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The Haunting: Vertigo *Via Muybridge*

For Mallarmé, a poem is a pure crystal that allows to transpire an evanescent flickering. . . . Nothing really evolves in this poet's work, at least in his mature poems: Nothing takes the time to grow, nothing develops continuously. Nothing decays either, moreover; nothing truly perishes. The movement authorized in the structure is too rapid, too brief, too allusive to contain the thickness of transformative or corruptive duration. What is required is to capture a sudden modification, a transfiguration, a fulguration that abolishes in an instant the immobility of place, but also any possibility of change taking hold of things. A speed that interrupts the immutable, but also movement: a *passed movement*, annulled as soon as it is initiated. And thus a movement of which one could doubt whether it ever took place.

— Quentin Meillassoux[1]

The Allegory

Old San Francisco. Eadweard Muybridge, the man who murdered his wife's lover and got away with it. And he invented the movies.

New San Francisco. John "Scottie" Ferguson, the man who tried to re-create his murdered lover—but she died too.

What's the difference? Power and freedom; Muybridge had it, Scottie didn't.

Muybridge's apparatus was a simple one—a gun—and it worked. Muybridge stopped time, and then it exploded all over him.

Scottie chose the whole cinematic apparatus itself, focusing on mise-en-scène and especially hair, clothes, make-up, and accessories, which is where it all went so horribly wrong. Time stopped Scottie, and when he tried to rewind it, he found himself trapped within its whorls.

Introduction

At the very beginning of *Vertigo*, the camera seems to pull back from something that is at first perceived only as a blur but is very soon revealed to be a metal bar.[2] Once the camera stops, three successive actions occur that are all essentially the same; these three are then followed by another triplet of repeated actions. These are the first two "Hitchcock Motion Studies."

Figures 1a and 1b, the Hitchcock Motion Study "Criminal and Cop Climb, Leap, Run" shown on the following pages, is taken from the film's opening shot. In figure 1a, a criminal reaches the top of the ladder, leaps from it, and then dashes across the roof; the same actions—climb, leap, run—are performed by the policeman, shown in figure 1b, and then again by Scottie (though in his case, only the first two movements are shown). The same is true for the film's third shot (following the flight across the roofs), and what we can call Hitchcock Motion Study 2, "Criminal and Cop Climb, Jump, Land, Flee," in which the criminal now jumps from one roof to another, lands, and then continues to flee. He is followed again by the policeman and then Scottie, both of them performing the very same movements.

And what do these "motion studies" resemble but the famous work of Eadweard Muybridge? But what could Muybridge possibly have to do with Hitchcock and *Vertigo*? Could there be something "Muybridgean" about the film? Not at first glance, no. With only two slight instances that I know of, the name Muybridge has never before occurred in

Figure 1a. Hitchcock Motion Study 1:
Criminal Climbs, Leaps, Runs.

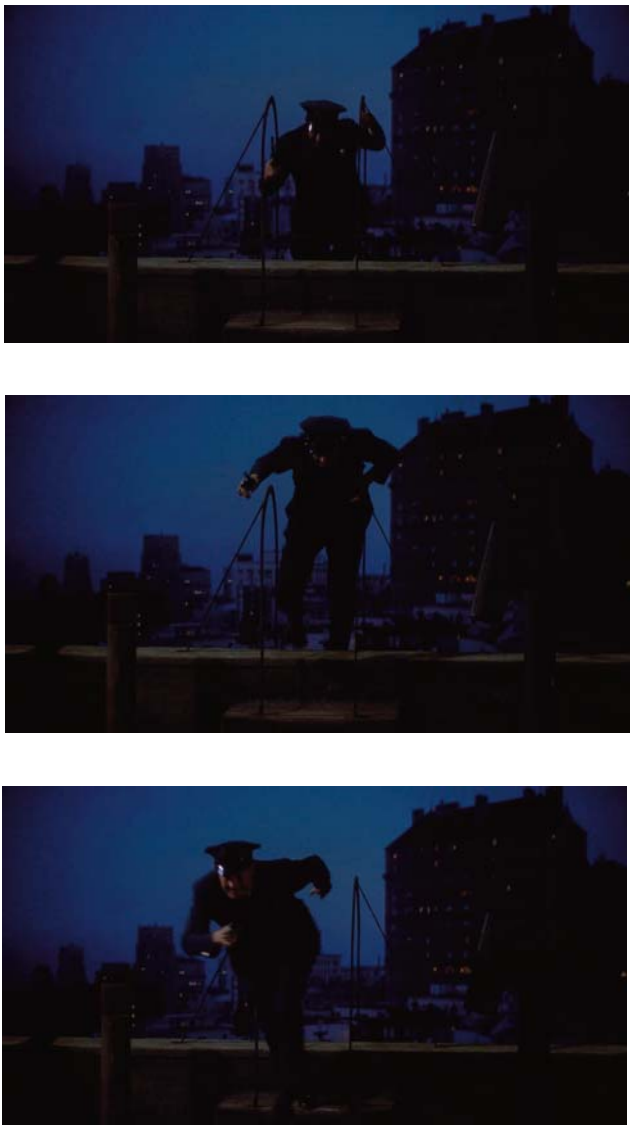

Figure 1b. Hitchcock Motion Study 1:
Cop Climbs, Leaps, Runs.

Vertigo studies—although there is one additional subtle linking of the two: the illustration on the endpapers of Patrick McGilligan's biography of Hitchcock is a Muybridge-like sequence photograph of Hitchcock in motion (fig. 2).[3] While one can barely imagine the name Muybridge ever coming up during scripting sessions between Hitchcock and his scriptwriters, the prospect of something similar happening occurred to me while discussing Muybridge in a class on Pre- and Early Cinema. Going over bits of his biography, his career in San Francisco as a photographer, as well as his killing of his wife's lover, and subsequent acquittal, I briefly recalled that Scottie in *Vertigo* was also exonerated by a group of men (though under quite different circumstances). A connection was made, for here was the spirit of old San Francisco, haunting the present and once again asserting that men have "freedom and the power." Immediately, one thing lead to another: "A man's murder of his wife, old San Francisco, one man manipulated by another and then cast aside." . . . Suddenly I was wondering to myself, what was it I was recalling: the plot of *Vertigo* or the relationship between Muybridge and his patron Leland Stanford?

Haunting

Vertigo is the story of a man who begins by being suspended (caught between); he is then marked by an image—his vision of a woman—which all too soon shatters; he then attempts to reassemble it, but in that endeavor he sees, as in a mirror, double; finally, however, he does learn how to see—cinematically—all too late, and is suspended once more. Scottie is a haunted man.

Vertigo is a haunting and haunted film. Indeed, it performs its own haunting, circling back upon itself with so many shots and scenes—museum, restaurant, hotel, and so on—resonating, being revisited and re-seen. The film is about haunting: Madeleine believes that her ancestor Carlotta survives in her, and thus her fate will be tragic. Judy-as-Madeleine performs that very haunting upon Scottie. Scottie

Figure 2. Hitchcock Muybridged.

hesitates in believing Madeleine, and is then haunted—morally, guiltily—by his failure to save her as much as by his memory of her; he then attempts to atone for his initial skepticism by resurrecting Madeleine in Judy, "papering over" that initial doubt by way of a "making-over" of Judy. Similarly, Judy feels guilty for having deceived Scottie.

Haunting takes many forms. While Madeleine might wonder, "If Carlotta lives within me, then who am I?," Judy wants to forget her origins, her past, and take on a new identity. Scottie loses all sense of himself, and knows he can never again be the man he once was or thought himself to be. In all of these there is the presence of the past (the presence of an absence)—Carlotta in Madeleine; Salina, Kansas in Judy; "the hard-headed Scot" in Scottie. In all of these there is an unrelenting sense of loss, of guilt, and of inadequacy. To feel haunted is to lose one's sense of self; it impinges upon one's sense of origin and of identity. Being both in the past and in the present can never match up—time thickens round these characters—and thus, to feel haunted is to experience a sense of both moral and existential vertigo.

