

# The Perils of Patriarchy



by

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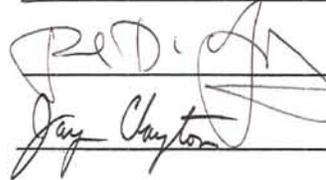
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## Introduction

When a hero and a heroine meet in a classical Hollywood narrative, it is assumed that they will fall in love and be married by the film's end. They may go through some bumpy patches along the way, but they will survive and be better for it. As David Bordwell describes in The Classical Hollywood Cinema, "one of these lines of action involves heterosexual romantic love. ... Character traits are often assigned along gender lines, giving male and female characters those qualities deemed 'appropriate' to their roles in romance" (16). This is how a classical Hollywood plot typically unfolds. When a man and a woman fall in love in an Alfred Hitchcock film, they have to go through extreme trials and tribulations to test the endurance of their relationship and prove they are a lasting couple. Although all couples must go through hardships, Hitchcock raises the stakes by putting them through film noir suspense and tragedy. These trials are about taming the woman, revealing her weaknesses, and presenting the need for male protection through marriage. Hitchcock has a predilection with giving his characters implausible scenarios where they must adapt to unfamiliar territory quickly in order to survive. He uses many different techniques in his 53 movies and his male protagonists run the gambit from being single to happily married before conflict enters their lives. For his unmarried protagonists, romance often accompanies intrigue. Now, the man must escape the suspenseful situation unfolding around him and prove himself and his new partner to be a lasting couple while the woman accepts his authority.

Hitchcock stresses that the ability to function within a patriarchal system legitimizes a couple. Functioning is often demonstrated by the ability to survive a threatening situation, assuming that if the couple survives an outrageously difficult and rare scenario, they are strong enough to outlast anything. However, certain societal norms and expectations must be followed,

even in the face of grave danger. Each partner must still follow gender lines and behavior properly. The man represents patriarchy, therefore the woman's role is to assist and support him. Sometimes, a woman can threaten patriarchy by acting improperly or attaining more power than the men around her. In three of Hitchcock's films, *Notorious*, *North by Northwest*, and *Rear Window*, the female love interest must demonstrate her ability to function within the bounds of patriarchy before she is accepted into its system. Often, this demonstration is involuntary purification forced upon her to remove her unfavorable or threatening attributes. The female love interests may begin the film unfit for a patriarchal relationship, but they invariably end with a firm understanding of their position and their relationship. All three films have closed endings that conclude by resolving the dangerous situation and reaffirming the security of patriarchal power structure in their relationship.

Women struggling with patriarchy occurs in many Hitchcock films, but the result is either more obviously punitive or becomes unnecessary after the women have fallen completely passive. In *Psycho*, Marion Crane attacks patriarchy by stealing money and running away from her comfortable life. Consequently, while extremely vulnerable in a shower, she is stabbed brutally with a phallic knife, over and over. Her punishment for defying patriarchy is death. She suffers the same involuntary purification as the other women presented in this paper, but she is not strong enough to withstand hers and dies, rather than being reaccepted by patriarchy. Other women are hardly developed in their respective Hitchcock films, and blindly take the side of their significant other. Anne Morton in *Strangers on a Train* barely shows emotional depth as murder and catastrophe unfold around her. Her role in the plot is to lament its happening. By contrast, the women presented in this paper are both the heroine and the punished – they are not villainesses, but not passive either. They start out as independent women and must be broken

down by patriarchy through punishment before they can take their passive place as a significant other.

The heroines of *Notorious*, *North by Northwest*, and *Rear Window* each pose a unique threat to patriarchy by manipulating men around them in some way. Tania Modleski writes in her book *The Women Who Knew Too Much* about the content of Hitchcock's films that "as Hitchcock never ceases to fear, men are constantly in danger of having their power undermined – of being deprived of the keys to their secrets by women who, though notorious, can never be completely subdued or fully known" (68). Although she is speaking directly about *Notorious*, this is a danger that all three of the heroes face with their female counterparts. Each heroine enters the film with some power that makes her formidable. Modleski argues that the women are never fully subdued, but the transition of character throughout the films shows that they may definitely be tamed. Modleski may claim that patriarchy is ambiguously defined, but no matter how anti-patriarchal the film might initially seem, the women still ultimately get pulled back into the traditional roles for a woman within a patriarchal system. Even the fiercely independent ones cannot resist the strong pull of patriarchy. Each specific threat to patriarchy comes with a certain punishment or hardship that the heroine must endure to be rid of it.

Alicia Huberman, the heroine of *Notorious*, threatens patriarchy with both her independence and her knowledge. With a slight arrogance, she believes she will be able to function as a double agent, invading two spheres of patriarchy, domestic and government. Instead of gaining more power from her new position, she finds herself being trapped by patriarchal role assumptions that give control of her to both her husband and her government handler. While one abuses her emotionally, the other abuses her physically. Her punishment for threatening patriarchy is quite visible and she is broken down systematically.

In *North By Northwest*, Eve Kendall is used as a weapon for patriarchs against other patriarchs. Her threat is her sexuality, which she can use to “lure men to their doom.” She is excessively sexualized, so much so that little of her true identity is revealed. She not only can manipulate men to threaten their dominant position in patriarchy, but she has been able to use them to gain confidential knowledge. She functions as a femme fatale, until she is weakened by love and subsequently punished for it. She must be purged of the characteristics that make her such a good double agent before being accepted into patriarchy.

Of the three heroines, Lisa Freemont of *Rear Window* seems the least likely to fall prey to patriarchy because she is empowered in many ways. She is mobile, independent, and wealthy, all traits which should free her from the patriarchal cage that reduces the other women, but do not. Jeff, her boyfriend, exerts control of her through emotional abuse. Although she gets entangled in a dangerous murder mystery, Lisa also entraps herself by staying in an emotionally damaging relationship. She endorses patriarchy from within and wants to be part of the system. The only way Lisa can prove that she is a fit candidate for marriage is by losing some of her self-confidence and defiance and becoming the submissive and unchallenging partner Jeff can accept. She proves she wants to be his partner more than she wants to control her life.

