and the music is very low. He speaks much quicker and is almost shouting.

He eventually calms himself down. This is very disturbing, why does he get so angry when a mental institution is mentioned? A close up on Normans face reveals he is staring straight at Marion. Once Marion leaves Normans darker side is shown. He knows she is going to take a shower and he walks over to the picture with the peephole behind it. As he walks over to it, the shadows in the room change.

The shadows move across his face and he stands by the picture for a long time. The viewer must be wondering why he has been standing by this picture for so long. The side of his face nearest to the picture is covered in shadow and the side of his face away from the picture is light. This makes it look as if he has a split personality, white being a colour representing good, and black/shadow representing bad it is showing there is something bad near that certain side of his face. When he looks through the hole, Marion is wearing a black bra; again there is this feeling of evil.

When Marion is in the shower people are expecting something to happen but don't know what. There are lots of close ups of the showerhead. I think this is so they don't have to show too much flesh. All the angles in the shower scene are shot as if Norman has another peephole and is looking through it. When you see "Mother" open the door you want to tell Marion that someone is coming but you cant.

It is ironic that people immediately think it is Norman coming in. Then they see the hair and assume it's the Mother when in fact it's sort of both. The suspense is built up by the way the Mother creeps in and up to the shower curtain very slowly. When the curtain is pulled back the famous music by Herrmann comes in again to shock the audiences even more. The music and the scream completely shock everyone.

Each shriek of the violins is like a cut into Marion. I think that because Normans face is completely in shadow that this means that evil has taken over him completely. Reverse shot is used in this scene a lot. Each cut of the knife is like a cut of the film and each time it cuts to Norman's face it has

zoomed in a little bit further. It was good the film was in black and white because the effect of blood was actually chocolate sauce.

The sound of the knife cutting into Marion was so real that some people in the 60's actually believed that they had killed a girl for the film. The sound was achieved by stabbing a knife into a watermelon. The film was almost not released due to the fact that the board of classification were sure that they saw a knife go into the flesh and that they saw a breast. Hitchcock cleverly used the editing to display images into the viewers minds, to see something that wasn't there. This technique was also used in Tobe Hooper's " Texas Chainsaw Massacre" made in 1974.

This and many other films all pay tribute to the groundbreaking film " Psycho ". When Marion has just stopped being stabbed, you see the figure of Mother run out of the room instantly. As she comes closer and closer to dieing the music slows down more and more, like her gasps for breath. When she holds her hand out it looks like she is trying to get help from the viewer.

After she lay dead over the bathtub, there is another close up of the showerhead. The center of the showerhead looks like an eye and it looks like it is watching Marion die. When the shot merges from the plughole to Marion's eye you can see a drop of water under her eye, which looks like a tear. The scary thing about this is that she is staring straight at the camera, making it look like she is staring at the viewer. When the audience hear Norman shouting at his Mother about blood it confirms to them that Mother is the murderer.

The house is completely covered in shadow. The silhouette of the house in front of the misty sky gives off an evil image. Even though the house is covered in shadow the cabins are not. This could mean the house is represented with evil. Again it is duality. Norman's reaction is reason enough to believe he didn't do the murder; the film is very clever in deceiving you.

When he turns to face away from the dead body a picture of a bird falls on the floor, as if it has just died. Norman seems to know exactly what to do, as if he has done it before. When he is going back into cabin 1 with a mop his shadow is cast on the wall showing his split personality. As he is standing in the door way to the bathroom you can see the money again as if saying " all because of this? " When Norman is going to put everything in the car there is a little bit of suspense when another car drives past and you don't know if it's stopping. There is a startling similarity in the fact that Norman has killed a person called ' Marion Crane' and his hobby involves him killing birds, a crane is a type of bird.

The way Norman chews on candy and the way he acts make you feel the same. When the car stops sinking you start to think like Norman, you want the car to sink. This is a bit of dark comedy; the film is teasing the viewer. When the car finally sinks there is an evil smirk from Norman, it makes you smile as well.