Haunting then concerns doubleness: the past and the present, the dead and the living, co-existent. *Vertigo* is also

haunted by a double-vision (which Muybridge actually experienced), of mirroring and doubling: the famous "*Vertigo* shot" that combines a zoom in and a track out at the same time; Scottie's wish to duplicate Judy as Madeleine, and much more. And *Vertigo* is a film in which cinema itself is haunted: by its origins (chronophotography's analysis and synthesis of time and motion), and by what it has become (crass, commercial Hollywood and its constructed narratives). But what kind of haunting is this? It is not as overt as Madeleine's but it too is a subtle self-questioning of origin and identity. In *Vertigo* there is an undercurrent of such questioning. If we look at certain formal elements—the fragmentation of time, at pivoting, and doubling—we then notice how these establish a kind of undercurrent within the film itself: these are forms that we can associate with pre- and early cinema. This is the haunting undercurrent of *Vertigo*, and they form the thrust of this essay, which will open one particular film to a larger view of film history, and instigate an investigation into cinema's own sense of its history, of its being haunted by its origins, and thus by its identity; by its own paradoxical nature of lying somewhere evanescently between stillness and movement, materiality and ghostliness, frustrated desire, human unknowability, and the insubstantiality of time and the image.

The first section ("Murder!") will examine the many surprisingly coincidental relationships between the biography of Eadweard Muybridge and the narrative and characters of *Vertigo*, and includes a brief excursus ("The Producer") on the question of the producer figure in both stories (that is, of Muybridge and of *Vertigo*). These may be interesting in themselves, but in order to render a more theoretical grounding, and to discover where *Vertigo* partakes in certain fundamental issues raised by Muybridge's work—and by early cinema in general—in the longer second section, "Time and the Image," I will examine the film under three headings. The first, "Fragments of Time," will deal with time's shattering into fragments, as well as the notion of a person being "marked" by an image; the second,

"Suspension: The Pivot," with the issue of lying between stillness and movement; and the third, "The Duplicate/The Cinematic," with the idea of the double (via the mirror and *mise-en-abyme*), that will include a close examination of three complex images.

I. Murder!

Let's first revisit some biography. Born in England in 1830, Edward Muggeridge spent his twenties in the United States as a book and print dealer. In 1860 he decided to return to England, and left San Francisco by stagecoach. On the way, while travelling through Texas he was involved in a horrific accident and was thrown from his coach; he awoke nine days later in Arkansas, seeing double. He spent the next few years in England and Europe (inventing a washing machine, starting a bank), and then returned to San Francisco in the mid-1860s, reinventing himself as a photographer and as Edward (later to become Eadweard) Muybridge, aka "Helios," his *nom d'artiste*.[4] The variety of his photographic work, especially the photos of Yosemite and the second San Francisco panorama, made him famous as a great photographer. In 1871 he married Flora Stone, a photo retoucher. In 1872 he met Leland Stanford, former governor of the state of California, and railroad tycoon; he soon became Stanford's "house photographer" (literally and figuratively). In October 1874, he shot and killed Harry Larkyns, Flora's lover, and spent the next few months in jail, but was released the following February when an all-male jury found him not guilty. In 1877 he began taking photos of (especially) horses in motion, the photos that would ensure his fame. Muybridge's work brought him to Europe, where he met and was lauded by Étienne-Jules Marey, the great physiologist and chronophotographer, as well as other artists and scientists.

He then returned to London to lecture, and just at the time when it appeared that he would be accepted into scientific—in other words, legitimate—society, Stanford published *The*

Horse in Motion (1882), which, although based on Muybridge's photographs, had only a single mention of him. Stanford had regarded him as merely a technician; Muybridge was crushed that part of his reputation that he imagined to be his glory was ruined. He returned to America determined to reclaim his status, and set to work in 1884 on the massive volumes of *Animal Locomotion* (published in 1887). Following this, he toured with his Zoopraxiscope—his claim to being "the inventor of cinema"—which he had created in 1879. In 1894 he returned to England, still lecturing, but eventually retiring to his childhood home, where he died in 1904.

While it is not an exact fit with *Vertigo* (if it were it would have been noted long ago)—for example, Stanford does not set Muybridge up to kill Flora—we can, I believe, discover certain resonant resemblances—forms of haunting—between Muybridge's story and *Vertigo*. Let's look at a few. Muybridge suffers an accident that, according to many observers, changed his personality (he is said to have become quieter, more insular, even eccentric); this factored into his trial when his lawyer went for a plea of insanity. Scottie too suffers an accident, one that both weakens him ("feminizes" him—think of the corset), and makes him aware of his fear of heights; in his trial this will be used as a defense of his inability to save Madeleine. And both men are acquitted by all-male juries. When acquitted, Muybridge broke down in a fit; Scottie goes catatonic. In both cases, old acquaintances are renewed: Muybridge is initially engaged by Stanford to photograph his house; five years later Stanford asks him to work for him on the "unsupported transit" horse project. Scottie knows Gavin Elster from his school days, and becomes reacquainted when the latter hires him to track his wife.

The two rich men both need a certain job done, one that will require professional expertise. Both projects in their own ways involve the unbelievable: one to reveal what the human eye cannot see without the aid of a mechanical apparatus; the other, to investigate a haunting across time, a case that cannot be proved but only inferred by circumstances. The first proves a success; horses do indeed momentarily have all four feet off

the ground. The second is also in its own way a "success" (even though the subject dies). Elster's suspicions are correct; his wife had been haunted by her ancestor (or so Scottie believes). But the further results of these successes are also similar. In the first case, though Muybridge seems to be at the pinnacle of fame, he then discovers Stanford's "betrayal," and must struggle to regain his honor as both an artist and scientist; in the second, Scottie undergoes a trauma, one that requires therapy for what seems quite a long time. Afterwards, he too makes an effort to resurrect himself—but not only himself. In other words, both men go about remaking themselves via a return to the same—but on a vastly greater level: Muybridge to an almost perverse and obsessive multiplicity as he makes even more photos of animal locomotion; and Scottie in his obsessive quest to remake Madeleine, or, to make Judy-as-Madeleine.

We know next to nothing about Muybridge's love life. Did the trauma of Flora's betrayal and Larkyn's murder ruin whatever interest he may have had in romance? Apparently, he was a supreme loner. After Flora, the only significant women in his life seem to be the models in the Pennsylvania (*Animal Locomotion*) project.[5] Likewise, Scottie's accident at the beginning of the film has everything to do with his love life: it ruins it. Following the policeman's accidental death, Scottie, though not as traumatized as he will be by Madeleine's death, and apparently not requiring a lengthy period of recovery, has nonetheless been deeply affected: he has had to resign his job, must wear a corset, and seems to be sexually insecure (not even recognizing a brassiere and being chastised for that by his maternal, former girlfriend Midge). In a word, having looked at the medusa-face of existential contingency, he has turned soft—and is now ready to be screwed.

Muybridge's acquittal surely puts us in mind of that old San Francisco that Elster so admires. Scottie's search for real social history—"Who shot who in the Embarcadero in August 1879?"—might, in Muybridge's case, be rewritten as: "Who took a ferry and a train to Calistoga in order to kill his wife's lover in October of 1874?" The trial was humiliating

for Muybridge, as is the inquest for Scottie. While in jail awaiting his trial, Muybridge was interviewed by a newspaper, saying that

> the letters from her to him and from him to her left me no room for doubt. I was thrown completely off my balance. The revelation was like a stroke of lightning to me. I objected to the plea of insanity when it was made because I thought a man to be crazy must not know what he was doing, and I knew what I was doing. I was beside myself with rage and indignation, and resolved to avenge my dishonor.[6]

And later in the same newspaper interview, he said:

> The only thing I am sorry for in connection with the affair is that he died so quickly. I would have wished that he could have lived long enough at least to acknowledge the wrong he had done me, that his punishment was deserved and that my act was a justifiable defense of my marital rights.

We can certainly recognize this last remark as an expression of an assumed power and freedom, the same freedom and power that Elster so admires. One of the main lines of the defense was simply that Muybridge was mad. As evidence there was the question of his personality change following the stagecoach accident. The defense submitted a photo of him sitting in Yosemite at the edge of a cliff with an extremely steep drop below. (Muybridge seems not to have had a sense of vertigo!) Further proofs of his "madness" were his willingness to lend his photo equipment for free, refusing commissions because they did not meet his aesthetic standards, and reading the classics at night.[7] The jury seems to have been finally persuaded by Muybridge's principal lawyer, Wirt Pendegast, who was provided by no one less than Stanford.