When Hitchcock’s heroines are presented in this order, there is a progression from the least subtle example of patriarchal control to the most subtle. Punishment begins as extremely physical and life threatening and develops into more psychological damage as the narratives advance, showing the overt or subtle ways that patriarchy can be imposed upon women. Alicia is very clearly controlled by her surroundings and the men in her life. She is physically abused after displays of power and must come close to dying before being embraced by her partner. Eve is also stuck between two men, and injured by both, but she is not nearly as destroyed as Alicia.

Finally, Lisa chooses to assert patriarchal controls on herself, even though her boyfriend emotionally abuses her, in order to mold herself into the proper wife.

In three different ways, each film pushes toward a reaffirmation of patriarchy, following the Classical Hollywood Narrative. The three women start out strong and independent, but undergo a patriarchal cleansing in order to determine their suitability in a relationship. Although each woman's path is different, they are being lead to the same end: a submissive place next to a man.

Although Hitchcock operates in the noir/suspense genre, which is not known for having romantic endings, it is crucial that these films end with a secure relationship. Bordwell says that noir is usually “a challenge to the prominence of heterosexual romance. The film noir heroine is sexually alluring but potentially treacherous. ... Instead of winning her as a romantic partner, the hero finds her barring access to his goal or holding him in her power; at the limit, he may have to kill her or die himself to break free” (76). Although Hitchcock's heroines fit the description of the film noir heroine, Hitchcock presents another option: tame the woman. He has blended the two film styles of classical Hollywood and film noir to create his own category. Since the men in his films experience a crisis of masculinity, whether from a symbolic castration or an outside threat, a tamed woman confirms their masculinity, presenting another way of overcoming the threats that they face. They have the ability to escape near-death situations while molding a marriageable woman. If the films did not reaffirm patriarchy at the end, the male character would not be able to retake his position in average American life. With the culmination of the suspense comes a change of lifestyle. By righting the wrong that has been done, the couple should be able to go back to a regular life and be reaccepted in society. This symbolic reintegration is the

equivalent of destroying the femme fatale in film noir. That women must be destroyed or manipulated into something different is the connecting theme between the three chosen movies.

## Notorious

*Notorious* is a film that deals with issues of love, trust, and deceit. Alicia Huberman, the heroine of *Notorious*, is played by classically beautiful Ingrid Bergman. The film chronicles her changes as she is forced to go through many tribulations before being allowed to take her place in patriarchy. As she faces challenges, she gradually loses the vibrancy she possesses initially, becoming more tame and subdued. The government requests that she embark in a fake relationship as part of her civil duty, and she finds herself trapped between the man she loves, Devlin, her government handler, and the man she must pretend to love, Alex Sebastian. There are many struggles to find the balance of power, and Alicia is punished in multiple ways by both men. She cannot please both of them at the same time and suffers for this reason. The daughter of a traitor, she must redeem her father's sins as well as her own before she can be accepted by the man she loves. Alicia must try to balance the two men, yet ultimately she ends up with the proper patriarchal match, the man she has always loved, when he has decided that she is worthy of him. Order is restored by the end of the film.

One unique aspect of this film is the focus on Alicia's point of view. Unlike *North By Northwest* which unveils the facets of Eve's character gradually, *Notorious* spends the entire film focused on Alicia. She enters the spy game knowingly, but unprepared for what is to come. Her devolution from a party girl to a nearly dead and submissive romantic partner is vividly displayed. By presenting the film primarily through her point of view, the difficulties of her status as a double agent are easily seen, as are their contribution to her downfall.

Throughout the film, Alicia's appearance reflects her level of agency and shows her demise. Her costuming often parallels her attitude at the time and her position in her

surroundings. Hitchcock's introduction of Alicia shows her carrying herself with the utmost poise and grace. Alicia's father has just been sentenced to jail for treason and photo-hungry reporters lurk outside the courtroom to attempt to get a picture of Alicia. She is dressed in a crisp suit and a large hat covers her face. She appears dressed impeccably and professionally, showing her strength in the face of adversity. The pride she carries herself with is reflected in her outfit, and it is no surprise that this woman would not debase herself by talking to reporters. Regardless of her father's sins, she will not defame him in front of these men. She also shows great independence. No one accompanies her to the trial or attempts to protect her from the news people. She is clearly a capable woman who has chosen to face this situation directly.

At her party later that night, Alicia is dressed in a striped midriff baring top and skirt. She is a whirl of energy as she moves about the party, attending to her guests and socializing, emphasizing her independence. She jokes easily about being followed by cops and says she a "marked woman... liable to blow up the Panama Canal any minute now." She and her friends chatter about the predicament with her father, and one offers to sail her away to Havana for a week so the drama can subside. In her article, "(G)aping Women; Or, When a Man Plays the Fetish," Laura Hinton writes that her outfit is "a costume that further signals both female sexual notoriety and the prison notoriety of her father" (186). Her black and white stripes call to mind a prison uniform, but the ease at which she talks about her father's conviction and her new status as a "marked women" suggest that she is mocking the situation. If this outfit demonstrates her sexuality, then Devlin, played by Cary Grant, immediately begins to repress it with his first displays of patriarchal control. When the pair leaves for their night drive he ties a scarf around her waist in order to cover her exposed stomach. After she joins him, her outfits get more conservative and less flamboyant.

Later, on the plane trip to Brazil with Devlin, Alicia is dressed in an extremely subdued way. Hinton writes that Alicia “appears to have lost her provocative appeal ... [She has been] ‘reformed’ – by heterosexual love ... wearing a visually subdued costume that conforms to her new role on behalf of male espionage... an unrevealing outfit and carefully coiffed hair” (188). She wears a loose overcoat that reveals none of her body or sexuality. To match her new subdued image, Alicia also insists that she will not be dating in Rio as she starts to try to shed her wild ways. This job assignment seems to have given her an increased fervor to do good, even at the cost of changing her attitude from just wanting “good times” to working for something. Her changing personality is expedited by the news of the death of her father. Instead of becoming upset, she states that she can finally free herself from hate, making her transformation into a new woman even more plausible now that a stressor leaves her life.