As for the two women in these stories, Flora and Judy both have unhappy pasts. Judy Barton tells Scottie that she is

from Salina, Kansas. She then recognizes the pain in Scottie's loss and longing ("She's dead, isn't she?"), and shows him two separate photos—one of her and her mother, another of her deceased father—but holds them in such a way, next to one another, that they look like they should form a single photo; in other words, it is her pathetic attempt to reunite a once happy family, to gather together her own few fragments of time. She tells Scottie that her mother remarried and because she "didn't like the guy" she left home for "sunny California." He asks her out for dinner and she consents, adding that not only has she been on blind dates before, but "matter of fact, I've been picked up before."

Even Flora Muybridge's story fits into the *Vertigo* scenario. Like Judy she came to San Francisco form an unhappy childhood back east, in her case Alabama (or Ohio or Kentucky). Motherless, and stuck with a wicked stepmother and uninterested father, she then lived with an aunt, who then passed her on to a foster father, at which point she became known as Flora Shallcross. She left this home to marry, at age sixteen, and became known as Flora Stone, but soon again was divorced (this time a wicked mother-in-law was involved). Now she called herself Flora Downs, and married Muybridge when she was twenty-one and he forty-two.

Likewise Carlotta, whose story is memorably told by Pop Leibl:

> Oh yes, I remember, Carlotta, beautiful Carlotta, the sad Carlotta. . . . She came from somewhere small to the south of the city. . . . And she was found dancing and singing in [a] cabaret, by that man, and he took her, and built for her the great house in the Western Addition. And . . . there was a child. . . . So he kept the child, and threw her away. You know, men could do that in those days. They had the power and the freedom. And she became the sad Carlotta. … And the mad Carlotta. Stopping people in the streets to ask, "Where is my child? Have you seen my child?" . . . She died. . . . by her own hand. . . . There are many such stories.

Elements of similarity abound here. A woman from "somewhere small" and unsophisticated comes to the big city (all three women); taken by a rich, married man to be his mistress, and then abandoned (Judy); or to be the mistress of someone she believes to be more glamorous than her husband (Flora). Corber mentions "the parallels between Carlotta and Judy . . . . Like Carlotta, Judy is sexually exploited by a lover who has the power and freedom to throw her away."[8] Rothman too sees parallels when he remarks that "it helps to think of Judy's bond as being not only with Carlotta Valdes . . . but also with Carlotta's daughter, the little girl whose mother failed to keep her from becoming lost."[9] If we look at the lives of all three women—Carlotta, Judy, Flora—we have madness (not that Flora is mad in the way that Madeleine is construed to be, but only in the sense that, by the standards of her time, she behaved very foolishly), murder, broken families, unloving parents or their substitutes, and escape by any means necessary (across the country, across generations). While a child figures only in the Carlotta story, there is a resemblance between her "madness"—wandering the streets, accosting people—and Scottie's condition after he leaves his rehabilitation and "wanders" once again, seeing hints of his past wherever he goes. Lastly, notice how Pop Leibl begins and ends his tale: "It is not an unusual story. . . . There are many such stories." And in the middle of his discourse, the familiar doublet: power and freedom.

Is there a resemblance then between the stories of Muybridge and *Vertigo*? Can we now imagine *Vertigo* as a sort of "retelling" of the Muybridge story? Structural similarities, though not precise, are certainly present. "What else could I do?" asks Muybridge; "What can I do?" asks Elster. The result is the same: the men are always in the right, and they possess the power and freedom.

A. The Producer

We will probably never know how the Stanford/Muybridge horse project began. Was it originally Stanford's idea, or did Muybridge suggest the use of

photography to his employer?[10] But we do know how John 'Scottie' Ferguson was recruited by Gavin Elster to follow the latter's wife. Recruited? Hired? Persuaded? Seduced. It is a subtle and magisterial scene, displaying Hitchcock's utter mastery of classical Hollywood style at its most expressively invisible. Even before it begins Scottie is already being manipulated by the equally "invisible" man "behind the scenes": going to what Midge calls San Francisco's "Bowery," he expects to find a down-at-his-heels former schoolmate, and is surprised—he loses his bearings—to discover instead a shipping magnate. The scene deserves re-seeing for Hitchcock's mastery of *mise-en-scène*, how he utilizes space, framing, movement (by character and camera): watch how Tom Helmore weaves about the two rooms, how he lets certain words fall and have their effect on Scottie, how shots are theatricalized by placing Helmore within the pillars leading to the room behind, and how he hovers around and behind Scottie, "playing him" all the while.

Though Elster occupies only about a total of ten minutes' screen-time, his machinations are felt throughout the film. His appearances comprise only these few: there is that great first scene, Scottie's seduction; his meeting with Scottie at his club; we glimpse him very briefly throwing his wife from the mission tower; then his appearance at Scottie's inquest; and his brief appearance in Scottie's dream. We also are aware of his presence when he telephones Scottie at home after the latter has rescued Madeleine.

I would like to look more closely at Elster by performing a sort of narrative anamorphosis which would for the moment enlarge Elster's character and decrease the stature of Madeleine and Scottie. He is married, he is running his wife's business, and he has a mistress. He wants to get rid of the wife, and the mistress too. So he trains the latter to imitate the former, and enlists the help of a former college chum. How this is done is almost ludicrously easy; the game is played out successfully, and he gets away—if I may put it this way—"scot free."

As Mark Cousins says, "he is the author of her [Madeleine's] words and director of her actions. It is Gavin Elster's narrative seduction, not Madeleine's, for which Scottie falls. Character, actor, scriptwriter, and director, Gavin Elster plays all these within the narrative, despite Scottie's ignorance. And our ignorance."[11] He is, we might say, both the producer of events, and the director (as Scottie so well understands: "I'll bet he rehearsed you very well"). He makes dupes out of everyone (and he even makes a duplicate of the real Madeleine). Elster does more than instigate events: he is both the mastermind and the puppet master.

Scottie may "think" he is in charge of Judy's makeover, but she surely just plays along (at times reluctantly, at others willingly), always one step ahead of his desires—after all, she has been well rehearsed by Elster. The gentleman may "certainly know what he wants," but Judy also knows exactly what both Scottie and Elster want. Scottie acts out Elster's wishes and designs, not his own. Elster allows Scottie to think he is in charge, all the while knowing that he, Elster, is pulling all the strings. *Vertigo* is then in this way the story of an evil genius who is directly or indirectly responsible for the deaths of at least two women and the utter ruin of a man.

Leland Stanford made everything possible, and he (initially, at least) took and received all the credit; Muybridge was a mere technician. In Hollywood, the producer is in the Stanford role, behind the scenes perhaps, but actually making everything possible. Hitchcock may get all the headlines, Scottie may be the key inquest witness—but again, the man responsible for it all is Elster. Indeed, Elster is the complete auteur: producer and director, he writes the script, rehearses and manipulates his actors, selects the locations—he even gets to throw in a semi-nude scene and a dream sequence!—and like Hitchcock, at the inquest, he even gives himself a brief walk-on part. Rothman too detects a "Gavin Elster in Hitchcock."[12]

The only thing that unites Elster and Scottie, however, is that they are both men, and they both manipulate women. When Elster remarks, "We know who killed Madeleine,"

what does he really mean here? On a superficial level, the implication is that Carlotta has killed Madeleine by somehow haunting or inhabiting her psyche. But he is speaking however allusively to Scottie in such a way that we come to see this brief conversation as being in some way his confession. And with that he is gone! But as a man, his role is taken over by Scottie.

II. Time and the Image

1. Fragments of Time

Scottie first sees Madeleine at Ernie's as she walks forward from the dining to the bar area, turns her head briefly, stops—is seen in profile—and then proceeds to leave the restaurant with Elster. That is, she is first seen from a distance; she then moves forward; at the lintel dividing the two spaces she turns to acknowledge a waiter, revealing the back of her head (and the chignon, the spiral of hair); she then steps a bit more forward and is gazed at in close-up and in profile. And then she is gone! This sequence of movements could be called Hitchcock Motion Study 3, "Woman Emerges, Pivots, Turns to Profile," shown in figure 3 on the following page. This slight movement is the transfixing image, the brief flickering strip of time that Scottie will experience three times in the film: here at Ernie's, later at his home after rescuing her, and finally at Judy's apartment.

And then it is all gone. When Madeleine dies, the walls of time come crashing around Scottie. Guiltily, he survives, barely, until he sees Judy, and his ardor is revived. And then his work begins. Like the hero of Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), a film deeply indebted to *Vertigo,* Scottie is "a man marked by an image," or, in his case, a very short sequence of moving images.

The vision of Madeleine crashes into pieces—fragments of an image, fragments of time—and after her death, Scottie tries to piece them back together. What was chronophotography but the fragmentation and analysis of time followed by its

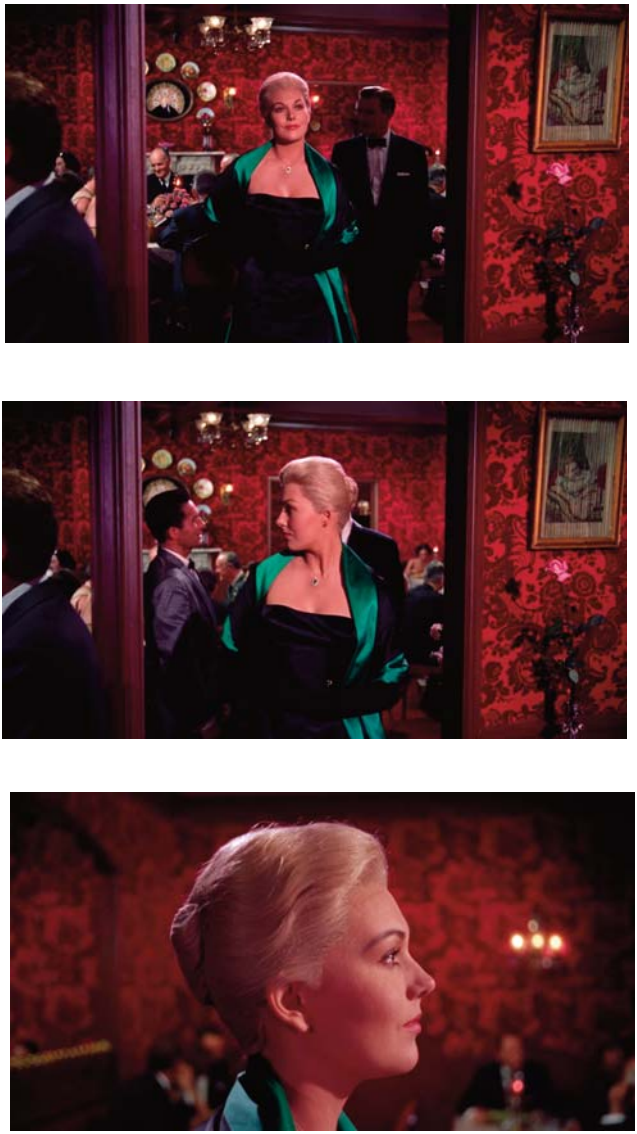

Figure 3. Hitchcock Motion Study 3:
Woman Emerges, Pivots, Turns to Profile.

synthesis so as to animate the brief, stilled pieces of memory and recreate the past in the present? But Scottie's endeavor will not be his alone, as it will require the work of the Departments of Hair, Makeup and Costume (and probably too, a Voice Coach).

Hollis Frampton sees Muybridge's work *Animal Locomotion* as a kind of atonement; here are his exact words:

> Time seems, sometimes, to stop, to be suspended in tableaux disjunct from change and flux. Most human beings experience, at one time or another, moments of intense passion during which perception seems vividly arrested: erotic rapture, or the extremes of rage and terror come to mind. Edweard Muybridge may be certified as having experienced at least one such moment of extraordinary passion. I refer, of course, to the act of committing murder. I submit that that brief and banal action, outside time, was the theme upon which he was forced to devise variations in such numbers that he finally exhausted, for himself, its significance. To bring back to equilibrium the energy generated in that instant required the work of half a lifetime. So that we might add, in our imagination, just one more sequence to Muybridge's multitude, and call it: *Man raising a pistol and firing*.[13]

And Scottie? Did he too experience "at least one such moment of extraordinary passion"? Certainly he did with his first vision of Madeleine at the restaurant; but that was appreciated only in retrospect when she fell from the tower to her death. His task is not just to recreate Judy as Madeleine, but to create backwards: to take the image of the dead Madeleine (smashed, fragmented), and resurrect her to the state of the image first beheld at Ernie's. (Again, like Muybridge, Scottie first analyzes Madeleine's image—forward movement, pivot, profile—and then synthesizes it: he puts it into motion. As Cousins remarks, "what he pursues is not an object but an *image*."[14]) These fragments of time consist

of both images and memories, or the memory of images. A walk in the park, a tea-dance, a number of steak dinners . . . no, these will not do: they are too long, drawn out, filled with duration.[15] Scottie needs only one moment for the fulfillment of his desire; he needs to return to the exact instant—those few seconds—of his blissful vision, one that is in movement but that is essentially still. This is what he seeks to recreate in Judy, that emergence into the light of blinding love. This is an insight into cinema, too, as we shall soon see when we examine Scottie's vision of Madeleine's death.

As a detective, Scottie is already quite well-rehearsed in the practice of putting pieces of puzzles together. But here, even before his life is shattered by Madeleine's fall—just after the visit to the forest, and the tree with its spiral of time ("And there I died")—he attempts to put together the pieces of her recollected dream.

She recounts her dream. (Comments in brackets indicate characters' movements.)

> MADELEINE: It's as though I, I'm walking down a long corridor that . . . that once was mirrored and fragments of that mirror still hang there and when I come to the end of the corridor there's nothing but darkness, and I know that when I walk into the darkness, that I'll die. I've never come to the end, I've always come back before then. Except once.
> SCOTTIE: Yesterday. And you didn't know, you didn't know what happened until you found yourself with me. You didn't know where you were. The small scenes, the fragments of the mirror, you remember those.
> MADELEINE: Vaguely.
> SCOTTIE: What do you remember?
> MADELEINE: There's a room, and I sit there alone, always alone.
> SCOTTIE: What else?
> MADELEINE: A grave.
> SCOTTIE: Where?

Madeleine: I don't know. It's an open grave, and I, I stand by the gravestone looking down into it. It's my grave.

. . . . . .

Scottie: What else?
Madeleine:. . . There's a tower, and a bell, a garden below. It seems to be in Spain . . .

. . . . . .

Scottie: Well, a portrait, do you see a portrait?
Madeleine: No.
Scottie: If I could just find the key, the beginning, and put it together.
Madeleine: So you'll explain it away? There is a way to explain it, you see? If I'm mad, that would explain it, wouldn't it?

[She runs to the shore; he follows.]

Scottie: Madeleine!
Madeleine: Oh Scottie, I'm not mad, I'm not mad! I don't want to die. There's someone within me and she says I must die.

[They embrace. Crashing of waves.]

This is all part of Elster's set-up: throw in a few details—"fragments"—that Scottie will recognize ("a room, and I sit there alone . . . a graveyard"); don't make it too obvious ("It seems to be in Spain"); but be sure to add the clincher ("There's someone within me"). And let him play the hero, but in the only feeble way he knows how: let him insert his own prideful knowledge ("a portrait"), and assert himself ("If I could just find the key"). The point, of course, is that he is set up to fail—except in declaring his love.

But this is a recurring (spiraling) dream, and Madeleine later visits Scottie to tell him about it a second time. But now

there is more detail ("a stable . . . a pepper tree"), to which he adds—unthinkingly, but significantly confusing her with Carlotta—"You've been there," and then urging her to "think hard." (As if thinking is going to do the trick!) And finally, supremely confident—supremely self-deceived!—he tells her, "You're going to be alright now, Madeleine. Don't you see, you've given me something to work on now. I'm gonna take you down there to that mission this afternoon and when you see it you'll remember when you saw it before, and it'll finish your dream, it'll destroy it, I promise you."