If Alicia’s skin exposure is linked to the amount of agency she has, her outfits near the end of the film reflect the vast power that she has lost. By the time she realizes she is being poisoned, her body is entirely covered. She wears a long-sleeved, floor length black dress that is neither form-fitting nor suggestive. The neckline also gives her the disturbing appearance of being choked; it is a high neck - coming up to a large choker necklace. Her only exposed area is her face, which reflects the pain and torment she is undergoing.



Figure 1: Alicia's distress

Alicia spends the rest of the film bedridden. Early in the film, the first time she is seen in bed, after her hangover, she is sprawled out across the bed in her clothes from the night before with her blankets draped haphazardly over her. There is something chaotic and improper about her placement in bed and Devlin standing over her. When he comes to her bedside for the second time to rescue her, she is dressed in a nightgown that is long-sleeved and floor length. She is wrapped under her covers and completely enveloped by them. When Devlin takes her away, he first wraps her protectively in a light coat and then an additional overcoat. She is practically rendered immobile by her multiple layers and she looks powerless and timid beneath all of them. She is completely changed from the woman who fearlessly commanded her own party and her own life.

Alicia loses her agency as she gets involved in patriarchal battles. She is called into espionage by the larger patriarchy, the government, which would like to use her as a pawn to gain information. While operating within this larger patriarchal structure, she gets trapped within domestic patriarchy battles by Devlin, her handler, and Alex Sebastian, her target. Both men want her for themselves and would rather destroy her than see her with someone else. There is no way for her to fulfill all her roles, or to please all of these men. Instead, she is punished for completing the job she was asked to do by the government. The physical and emotional punishment she receives shows the vicious circle that patriarchy creates. Patriarchy gives men the power to use women to achieve their goals and then punishes the women for agreeing to those conditions. Alicia finds herself unable to escape the trap she is forced into. She can only escape when one of the men decides to free her by rescuing her.

A scene that exemplifies her position as a pawn between the two men is the dinner party she and Alex throw for her homecoming. During the dinner party, Alicia is trapped between the

two men. She wants to be with Devlin so they can explore the suspiciously locked wine cellar together, while she has to stay with Alex in order to not raise any suspicions. She has to keep a delicate balance between the two, especially since Alex openly admits to being jealous of every man who looks at her. The composition of the party scene reinforces her position as a powerless pawn. The scene begins with an extreme high angle shot that shows the overview of the party. The floor is black and white tile, giving it the appearance of a game board. The shot tracks in on Alicia's position, showing its precariousness as well as the secret key she holds in her hand, the crucial evidence that she must transfer from Alex to Devlin, while being endangered by both of them.



Figure 2: Alicia's position as pawn

Alicia suffers in both the relationships with her handler and her husband. All she wants is to be loved by Devlin, yet Alex is the more compassionate and caring of the two towards her. Modleski writes, “Devlin appears to be the quintessential sadist – stern, remote, and punishing, always in command of himself and the woman who nearly dies for love of him” (65). Throughout their relationship Devlin has the upper hand. He exerts great physical and emotional power over Alicia. When she gets unruly and tries to escape him in her car, he restrains her and then knocks her unconscious. When she wakes up the next morning, she realizes that he has put her into her bed. She often stares at him while he looks away. She experiences a large range of

emotions, while he remains steely and impassive. She asks many loaded questions in order to try to figure out what he thinks about her. She often desperately questions him about his opinions, without paying heed to what the responses will do to her emotionally. Alicia wants so greatly to have his approval, that the slightest insult from him is enough to change her entire mood. He can cause her to drink, to doubt herself, to run to the arms of another man.

Devlin is first introduced by his back, still and impassive in a crisp suit. He never formally introduces himself by name, and Alicia appears to be in awe of him. Even from their first meeting, Alicia seems drawn to him. She talks to him without any response from him, and agrees to join his government team for no apparent reason. She picks up his every word while staring intently. The bottles lining their table demonstrate the amount they have been drinking, although Devlin, the mysterious stranger, seems unaffected. Alicia, on the other hand, is quickly losing composure in front of him. Her hair falls out of its perfect coif and she begins to have trouble with her words. Even their first interaction shows the imbalance of power that will pervade their relationship; Devlin maintains an impassive exterior while Alicia betrays her weaknesses and emotions.

In reaction to his impassivity, Alicia tries to regain the power he takes from her. She tests him and prods him to try to get him to show fear or emotion. As his exterior remains unfazed despite her reckless driving, Alicia gets angry with him. After asking him what the speedometer reads and he replies sixty five, she says “I want to make it eighty and wipe that grin off your face. I don’t like men who grin at me.” While she drives, his hand stays close to the wheel, showing that he could exert control if he wanted to. When a police officer comes up alongside her car, Devlin hands the cop papers that exonerate Alicia, to which she immediately gets suspicious. She finally asks the man his name, showing that perhaps men’s names do not even

matter to her normally. She attacks him for being a cop and trying to get something from her, and things quickly escalate to physical. He attempts to restrain her as she kicks and thrashes while trying to throw him out of her car. When she refuses to calm down, he knocks her out with a swift punch and takes the wheel. No matter how Alicia tries to defend herself, Devlin has the upper hand.

The next morning she wakes up confused and disheveled. She is in her clothes from the night before and extremely ragged-looking compared to Devlin's flawless appearance. Again, if clothes parallel power, he possesses all of it. This time she allows herself to be dominated by him, drinking the concoction he has made for her without asking what it is. Modleski writes, "he stands menacingly in the doorway and forces her to drink the cure for her hangover... a shot which rhymes with those of the poison coffee cups later...the film clearly links Devlin to the Nazis" (66). Modleski stresses that the difference between Devlin and the Nazis is that he believes he is giving Alicia a cure for her hangover, but her face betrays how disgusting it is.

In order to get Alicia to join his government agency, which is his goal, Devlin turns her words against her thus showing her that he has even more control over her. He plays a recording of her and her father arguing before he was sent to jail over his activities. She still resists, embracing the party girl attitude that has been seen from her so far, saying "Good times, that's what I want, and laughs with people I like." Regardless of her resistance, Devlin asks one more time for her cooperation. For no apparent reason, she now agrees, perhaps already submitting to his patriarchal power. Again, she stares intently at him as he leaves the room to begin making travel arrangements. She is mesmerized by him in all ways.