And then she dies. The irony is that she really has given him something to work on: her own dream, small parts of which become his dream. The *Vertigo* dream sequence comes after the trial scene, and is, sadly, not one of Hitchcock's finer moments. But, appropriately, it is made up of scattered image fragments, and even a fragmented image (the bouquet, which further fragments into two different graphic styles, no less). It also includes the *ménage à trois* of Elster, Scottie, and a living Carlotta, as well as a dolly in on Carlotta and the necklace (significantly, as we shall see). Scottie's long walk forward and the empty grave seem to echo Madeleine's dream, while his fall onto the roof tiles that ends in white nothingness seems to reverse Madeleine's final step at the end of the corridor into "nothing but darkness." We never hear of Scottie, or his therapist, attempting to piece together this dream. The real dream is all the rest of the film. (This is one of Chris Marker's key points in his essay on *Vertigo*.[16])

Scottie needs to play the hero and solve the mystery Madeleine suffers, to put the pieces together and somehow atone for his uselessness in the opening scene, besides expunging his guilt over falling in love with "a case." If only he "could just find the key," he declares. And later, that she has "given me something to work on now." He is convinced that taking her to the mission will "finish your dream, it'll destroy it, I promise you." But instead she is destroyed. Having failed again, his new goal is to take the memories and images of Madeleine and apply them to Judy. This is no "solution," but a substitute for one. His obsession has only

changed direction. Now, instead of putting together the pieces of a puzzle and discovering the answer, he merely wants to look at the "answer": the picture of the finished puzzle, the beautiful image of Madeleine.

After shopping for a dress and shoes for Judy, they return to his apartment. She is afraid of how obsessed he seems, and how he seems to neglect her own needs and desires. He denies this: "Judy, it's you too." Not the most reassuring of sentiments, but recall that this is Judy Barton, who freely admits to having "been picked up before." And then recalling Madeleine's remark that "There's someone within me," he adds, "There's something in you too." She goes on complaining about him, and as she speaks—and as the camera pivots round his gazing—the rapturous *amour fou* that he will experience at the final apparition appears in his eyes.[17] This intensity of vision continues as she rattles on, until finally he mutters "the color of your hair . . ."—and she is fed up. No matter: supremely, madly, he denies her any agency whatsoever: "It can't matter to you."

Muybridge, as per Frampton, deals with his trauma by exploding the briefest actions into so many temporal fragments that time seems almost to be taken outside of itself. Scottie, of the other hand, attempts to atone for his guilt, loss and responsibility ("We know who killed Madeleine") by a gathering-in of time, bringing all of time (all his time with Madeleine) whirling round a single instant, the first vision of her. How to order this reordering of time? Muybridge chose a grid; Scottie a spiral. (Chris Marker calls the film "a vertigo of time."[18]) Scottie here is a man of Pre-cinema: with fragments of time shored against him, it becomes his job to reassemble them—even before he dares attempt to make them move once more.

Finally, what was the purpose of the Palo Alto photographs? Financial: Stanford was in a position to win a bet (though this is debated). Scientific/speculative: to capture what could not be discerned by normal vision, and had only been guessed at—that at certain moments while running a horse will have all four feet in the air at once. Or: that this

seemingly uncanny phenomenon—equine levitation—was as natural as, well, vertigo. And after all, what is vertigo—a symptom of acrophobia, a sense of dizziness—but an optical miscomprehension? It is the effect produced by feeling or thinking that things are moving when in fact they are perfectly still. And, as Tom Gunning says, "the film figures the power of eros precisely as vertigo."[19] What does cinema do, but reassemble fragments of time, resurrect and reanimate dead stillness, and "induce in us, lovers of the movies, a kind of motion sickness."[20] And endless desire.

2. Suspension: The Pivot

Historically, the cinema pivots between Pre-Cinema and Early Cinema, between the stillness of chronophotography, and the first flushes of movement we witness in Muybridge, Marey, Edison, and the Lumières. These very brief films moved, but they *didn't go anywhere*, there was no forward movement. It is well known that in their screenings the Lumières would hold the first frame of their brief films still before animating it into movement. This is the moment too that Muybridge's work embodies, that time when photography became cinema: that uncanny time of suspended in-betweenness—when one did not believe yet had to.

Curved forms, both narrative and formal abound in *Vertigo*, particularly as circular repetitions and returns. As Trumpener says, "the characters . . . can do nothing but repeat old journeys, then repeat the repetition."[21] These are so well known that they need little rehearsing here. The second part of the film revisits the first; many scenes are repeated (Ernie's, the museum, and so on). In his first trailing of Madeleine, Scottie begins at her hotel and ends there. And after she flees his home following his rescue of her, he again trails her and—after turning this way and that, his confusion and frustration visibly growing—winds up where he began, back home.

But for all the circular movement of the film, there is one kind of movement in particular—a short arc or pivot—that

feels suspended between movement and stillness.[22] This pivot is a kind of swaying that might well induce vertigo. But what to make of them, what meaning could they all have, especially within the terms—a film haunted by cinematic origins—I have chosen to see *Vertigo* by? In *Vertigo* time is hesitant to move, but move it must. This too is a form of suspension, of being held in between, of indecisiveness. Scottie rarely makes clear, freely chosen decisions. To say that the vacillating "gentleman certainly knows what he wants" is to go too far. Does Scottie know what he wants, beside some vague notion of "life with Judy-as-Madeleine"? Can he project himself living inside a lie of his own creating? There was no forward movement, no narrative created between Madeleine and Scottie: they admitted their love and then she died. If it is the recreated ideal that he wants (and not Judy herself), then he can build no further future for them, because there was nothing else they did together.[23] Scottie seems doomed to remain in this stilled moment of being. But what would that comprise other than a lifetime of repeated moves, revisiting Ernie's, revisiting the old haunts for a big steak every evening? In some perverse regard, this is in fact enough for him, wholly satisfying. The cinema and its illusions—of actual movement, of romantic fulfillment—are countered here by the idea of a very private Early Cinema of a flickering of life and movement, just enough to give a man a rise (the rescued Madeleine lying naked in his bed).

Nor is Judy unfamiliar with vertigo. She mentions—speaking to Scottie as Madeleine (though the detail seems authentically autobiographical)—that "I've fallen into lakes out of rowboats when I was a little girl." As a mature woman and on dry ground, she walks among "the oldest living things"—evergreens, still but animate. Here, her vertigo also becomes temporal ("knowing I have to die . . . ever living"): in the moment, yet hovering in eternity. Consider Roland Greene's comment regarding the forest and the mission visits: "One vertigo [psychological, historical] complements the other, and both are indispensable factors in Elster's plot. A romantic projection onto a mundane scene, the tower literalizes Scottie's

romantic ignorance of this vertiginous history that makes the plan succeed, because he cannot gaze directly at that past any more than he can look down from a height."[24]

There are many pivoting movements in *Vertigo*. Look again at that first non-encounter at Ernie's just after Madeleine has moved forward and stops in profile, as seen in figure 3. She is facing screen right, and then turns her head slightly left. Sitting at the bar with his back to her, Scottie turns his head slightly to his left, as if away from or in denial of her turning; then cut back to the continuation of her movement left, another quick return to Scottie, and finally back to the completion of her almost 180 degree turn from one profile to the other (facing right, facing left, facing right) as Elster enters and the couple exits. The flurry of shots concludes with Scottie's pivoting to his right as he watches them go, doubled in a mirror. It is all done as if in shot-reverse-shot, but no one is looking at the other, and as if their heads were swiveling round the same axis. Another beautiful *pas de deux* of faces occurs at their first meeting at Scottie's home. Madeleine enters the room, he stands by the sofa, and the camera half-circles his movement and does the same for her; again, they seem to be turning around an unseen center. Later, they do something similar again when, having had the dream again, Madeleine visits Scottie at his home, and he pivots around her, with the lamp between them acting as axis.

All of this pivoting round one another is not dissimilar to their "wandering," and wholly appropriate to their situation. As for Scottie, he twice embodies suspension. Only look at our first and final glimpses of him: at the beginning of the film, following the policeman's fall, he is left suspended by his arms (at the crossroads of his destiny); at the end, following Judy's fall, he is left "suspended by his feet" (in the depths of time).[25]

A. Scottie Inside the Apparatus

Scottie's experience of Madeleine's death could be described as a hallucinatory and nightmarish cinematic episode. It is as if he were trapped inside the cinematic

Figure 4. Scottie trapped in the apparatus.

apparatus itself, with the stairwell serving as projector and the staircase as a reel holding a strip of film (fig. 4). As he winds his way upward (to his and our surprise, there being no curves here)—in pursuit of his object of desire, of the image getting away from him and he not knowing that it is an illusion—he twice gazes downward (again suspended between two directions: "I look up, I look down") and the "*Vertigo* shot" once more serves to convey his experience of disequilibrium, simultaneously projecting back and forth within this projector, making visible to our eyes the vertigo we know he has, as well as preventing him from any further upward movement. And as he climbs the stairs (dark as black leader) he passes a series of windows that are as much individual film frames as they are shutters. But these frames onto the exterior world reveal only a still, unmoving sky. Finally, he twists his view from one frame to another behind him and he briefly glimpses a single fragment of time, a single image, that of Madeleine's falling body. How many actual film frames constitute this image? 24? 12? 6? After all, her body passes in time across the window frame, Scottie's film frame. But how does he experience it? As motion in time, or as a single event, a single image/frame (within his physical/mental/nightmarish apparatus)? And what does he further—imaginatively—project? After all, we have not heard any scream before or thud after. Does he imagine a body in

pieces, or does his own breakdown occur immediately? Or does it all lie somewhere in between—suspended?