When Devlin and Alicia lunch in Rio, she appears confident and happy, drinking less and showing self-determination, but Devlin is quick to crush her dreams and insist that her temporarily good behavior is only a phase and not permanent change. He mocks the control she feels over her own life. Their conversation goes in circles until Alicia is so upset that she orders herself a second drink, a double. She drinks because Devlin overwhelms her, but by drinking more she proves his assumptions about her inability to change. The scene ends with her asking him why he will not believe in her, to which he has no reply. The scene cuts to them walking up a hill, where she keeps antagonizing him about the embarrassment of being in love with her since she is a tramp and someone not as good as him. She willingly devalues herself and wants him to agree. As she rants, he finally grabs hold of her and kisses her hard, giving into her accusations. Even this kiss, which should be a tender moment, screams of power struggles. Devlin is giving into Alicia, but he does so violently and restores the balance of power back to himself with his physical exhibition of power.

Just as he is beginning to soften and treat Alicia more as an equal, Devlin learns of the job planned for Alicia, namely to ensnare a former love to obtain secret information. Her acknowledged sexual prowess undermines his patriarchal position in their relationship and he decides he can no longer be with her. The addition of another man to her life threatens and disgusts him. He returns to his cruel treatment of her with a renewed vigor and she bemoans “right below the belt, every time.” When she realizes that he wants her to be with another man, she berates him for not defending her. Instead of arguing to the contrary, he allows her to believe that he did not say anything. Both are trying to test the other; Alicia wants Devlin to tell her not to take the job, in order to prove that he cares for her too much to see her with someone else, and Devlin wants her to refuse to take the job to show that she has truly changed and is willing to be

monogamous with him. This is a crucial moment in the power balance of their relationship. By agreeing to do the job, Alicia gives up her power and reaffirms Devlin's disdain for her.

Devlin fully throws himself into the position of her handler. Because he is no longer her boyfriend, he has no qualms about insulting or disregarding her. He is inattentive and does not perceive her needs. Before she can attend the crucial dinner party, she must be debriefed by Devlin and her boss, Captain Prescott. Prescott brings her a rented necklace for the occasion and she pauses awkwardly while deciding which man she should ask to help her put it on. She settles for her boss. In addition to being inconsiderate, Devlin relentlessly abuses Alicia for her past sins. He causes her emotional distress, as evidenced through her crying and drinking, and fails to give her the support she needs until the very end.

Devlin maintains his cool and cruel exterior towards Alicia for the majority of the film, even when it does not match his true feelings. While the government agents speak about her behind her back, Devlin defends her in one of his few overt displays of compassion. One of the men has said that her "type" of woman worries him. He agrees but retorts "Miss Huberman is first, last, and always not a lady. She may be risking her life, but when it comes to being a lady, she doesn't hold a candle to your wife, sir, sitting in Washington and playing cards with three other ladies of great honor and virtue." Devlin replies with such passion that one of his bosses admonishes him for his outburst. He perfectly describes Alicia's predicament, though, one that he inflicts upon her as well. She cannot be taken seriously because of her past infidelities, yet she shows more courage and pride than most women. As soon as Alicia enters the room after his defense of her, Devlin stops talking and shuts down again. She comes to the office asking for Devlin's permission to marry Sebastian and Captain Prescott answers for him. Devlin tries to give an absurd reason that the marriage would not work, that the honeymoon would delay their

investigation, and his excuse is rejected by the other men. Since he will not admit why the marriage would truly upset him, he quickly leaves the room. Alicia is visibly upset by his behavior, since she only has seen his cruelty and not any of his complimentary behavior.

After punishing her emotionally for weeks, Devlin goes to the house and ends up rescuing her after hearing that she has been bedridden. Seeing her in such a fragile state softens him. Now that she has completely lost her power and can pose no threat to him, he accepts her. He finally admits that he loves her and that he could not bear seeing her married. She does not believe she can make it without his help, but the knowledge that he loves her keeps her awake. Devlin dresses her, and helps her out of the room. She looks only at Devlin as they travel through the house, allowing Devlin to control her and her movement. Their boldness of movement saves them because Alex cannot afford to cause a scene in front of his other Nazi compatriots for fear that they will figure out that he has married an American agent. They escape unscathed and reunified.

Alicia's other patriarchal option before Devlin decides to be with her, which is also not a safe one, is Alex Sebastian, a Nazi supporter who was once in love with Alicia and who is her intended target. In order to attract his attention, Devlin purposefully puts her into harm's way so Alex can save her, making Devlin an unfit partner since he does not protect her. He causes her horse to careen out of control and put her in peril, using her to the point of risking her life. Even though Alex is supposedly the villain, he treats Alicia as she should be treated, unlike Devlin. He dotes upon her, and can provide her with wealth and luxury. Unlike Devlin, he does not hesitate in falling in love with her and telling her how he feels. Instead of hiding his emotions, he pampers her with beautiful dinners and compliments her. He does not cause her emotional distress, and trusts her completely. However, even with his trust, he cannot refrain from asking if

she and Devlin are a couple, to which she has to reply no. She has to say no in order to please Alex, but her face as she says no reveals that she is telling the truth. Even though they were only happy together for an afternoon, she and Devlin have lost their opportunity because of the addition of another man. Alex accepts her answer and remains the doting partner. His attentiveness allows Alicia to exploit him further.

Alicia quickly infiltrates Alex's world, becoming a success as his girlfriend and at obtaining information for the American government. In order to test her love and assert his patriarchal dominance over Devlin, who he sees as a potential threat, Alex asks her to marry him quickly. Once married, Alicia becomes the woman of the house and uses her new power to increase her investigation by exploring every area of the house under the guise of looking for closet space; she even interrupts business meetings in order to talk to him. Still, Alex performs as a perfect gentleman and husband, providing Alicia with everything she needs. She opens every room in the house, but one, the wine cellar. It is unable to be opened. She reports this anomaly to Devlin and they decide it must be opened. Devlin and Alicia plan a party at her house, so he can be invited under the excuse that if Devlin sees her and Sebastian in love that he will fall out of love with her.

The night of the party, as Devlin and Alicia pretend to be jovial while talking about infiltrating the wine cellar, they prove too successful and arouse Alex's suspicions. When they are caught in the act of the exploring the wine cellar, it is safer for them to pretend to be having an affair rather than admit what they are actually doing. Unfortunately, in the act of pretending, Alicia betrays too much real emotion. She still insists that she does not love him, and Devlin replies, "For what's it worth your wife is telling the truth. I knew her before you, loved her before you, I just wasn't as lucky as you." Again, this statement blurs the line between reality

and acting. This could be a clever reply to Alex or it could also be how Devlin really feels. He exits quickly, leaving Alicia to fix the situation. However, Alex agrees to forgive her since they have guests upstairs. Alex tries to resume the party, ignoring their squabble, only to find that his key to the wine cellar has gone missing. In order to hide his suspicions, he is extremely nice to her. While Alicia thinks she is safe and that he accepted her and Devlin's charade, she is really in more danger than ever.

Unfortunately, Alex's intense devotion just makes his wrath more extreme when he realizes that his wife has been using him to obtain information for the American government, showing his danger and unfitness to be a suitable patriarchal partner. After determining the truth about his doomed relationship with his wife, he goes first to his mother, the woman he pushed away because she did not approve of Alicia. As he mourns the loss of his marriage and fears its repercussions, he laments "I must have been insane, mad, behaved like an idiot to believe in her with her clinging kisses." This revelation of betrayal is even more humiliating than being cuckolded by Devlin, as his mother originally suspected. He has not only been betrayed by the woman he loves, but he has put his entire cohort into danger. The group has killed men for much smaller infractions than this in order to protect their secret. Letting Alicia into his life has made Alex a target. Alex and his mother decide to punish Alicia for her betrayal by slowing poisoning her. Even his wrath reflects his personality. Alex does not act cruelly on the surface, even as he is killing her. He is still very attentive and feigns concern as her condition worsens, killing her with kindness. His behavior is so stable that Alicia does not realize for days that she is being poisoned. Even when she figures it out and attempts to escape, Alex can use his compassion to trap her further. The polite request of having the telephones removed from her room so she can sleep makes him seem like a doting and considerate husband, and at the same time it prevents

Alicia from being able to call for help. She is powerless to escape his watchful eye, and sometimes his mother's watchful eye, until Devlin comes and physically removes her from the situation.

Her health quickly deteriorates, first beginning with headaches and escalating into dizzy spells. During her final meeting with Devlin, she walks extremely slowly and appears to be in pain. Earlier in the week, she finds out that Devlin will no longer be her contact and resents him for leaving her. She tries to get this information out of him, but he refuses, angering her. When he starts to inquire about her health, she insists it is a hangover, reaffirming Devlin's opinions of her. He easily believes her excuse and pushes her away further. She gives him back his scarf that he gave her the first night they met and leaves him behind. It is not until later that he realizes she was actually sick and goes to her rescue.

This film ends slightly differently than the other two films, *Rear Window* and *North by Northwest*. Both of those films end with a reaffirmation of patriarchy and a parting shot of the couple in their new balance. In this film, patriarchy has been reaffirmed: Alicia ends with her proper match rather than the fake marriage she was pushed into. Even when Devlin does rescue her himself, she is already extremely close to death and it is not truly known whether she will be able to recover, although now the couple is reunited. However, the film ends by showing the consequences of this couple's union. When saving his love, Devlin refuses to allow Alex in the car with him. Alex knows that his friends will be suspicious if he lets another man take his wife away, but Devlin refuses to yield. Devlin is denying Alex's patriarchal authority by taking his wife away. With the loss of his patriarchy comes the loss of his power and legitimacy in his Nazi spy ring. The final shot of the film shows Alex slowly walking back to his house, and presumably to his death.

*Notorious* introduces a powerful and formidable woman, only to break her down throughout the film. Alicia begins as an overly sexualized and confident woman. She is preceded by her reputation as a party girl with loose morals. She expresses no interest in the sins of her father, joking about her status under suspicion because of him. Modleski writes, “after setting the woman up as an object of male desire and curiosity, the film proceeds to submit her to a process of purification whereby she is purged of her excess sexuality in order to be rendered fit for her place in the patriarchal order” (58). Her power is gradually stripped from her by the men in her life. First, she loses emotional stability to Devlin, her love. He breaks her down by constantly belittling her and insulting her with references to her past indiscretions. He keeps her in an impossible situation by punishing her for the past that he knows she is powerless to change. All she wants is for him to show some faith in her and he refuses to give her this, allowing himself to remain powerful. Her physical power is stolen from her by the man she is forced to marry. To punish her for being an American agent he begins to poison her until she is bedridden and incapacitated. Only when she is completely powerless does patriarchy get reaffirmed and Devlin comes to rescue her. Before she was weakened, she was too much of a threat to him with her sexual experience and a threat to Alex with her knowledge. Once she has suffered and lost all her agency, Devlin swoops in to claim her as his own. She has, as Modleski says, been “purified” and can now reenter a proper union with an appropriate man.

### *North by Northwest*

*North By Northwest* is one of Hitchcock's grandest scale films. It covers almost the entire American landscape, spanning from New York City to South Dakota. In this quintessentially American film, Cary Grant stars as Roger O. Thornhill, an advertising man mistaken for George Kaplan, a hunted federal agent. Because of this mistake, he is placed into a life or death international spy ring. Issues of identity, consumerism, betrayal and trust, the government and its responsibility to its citizens, and suspense define this film. At the center of the action is Eve Kendall, played by Eva Marie Saint. Eve could be defined as an anti-heroine for most of the film. Her intentions and motivations are uncertain, making her an extremely dangerous woman. Like the majority of Hitchcock's heroines, Eve is a stunning beauty. Unlike the other heroines, she is forward and sexually self-assured, creating uneasiness around her character. Even though she is one of the more complicated heroines, she is ensnared by Hitchcock's strictly defined worlds of patriarchy. She falls hopelessly in love with Roger, betrayed by her emotions. Even though she begins with a lot of power and ability to manipulate, she still ends the film being physically rescued by the male protagonist from the edge of a cliff and being pulled into her marriage bed. Eve's character is defined by her actions and the men around her. Little is known about her since her personality changes to match the men around her. Her appearance is the only true identifier of her personality, and even that could be fabricated. She is rarely vulnerable, or honest, yet she and Roger fall in love regardless. Hitchcock creates a complicated woman, with seemingly a lot of independence and power, and yet she still cannot overcome the draws of the patriarchal affirmation of marriage.