Muybridge stopped short of cinema; he finished the great *Locomotion* project, took the Zoopraxiscope on tour, and soon ended that too. Repetition and looping seem to have been sufficient for him. He hovers then between photography, chronophotography and cinematography, between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, as Hitchcock did between silent and sound cinema.

3. The Duplicate/The Cinematic

After his accident, Muybridge sees double, and his reputation grows because of his Stereoscopes. So does Scottie after his—though his double vision is separated in time.

Looking now (even in reproduction) at Muybridge's great books is itself a dizzying experience. How does one make sense of these thousands of small, unique but similar images? What kind of "unsupported transit" can we cling to in the endeavor? Are they a depthless whirlpool or an unending corridor "that once was mirrored"? But Muybridge never achieved cinema as we have come to know it, though he must have been aware of its early achievements, its phenomenon. Thus, finally, I want to show how *Vertigo*, in a very few shots or scenes—of spiral forms, of doubles and mirrors—goes beyond Muybridge's pre- or proto-cinematic work to achieve its own (and Scottie's too) cinematicity.

A. Spirals and Mise-en-Abymes

From an arc or pivot it is only a short step to a full circle; but this is *Vertigo*, and so excess is the rule. Excessive circular form comes in the way of receding forms, that is, spirals and *mise-en-abyme* structures. Spirals open the film with its credits, are a hallmark of Madeleine (the chignon), and feature in the middle—Scottie's dream—as well as the climax and their kiss on the turnstile of desire, which makes one think that these circles can go on forever.

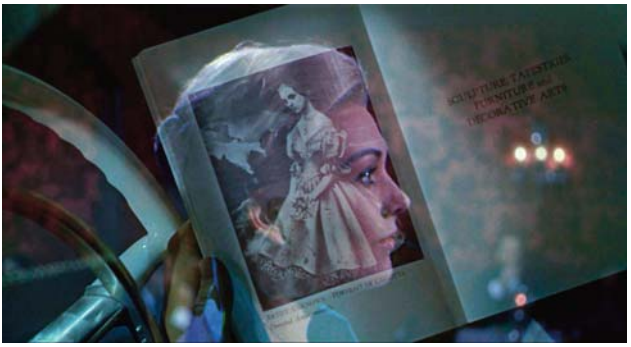

Figure 5. Madeleine with Carlotta.

Another instance occurs in the first scene at the museum, a viewer viewing a viewer. The swirl of hair occurs significantly in another image, and that is the "Portrait of Carlotta" ("artist unknown") that Scottie sees Madeleine gazing at during the first museum visit, and where we also see him notice the similar bouquets, the real one beside Madeleine, and the painted one in the portrait. These two elements—hair and flowers—become communicating vessels between the living and the dead (and between stillness and movement). The portrait and the initial view of Madeleine in profile come together when Scottie drops Midge off following their visit to Pop Leibl, and he opens the museum catalog to look again at the photographic reproduction. It is a powerful superimposition of two recently encountered images, but especially of overlapping times—the reproduction of a painting of a dead woman and an image of her (supposed) living descendent brought up in recollection (fig. 5). And, to be precise, while it is a superimposition of two shots separated in time and space, it is not a dissolve from one space and time to another: the image of Madeleine simply "appears" for an instant and then fades as quickly, the present intruding into the past, movement intruding into stillness—hauntingness itself. It is a temporal *mise-en-abyme* of past and present reverberating together, a double vertigo of time and vision, the expansion and compression of time, memory and desire, in a word, cinema.[26]

B. Duplicates and Mirrors

> "You're my second chance!" cries Scottie as he drags Judy up the stairs of the tower. No one now wants to interpret these words in their superficial sense, meaning his vertigo has been conquered. It's about reliving a moment lost in the past, about bringing it back to life only to lose it again. One does not resurrect the dead, one doesn't look back at Eurydice. Scottie experiences the greatest joy a man can imagine, a second life, in exchange for the greatest tragedy, a second death. — Chris Marker[27]

The duplicate—whether hair and flowers or a dress—is at the heart of *Vertigo* in the form of Judy.[28] As part of Elster's plan, she is a duplicate of the real Mrs. Elster, though for Scottie she *is* Mrs. Elster. After Madeleine's death, he tries to transform Judy into a duplicate of the woman he believed to be Madeleine. (This is a repetition for Judy: from Elster's "rehearsal" now to Scottie's.) But now she would be even more than a duplicate, that is, she would become a simulacrum, a copy of something of which there is no original. Before meeting Judy, there are the many false duplicates he meets or observes—the girl in the museum, the woman in the gray suit at Ernie's, the new owner of the car. While these are more a matter of resemblance, they also point to Scottie's need for an exact copy, to his need to resurrect a true image of the original/simulacrum. Like the cinema viewer, he knows the illusion is not real, but accepts it as being so. Or, as Trumpener puts is: "He who has taken the fiction to be a reality tries to make Judy over as Madeleine, to make a real person into a fictional one."[29] Shaken out of his quasi-cinematic vision, he refuses the real and hopes to achieve a return to the cinematic. In his rejection of the copy, Scottie reaches for the photographic; in his desire to animate it, he reaches for photography's own projection—the cinematic.

Finally, there is Scottie—a dupe.

Although not forms of movement as such, duplicated images and mirror images can also be seen not only as recessive forms but of doubt and ambiguity too, as pivots of undecidability. A mirror duplicates, or better, folds itself upon an image—as does cinema—as does Scottie as he walks through to "the other side of the mirror."[30] Multiple mirrors occur in *Vertigo*. At Ernie's, Elster and Madeleine appear together in front of a mirror and appear to double themselves in a kind of *mise-en-abyme*. And, just as quickly as they appear, they disappear—like the illusions that to Scottie they really are (or will be revealed to be). Scottie and Judy appear in a similar manner in the dress shop, where, significantly, their figures form a semi-circle that could be either a pivot or a sign that this act of duplication could go on forever. Curiously, apart from the "long corridor that once was mirrored" of Madeleine's dream, facing mirrors do not figure in *Vertigo*; I mention this only because it would seem a perfect fit.[31] But perhaps the single reflection is enough to imply the receding vision mirrors represent. Mirrors also represent duplicates, seeing double, the challenge of identifying the real and its copy—challenges all faced by Scottie.

C. Mirror and Flower Shop

There is one mirror image that supremely deserves mention here, a complex shot that occurs when Scottie trails Madeleine to the flower shop. He enters through an alley door (his shadow reflected in the door's opaque window), goes through a dark storeroom, opens another door, and a world of light and color floods in upon him (almost like going from black and white to the color cinema of the 1950s). He sees Madeleine receive the bouquet she has ordered. What he is unable to see is that the door he has opened is covered by a mirror. He looks forward at Madeleine; she stands near and in front of the mirror-covered door and we see her reflection. In a word, Scottie is trapped in a perverse

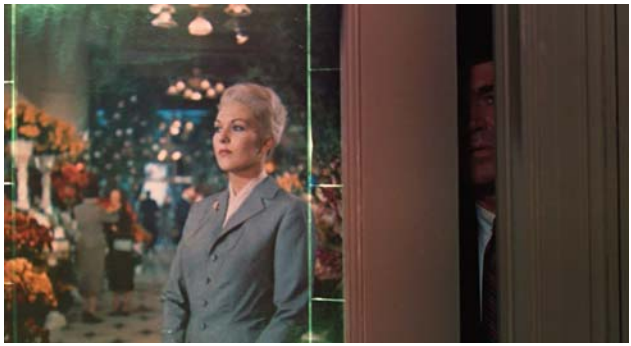

Figure 6. Scottie trapped in Madeleine's mirror.

game: he thinks he has "caught" her in his voyeuristic gaze, when in fact she has "trapped" him (fig. 6). Adding insult to injury, she does not even so much as glance towards him. However, we suspect that if he knew that she knew that he was there, he would probably enjoy it. (Scottie also thus becomes Madeleine's reflection—and hence an identification is founded.) A shot taken with the camera farther into the flower shop would have given us the overall view—real Madeleine in the middle of the room, reflected Madeleine in the mirror, and gazing Scottie next to her—but here instead, we are given only two of the three elements. What we have is another case of Baroque coextensive space—an unseen but implied space jutting forward. The effect is to provoke the viewer's visceral attention, to know that Madeleine is somewhere "out here, in front of the screen, *among us*." The shot give us vertigo.