Throughout the movie, Eve has an impeccable appearance from which she draws her power. Her beauty allows her to manipulate men. She always has perfectly coiffed hair, and

neatly pressed and professional outfits. Her beautiful business suits and dresses come as even more of a contrast to the single suit Roger wears for the entirety of the film. Since her identity is often in question, her flawless beauty gives her the appearance of a china doll, or a perfectly prepared sexual tease.

Eve's spy status makes her at once powerful and powerless. Her power comes from her ability to be a double agent. She can manipulate men with her sexuality and keep her true motives secret. She describes how she got pulled into her double agent status as her being asked to do something good for the first time. Good, in this case, means using her sexuality for more productive means than personal gain. She took her frivolous relationship with her criminal boyfriend Vandamm and turned it into something more when given the opportunity. Knowing that she is serving her country and her effortless ability to manipulate him give her power in their relationship. Whatever emotions he believes her to be feeling are all an act. She can control the relationship by changing her behavior. When he shares in the knowledge of her deceit, her power is taken away. Before falling for Thornhill, she wields the same power over Thornhill.

Everything in their first meeting oozes seduction. The audience recognizes that she is a temptress, but not until her note to Vandamm is revealed does the full extent of her deliberateness become clear. The note throws everything that was said between them into question. There could have been moments of truth in their conversation or it could have all been lies. The lack of insight into her character and her motivations creates an air of power. She could be trying to kill him or protect him, and it is her prerogative to decide. Her mysteriousness gives her power, and as she begins to unravel and fall for Roger, her power diminishes.

Eve's first act in the film is effortlessly seducing Roger after they meet awkwardly in the hallway of a train as he is evading the police. When he later enters the dining car, he has no choice but to sit by her. Although they make small talk, she retains an air of cool indifference, barely answering him with more than a word as he babbles on. When she begins speaking more freely, their conversation is loaded with sexual innuendo and superficiality. She seems like the perfect companion to Roger's shallow, consumer-driven advertising career, offering him a meaningless relationship without pretenses or expectations. Robin Wood writes in his book *Hitchcock's Films Revisited*, "the superficial Eve... is the perfect counterpart for Thornhill: worldly, amoral, quite without depth of feeling, quite uncommitted to anything or anyone, taking sex as she would a cocktail" (136). She is as assertive and vain as he is, complimenting his appearance and saying that she never says anything she does not mean.

The two begin talking about honesty, and she can see through his lies immediately. She also encourages him to speak freely, which means speaking about wanting to have sex with beautiful women. When she admits that she paid the host to let Thornhill sit by her, he is clearly stunned and enamored by her and asks to finally be introduced. She replies, "I'm Eve Kendall. I'm twenty-six and unmarried. Now you know everything." This statement shows that she is available for Roger, yet does not give him any more information than he would be interested in, yet the age and marital status she reduces herself to are clearly not all that makes up a person. After referring to herself condescendingly, Roger begins to speak to her as a femme fatale, a description which she does not correct, even when asked what she does besides "lure men to their doom." She rejects his false introduction, replacing it with his true identity. However, she says she will protect him out of her own boredom and need for an activity for the night. Their initial meeting ends abruptly as police board the train. Now that he is in danger, she commits to

protecting him and brings him back to her room. She performs flawlessly for the police and they have more time to spend together.

A scene cut transitions to later in the evening for Roger and Eve. She is encouraging him to let her help him even after he gets off the train. This conversation changes the seriousness of their relationship. In one of the most complicated exchanges she asks, “How do I know you aren’t a murderer?” He replies, “You don’t.” She retorts, “Maybe you’re planning to murder me, right here, tonight.” He coyly replies, “Shall I?” and she gives in. This is an exchange it equates the act of sex with death, one of Hitchcock’s classic metaphors. Also, it shows Eve’s awareness of the danger of the situation and her compliance to be with him. She is neither innocent nor inexperienced. Their dialogue and embrace are overtly sexualized and exaggerated. As their embraces get more passionate, the last shot of Eve is her looking concerned over her shoulder. A cut to the porter shows that she has written a note to Vandamm asking what to do with Roger in the morning.



Figure 3: A guilty conscience?

At this point in the film, Eve appears to be defying patriarchy by her extreme manipulation of Roger. She tricks him into a submissive position by what he believes to be overwhelming support. To him, Eve seems like a fresh savior compared to his nagging mother that he left behind. His mother, believing her son to be a delinquent and skeptical of all his

behavior emasculates him in front of other people. Wood writes about Roger's initial identity that, "The only relationship of any apparent strength, with his mother, proves worse than useless, her skepticism undermining him at every step" (135).

Although his mother mocks him, she also provides a realistic interpretation of the situation. It is normal to be skeptical of a son claiming that the reason he was drunk driving was because he was trying to be killed by a lethal dose of alcohol after being mistaken for a spy. When he is trapped with an elevator with his almost killers, she asks "You gentlemen aren't really trying to kill my son, are you?" This comment shows her utter disbelief in the situation and indifference about his safety. In order to evade his killers, he has to leave her behind in the hotel. The reason his identity has been mistaken is because he is trying to get a telegram to her. While the name George Kaplan is being called, he is simultaneously trying to summon a bellboy in order to send a telegram to his mother. This coincidence changes his life irreparably and begins his cross-country quest to save himself and regain his identity as Roger Thornhill. When he begins to accept his identity as George Kaplan, his mother leaves his life and Eve enters. Although she pretends to be helping him by discovering the real George Kaplan, she is leading him further into his own dangerous identity as George Kaplan since by accepting that identity, he protects her status as a double agent.