D. Midge in the Mirror

A stranger combination of images occurs in Midge's apartment when she reveals her mocking self-portrait as Carlotta (and hence too, herself, or her own self-projection, as the ultimate figure of desire, Madeleine). Midge, thinking herself a wry outside observer, has in fact inserted herself right into the game. She tells Scottie that she has returned to

Figure 7. Midge projected, mirrored.

her "first love"—ever the self-reliant professional, she is not referring to Scottie but to painting. We see Midge and Scottie with the easel and canvas between them. Then, as Scottie asks, "Still-life?" we see Midge *in profile*, answering, "No, not exactly. Wanna see?" Scottie gets up, approaches the canvas and sees what it bears. He then looks at Midge and in this shot we see, from a high angle, Midge below and the mocking self-portrait above. She is, let us say, beside herself. Scottie leaves, and Midge, realizing how badly her joke has gone off ("Oh Margery, you fool!"), defaces her portrait (with a brush; a knife would have created a truly fragmented image), and, flinging the paintbrush at the window sees her image mirrored, duplicated, and even projected onto a screen of her own devising (fig. 7). She has turned into a disembodied figure of loneliness, and this prefigures our last sight of her, when she walks down the long—and mirrorless—corridor of the clinic away from Scottie and the film, in what is surely one of the loneliest shots in Hitchcock's *oeuvre*. This short scene moves then from a Midge who projects an image of self-sufficiency to a duplicated, painted Midge and on to a Midge who becomes a mere reflection in a window at night. She thus goes through a vortex of selves and media until only a ghostly reflection is left. And what is cinema but a ghost of the real?

E. Mirror and Necklace

The most complex of these enthralling mirror settings occurs in the discovery scene, when Scottie realizes that Judy is the false Madeleine. Triumphant in his transformation of Judy into the new Madeleine, they plan another evening at Ernie's. She asks his help in putting on her necklace. He goes to her, and helps from behind, asking "How do you work this thing?" They are both facing left, in profile. She blurts out, significantly, almost challengingly, "Can't you see?" (Recalling the scene just described with Midge, who asked, "Wanna see?") The unspoken answer is an obvious "no"—Scottie does not want to see, does not want to recognize the truth. Challenged here though he is, he must see. And so he does.

Having succeeded in fixing the necklace's clasp and patting Judy's shoulder, he takes a brief glance at his handiwork in its mirrored reflection—and the truth (and the lie) finally dawn upon him. Beginning with a two-shot, the camera dollies up closer on his face, his wistful look; and then cuts quickly to a movement-in on the mirrored necklace resting on Judy's chest; and again cuts quickly and dollies out but now not from the mirrored necklace worn by Judy but from the painted necklace resting on Carlotta's chest in the museum painting. The backward movement continues, revealing the entire painting, and in fact the entire scene—Madeleine gazing at the painting of Carlotta in the museum gallery—is now in the past, is, in fact, the earlier scene of Scottie observing Madeleine from behind as she gazed upon the portrait. And then, remarkably, superimposed on or behind this scene from the past, Scottie's face appears peering back from behind this whole scene that began with him peering forward into the mirror. Astonishingly, past and present and reality and its mirrored image have collapsed into one and gaze upon another.

The museum image dissolves to just Scottie looking, and we are back to where the short sequence began, with Scottie looking in the mirror and realizing the truth. But for an

Figure 8. "Can't you see?": the other side of the mirror.

instant—the moment of the superimposition—we are, as again Marker says, on "the other side of the mirror," on both sides of time. Figure 8 shows the small figure of Madeleine in the lower right quadrant looking up at the painting as a huge image of Scottie's face is superimposed and momentarily dominates the frame, as if it had been painted directly onto the gallery wall and with the painted portrait in the middle of his head!—looking, it seems, back out from the painting with an almost accusatory gaze at Judy. This is undoubtedly one of the weirdest shots in all of Hitchcock, and one of his supreme achievements.

Conclusion

No, one cannot imagine a screenwriting session in which either the Muybridge story or the subject of chronophotography ever was ever brought up. But one can imagine a Hitchcock steeped not only in film technique but also film technology and history, including its origins in photography, and wondering how to combine the story of a man briefly "marked by an image" (only a few frames needed, as in Marey's shots or Edison Kinetoscopes), who then loses the image (the death of a beautiful woman), and unable to accept this, becomes "suspended in time" as he desperately struggles to reassemble fragments of the past, and to make the vision live again. What a fascinating notion to

begin with, and how thoroughly cinematic, incorporating a beautiful woman (desire), scattered images (editing), and reanimation (narration and doubling). How then could that deep thinker (and showman) of so-called "pure cinema" make this haunting image of time also *cinematically* coherent and true? What would this turn out to be but *Vertigo* as I have been interpreting it? I am not suggesting that all of this was consciously thought out by Hitchcock, but rather that in some way he recognized that this is what his story, at least in part, was about, and that this was the technique required to tell it.

Muybridge and Stanford both wanted to destroy a fiction and establish a truth. The irony is that this "truth" would lead eventually to the greatest illusionist device of the twentieth century. As mentioned earlier, *Vertigo* is also haunted by what cinema has become. *Vertigo* becomes then an allegory of cinematic spectatorship. To quote Trumpener again, Scottie "takes a fiction to be reality," and then tries to make a reality (Judy) into a fiction. And, as she adds, "the film itself knowingly destroys romantic illusion in its very re-creation of illusion's mechanism."[32] He falls for a romantic (filmic) illusion; it disappears (the film is over); he tries to recreate it in "reality"—only to be fooled once more: the simulacrum is only the first illusion again.

Judy is a "reasonable facsimile" of Madeleine.[33] But to accept this, Scottie must "enter the cinema" (that is, think cinematically): he must put out of his mind that this second Madeleine is a copy, a simulacrum of the Madeleine he loved and saw die. Like any film-viewer, Scottie must accept the illusion as real. And it is: emerging from the neonized fog, the final view of Judy as Madeleine is as real as a photograph developing in its chemical bath and "coming to life." Finally, the (near) climax of Scottie's desire is not fulfilled when he finally sees Judy-as-Madeleine appear in the doorway, but only—all three elements being essential—when she emerges from one room to another, is briefly framed between them, and, finally, is seen in profile, or even better, when his profile faces hers. But additionally, the fulfillment that Scottie seeks is confinement with his beloved in a single moment—not a split-second frame,

but just a few seconds—of his own creating. As they kiss, the two, the single couple, return in time to that moment in the stable just before Madeleine died, before time itself was shattered into fragments (Muybridgian chronophotography)—and then recovered (Hitchcockian cinema).

That is the first climax of the film. But this is *Vertigo* and there must be doubleness, another climax. Let us look again at the short scene in which Scottie realizes the truth of the lie that has been played upon him. Again, we have a variety of image types, the real, the mirror-reflection, the recollected portrait. But we have as well specific cinematic techniques (close-up, subjective shot, superimposition, dolly) bringing them all together. Scottie glances at the mirror and reassembles the fragment-images of time into a narrative whole: from the mirrored necklace on Judy, and the painted one on Carlotta, and the recollected Judy-as-Madeleine beholding Carlotta as he, then and now, gazes on them all—all three women present at once in their varied manifestations—across time and space, between life and death, stillness and movement and back again to see the whole. It is only by accepting Judy's challenge—"Can't you see?"—and doing so cinematically: that is, by dollying in, projecting, editing—this awful moment of realization—that the full truth is finally revealed to Scottie. Scottie, in this, his accession to cinema, becomes, if I may put it so, *homo cinematicus*. This time, however, time does not fall about him in pieces; rather, time's fragments gather themselves into him and he is back again—not "among the dead" this time, but among the living: living in the awful fullness and tragedy of being in time.

Notes

1. Quentin Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren: A Decipherment of Mallarmé's* Coup de Dés; translated by Robin Mackay (New York: Sequence Press, 2012), 140.

2. And in these very first seconds of the film we are already displaced—that is, our seeming bearings are an illusion: we are experiencing vertigo. As Murray Pomerance argues, it seems that the

camera is in one place, when it is in fact in another: what appears to be a reverse dolly turns out to be a reverse zoom. See "Gabriel's Horn: *Vertigo* and the Golden Passage," in *An Eye for Hitchcock* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 214-20. Further, not only are we elsewhere than we thought, the shot also opens up another space, a distance, what is called in Baroque terminology, "coextensive space." For a fuller discussion of this, see Gilberto Perez's analysis of F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927), in *The Material Ghost, Films and Their Medium* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkin University Press, 1998), where he also discusses the Baroque *locus classicus* of this phenomenon, Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (140-42).

3. Tom Gunning mentions Muybridge, but not when he discusses *Vertigo,* in "The Desire and Pursuit of the Hole: Cinema's Obscure Object of Desire," in *Erotikon: Essays on Eros, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Shadi Bartsch and Thomas Bartscherer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 263. In her wonderful book on San Francisco, *Infinite City, A San Francisco Atlas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 23-28, Rebecca Solnit imagines Muybridge and Hitchcock working at the same time. She describes the film as being "about haunting," and even suggests that "Muybridge's own story is a little like *Vertigo* . . . . Of people who might not be who they were supposed to be," but takes it no further than this. As noted in my text, the Muybridge-like photograph of Hitchcock is used in the inside of both the front and back cover in the cloth edition of Patrick McGilligan, *Alfred Hitchcock, A Life in Darkness and Light* (New York: Regan Books, 2003).

4. Like Muybridge, Scottie is also a man of multiple names, variously called, John, Scottie, Mr. Ferguson, "available Ferguson," and even "Scottie-O."

5. Maria Braun discusses the role of these women in Muybridge's work in *Eadweard Muybridge* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), 207-15.

6. Robert Bartlett Haas, *Muybridge, Man in Motion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 72.

7. This last is mentioned by Frampton. One has to wonder: which was the proof of insanity—reading at night, or reading the classics? See Hollis Frampton, "Eadweard Muybridge: Fragments of a Tesseract," in *On the Camera Arts and Consecutive Matters: The Writings of Hollis Frampton,* ed. Bruce Jenkins (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 23.

8. Robert J. Corber, "'You wanna check my thumbprints?': *Vertigo*, the Trope of Invisibility and Cold War Nationalism," in

Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays, ed. Richard Allen and S. Ishii-Gonzalès (London: BFI, 1999), 308.

9. William Rothman, "*Vertigo*: The Unknown Woman in Hitchcock," in *Images in Our Souls: Cavell, Psychoanalysis, and Cinema*, ed. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 78.

10. For details on the Stanford/Muybridge horse project, see Edward Ball, *The Inventor and the Tycoon, A Gilded Age Murder and the Birth of Moving Pictures* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 120, and Haas, *Muybridge, Man in Motion*, 47.

11. Mark Cousins, "The Insistence of the Image: Hitchcock's *Vertigo*," in *Art: Sublimation or Symptom*, ed. Parveen Adams (London: Karnac Books, 2003), 23.

12. Rothman, "*Vertigo*: The Unknown Woman in Hitchcock," 79.

13. Frampton, "Eadweard Muybridge: Fragments of a Tesseract," 30.

14. Cousins, "The Insistence of the Image," 14.

15. What is interesting here is that Hitchcock films both sets of sequences—walk/dance/dinner and hair/makeup/costume—at similar, even paces. One might expect from almost any other filmmaker—Tarkovsky excluded—the second set especially to consist of a flurry of shots montaged together, but instead they are given their own steady weight of time. They add to the build-up of time that is finally felt in that extraordinary scene when Scottie waits for Judy to return to her hotel room: his glancing at the newspaper, peering out the window, pacing about the room. We feel his impatience.

16. Chris Marker, "A Free Replay (Notes on *Vertigo*)," in *Projections 4½*, ed. John Boorman and Walter Donahue (London: Faber, 1995), 123.

17. Recall Cuban novelist and one-time film critic Gabriel Cabrera Infante's estimation of *Vertigo*: "Not only is it the only great Surrealist film, but the first romantic work of the twentieth century." See G. Cabrera Infante, *A Twentieth Century Job*, translated by Kenneth Hall and G. Cabrera Infante (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 281. Perez endorses Cabrera Infante's view and goes on to compare it to another love story: "*Vertigo* demystifies its romanticism but it does not defuse it. In this it is like another great romantic film, Max Ophuls's *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948), whose protagonist is not a man but a woman in love with an illusion that no reality can dispel" (*The Material Ghost*, 9). This should be

compared with Katie Trumpener's view in "Fragments of the Mirror: Self-Reference, Mise-en-Abyme, *Vertigo,*" in *Hitchcock's Rereleased Films*, ed. Walter Raubicheck and Walter Srebnick (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 175-88, which I allude to again in my conclusion; see note 31.

18. Marker, "A Free Replay (Notes on *Vertigo*)," 123.

19. Gunning, "The Desire and Pursuit of the Hole: Cinema's Obscure Object of Desire," 266.

20. Trumpener, "Fragments of the Mirror," 185.

21. Trumpener, "Fragments of the Mirror," 182.

22. And suspended between the photographic and the cinematographic. As for those many shots of Scottie in his car, turning this way and that, as Corber says, "in the scenes in which he follows Madeleine around San Francisco, Scottie . . . is simultaneously stationary and mobile" ("You wanna check my thumbprints?," 311).

23. One is reminded here of the situation in Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's novel *The Future Eve* (1886), in which Edison creates an android lover for a friend and installs "conversations" within her apparatus. In other words, though her talk may be charming and intelligent, she will only forever be repeating the same sweet nothings.

24. Roland Greene, "Baroque *Vertigo*," in *The San Francisco of Alfred Hitchcock's* Vertigo: *Place, Pilgrimage, and Commemoration*, ed. Douglas A. Cunningham (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2012), 36.

25. As Deborah Linderman observes, "his posture is thrown out of alignment, his arms and legs uncoordinated and tending in different directions"; see "The Mise-en-Abîme in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*," *Cinema Journal* 30, no. 4 (1991): 60.

26. It is a sort of anamorphosis. Better still, however, is the verbal anamorphosis that occurs when Scottie returns home, having searched for Madeleine, only to find her already there. He reads the note she has left (presumably it reads, "I hope we meet again sometime"), and remarks: "I hope we will too." She replies, wonderingly, "What?" and he, "Meet again sometime." To which she draws the syntactic rug from under him with, "We have."

27. Marker, "A Free Replay (Notes on *Vertigo*)," 129-30.

28. While my focus is on doubles in *Vertigo*, the film is also replete with triangular patterns and relationships that deserve examining. I list only a few: Elster, Madeleine, and Scottie; Scottie, Madeleine, and Carlotta; Scottie, Madeleine, and Judy;

Scottie, Madeleine, and Midge; Carlotta, Madeleine, and Judy—triangles that could circulate forever.

29. Trumpener, "Fragments of the Mirror," 183.

30. Marker, "A Free Replay (Notes on *Vertigo*)," 123.

31. In fact, they figure very rarely in film history. Why? Could they be too dizzying for the viewer? However, besides *Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1941), facing mirrors do occur in two of the great avant-garde narrative films, Marguerite Duras's *India Song* (1975), and Jacque Rivette's *Out One* (1971).

32. Trumpener, "Fragments of the Mirror," 183. Greene is also in accord here when he remarks that "the film is a baroque reflection on the conditions of desire and romantic deception" ("Baroque *Vertigo*," 36).

33. The phrase comes from Annette Michelson's essay on *The Future Eve,* mentioned in note 23, "On the Eve of the Future: The Reasonable Facsimile and the Philosophical Toy," *October* 29 (summer 1984): 3-20.

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