There is a distinct shift in power in Eve and Roger's relationship after he figures out that she has sent him to his death. He now believes nothing she says, and he regains the power she first took from him. When Roger survives her murder attempt and goes to her hotel room, he now believes, as the audience does, that Eve exists as the seduction weapon wielded by Vandamm. Roger rushes into her room with indignation; she appears clearly upset and somewhat relieved to see him. However, since her character has already been called into question, it is

unknown what of her behavior is an act or what is genuine. They both know what happened, yet neither talk about it. She rushes to him in an embrace that he refuses to return. The camera begins to swirl around the couple, as if they are being caught up in the romance of the moment, but then stops on Roger's disgusted face, showing the reality of the situation instead of being swept into the fantasy.



Figure 4: Roger's skepticism

The two keep up pretenses by discussing the afternoon, she must protect herself and he must prove that he knows the situation. Robert Yanal discusses the tensions between truth and pretenses in Hitchcock as Philosopher. He writes that Thornhill now “plays another role ... the returning lover who only wants to be with his beloved, while she, too, plays a role as the solicitous girl friend... Each seems vaguely aware that the other is playing a role though this awareness is kept to themselves” (Yanal 70). Roger continues his role as lover by threatening her with a serious relationship where they would never be apart. A relationship between the two of them is something to be feared, for her especially since Roger now knows she was trying to kill him. She asks him to leave and never come back and he refuses. She traps him in her room by insisting that he get his suit cleaned, leaving him pantless in the bathroom. He gets dangerously close to directly telling her that he knows what she is doing by saying that she is “wicked, naughty, up to no good... ever kill anyone? Bet you could tease a man to death without even

trying. So stop trying.” This statement addresses her as a femme fatale again, although now it seems true since she has quite definitively tried to kill him. He accuses her of using her femininity as a weapon against men, a charge which she has no defense against since it is true.

Roger’s power over Eve and her submissiveness to him is clearly shown in her emotional reactions to his hurtful accusations about her. As he abuses her verbally, Eve appears physically uncomfortable for the first time and her flawless exterior has been compromised. She finally has too much when he asks Vandamm “or are you going to ask this female to kiss me again and poison me to death?” she moves against him and as he holds her wrists, he says “Who are you kidding? You have no feelings to hurt.” It is obvious how upsetting his words are, and that these feelings are genuine. Roger is unrelenting, shocking her, as well as Vandamm and his associates. His ability to affect her shows that she is not a heartless seductress and she may have really cared for him. Vandamm recognizes this as he looks at her with disgust and confusion because of her strong reaction. As Roger bids her goodbye with “Goodnight sweetheart, don’t think it wasn’t nice,” she has tears in her eyes which he cannot see. Since her character is still developing, it is unknown whether she was always a good person, or if being with Roger has reformed her. Wood writes, “what we seem to have here (for we still take Eve very largely at her face value) is the old cliché of the wicked woman drawn into true love against her will” (136). Although it may be a clichéd role, it does add depth to her character. It also shows her willingness to participate in a patriarchal relationship, by falling in love and wanting to be with Roger. She is no longer unfeeling or ruthless, and she takes the role of the victim of patriarchy, abused by the man she has come to love.

As the plot unfolds, their respective roles in the relationship change as well. Roger sees Eve in many different, mutually exclusive lenses. She is first his savior in the train, then he hates

her with the fervor of a scorned lover, and finally she is the damsel in distress that only he can save. These are not changes in Eve; they are changes in Roger's perception of her. He struggles with throwing himself too passionately into each of his roles as Vandamm points out to him in the auction house. He says, "Has anyone ever told you that you overplay your various roles rather severely, Mr. Kaplan? First you're the outraged Madison Avenue man...then you play a fugitive from justice... and now, you play the peevish lover, stung by jealousy and betrayal." Roger's lack of balance and indiscretion create a dangerous situation for Eve since she cannot help but betray her emotions when being berated by a man who cannot understand her true motivations. If Eve is a damsel in distress or a "treacherous tramp" as he describes her to the Professor, these are roles that he has forced her into.

Eve is not only in a relationship with Roger, she also has her relationship with Vandamm to maintain as her job. She explains to Roger,

I met Phillip Vandamm at a party one night and saw only his charm. I guess I had nothing to do that weekend, so I decided to fall in love...Eventually the Professor and his Washington colleagues approached me... and told me that my relationship with him made me 'uniquely valuable' to them... Maybe it was the first time anyone ever asked me to do anything worthwhile.

This explanation reveals that perhaps she has always used her feminine guiles to an extent, believing that she could do nothing better. In a patriarchal society, a woman's sexuality is often her only weapon.

When Roger believes Eve to be untrustworthy and a partner of Vandamm's, he follows her to the auction house where he verbally attacks her in front of Vandamm. Eve's identity as good or evil is still being developed. At this moment, Roger believes her to be evil, but Wood writes "Thornhill's first image of Eve is now shattered; the second is equally misleading – though both bear some relationship to the real Eve" (137). Eve can be genuinely loving and she

can be manipulative, but she is not all of one or the other. At this point, with the confusion of his own identity as well as hers, Roger can only see her in extremes.

Before Roger arrives at the auction house, Eve's flawless back is shown with Vandamm's hand gripping it menacingly and possessively, rather than lovingly. He is asserting his power and control over her in one small movement. Hitchcock excels at the use of a single visual image to portray complex power dynamics. At this moment, Eve deserves some sympathy. His body position and grip show that she is clearly trapped in this relationship and overpowered by him. He is examining her as if she is one of the pieces for sale at the auction. Wood writes that his touch "constitutes at once a caress and a threat... expresses the precariousness of Eve's position" (138). She is in danger, no matter which of her two suitors she is with.

Both Vandamm and Roger are threatened in their patriarchal security by the other man. When Roger attacks Eve's integrity by implying that everyone has been in her hotel room, Vandamm removes his hand from his prized possession with disgust. As Vandamm and his associate are bidding on the art, Roger is relentless saying, "I'll bet you paid plenty for this little piece of sculpture. She's worth every dollar, take it from me. She really puts her heart into her work. In fact, her whole body." He is humiliating her in front of Vandamm, as well as humiliating Vandamm by speaking graphically about Roger's night with his girlfriend.

Besides being humiliated by Roger, Vandamm's security in patriarchy is threatened by Leonard, his "right arm." Throughout the film, Leonard displays a willowy elegance, a softness, and a refinement, which can all be coded as homosexual. When trying to explain to Vandamm his suspicions about Eve he says, "Call it my woman's intuition if you will, but I've never trusted neatness." He refers to the feminine parts of himself, and Vandamm interprets this as

jealousy over Eve. If Leonard were accepted as homosexual, his logical partner in the film would be Vandamm, undermining Vandamm's masculine identity and position in patriarchy. Vandamm does align with Leonard against Eve, and accepts Eve's status as a double agent and decides to murder her. Leonard also tries to stand in the way of patriarchy by attempting to kill Eve and Roger himself. He has taken Eve's power away from her by revealing her secret.

Even though being a double agent gives Eve a lot of power to manipulate men and wield her sexuality, she is also powerless in many ways even before her cover is blown. The Professor, Eve's federal agent handler, explains the precariousness of her situation to Roger and her identity again changes. Eve is now victimized by the situation she has been forced into. Roger is completely responsible for Eve since he put her into danger. Stanley Cavell writes in "North by Northwest", "He has first of all to save the bad woman, to rewrite the earlier plot which in effect began by killing her off, to rescue or redeem or resurrect her, that is to say to put the good and the bad together... *creating* a suitable mate for himself" (255). Eve is now the damsel in distress for him to save because he has put her into that situation.

After Roger has accepted Eve, the only honest conversation they have is in the woods, which is one of the most beautiful settings in the film. It is the one of the few natural settings in the film, compared to the high rises and city life. The naturalness of the setting reflects the sincerity of the moment, since it is the first interaction they have after all the lies and deceit have been stripped away. The composition of this scene is very important. The scene begins in with a long shot with both of them at the edge of opposite sides of the frame. The camera cuts to each of them as they begin to move closer to each other. Wood writes, "so they are united: Hitchcock beautifully involves the spectator in their movement toward each other, their movement toward the 'togetherness' that was earlier (for Thornhill) a contemptuous sneer" (139). The composition

shows how slowly and timidly they approach each other after everything they have been through together. After they have united, they are both trying to apologize for their behavior, knowing that the situation required it of them.

Eve is powerless to choose her own path and be with Roger, because her duty to the country supersedes her personal feelings. She believes she is powerless to have her own emotions, for when she does in situations such as in the auction house, she is betrayed by them. In order for her double agent status to work, she has to maintain her steely exterior and bottle up any other emotions. If Roger had not intervened, there would be no happy ending in her life. She either would have continued pretending to be in love with Vandamm and serving her country, or in the danger she finds herself in. She probably would have eventually revealed herself as a double agent and gotten into peril eventually. She cannot get out of this situation until a stronger man, like Roger, saves her from her powerless condition. She makes little reference to a time in her life when she was not guided by a man. First she is loyal to Vandamm as his mistress, then she switches allegiance to the Professor when he asks to be her boss, and finally she ends with Roger as her husband. Of the three men, Roger is the most reaffirming of patriarchy. With him, she can have a proper and honest relationship.

The final action scene of escaping from Vandamm can be read as the consummation of Roger and Eve's relationship and a patriarchal victory. Roger has accepted responsibility for Eve, and by escaping Vandamm and subsequently her responsibility to the government, she is agreeing to be with him. Although Roger wants to free her, his goal gains new urgency when he overhears Vandamm saying that he will kill Eve for being a traitor. Roger successfully warns Eve, but Eve cannot admit that she knows anything without putting herself in greater danger and

Roger is being held at gunpoint by the housekeeper. Roger rushes to her rescue in a car and they can finally work together as a team, and a legitimate couple.

The couple has no choice but to attempt to climb down Mount Rushmore together as they are being pursued. He proposes to her as they are escaping by saying “If we get out of this alive, let’s go back to New York on a train together. All right?” She laughs and agrees, unifying them.



Figure 5: Proposal over a precipice

She falls and hurts herself, making it even more necessary that Roger be able to take care of her and protect her. She now seems completely helpless in his arms. They begin touching more, and she relies on him for steady footing and stability. She falls off the edge of the cliff, and only one unsteady hand of his is keeping them alive. Wood writes, “there is every point in Roger Thornhill, the previously irresponsible, unattached advertising man, having to hang onto a ledge on Mount Rushmore by one hand, holding the woman he loves by the other, while the homosexual spy Leonard, the film’s ultimate representative of the sterile and destructive, grinds the hand with his foot” (133). Not only are they fighting for their lives, but they are fighting for their relationship against the forces that oppose them. Even though Leonard is shot and Roger’s hand is freed, it seems as though they will be lost. Eve says she cannot make it up and the scene cuts to them on their train ride safely home as Mr. and Mrs. Thornhill.

This film culminates in their marriage. Like other Hitchcock films, Hitchcock places his characters in a situation they cannot possibly escape, such as dangling over a precipice with no hope of being pulled up. Instead of showing how the two escape, he changes the scene to Roger pulling Eve up into their marital bed. Roger admits to reenacting their near-death experience and says it is just because he's sentimental. Wood writes that the action ends with "pulling her up into bed on a train, as 'Mrs. Thornhill' – a beautiful way of expressing the link between his survival of the ordeal and their relationship" (141). Although their relationship ends with a marriage, their relationship is complicated because Thornhill has been married twice before. This couple has to prove their longevity before they can be married. Cavell writes that "*North by Northwest* derives from the genre of remarriage... its subject is the legitimizing of marriage, as if the pair's adventures are trials of their suitability for that condition" (250). After being proposed to, Eve asks Roger why his first two marriages failed, to which he replies that they left him because he was so boring. The two of them share a laugh over this as they hang precariously over the edge of Mount Rushmore, since this is obviously a problem that they will never have, implying that their relationship will be stronger and long-lasting. They have already overcome his fatal flaw in relationships.

Eve transitions through many stereotypes of female characters in the movie – she begins as a femme fatale, turns into a damsel in distress, and ends as a happy newlywed. Whatever power she drew from her spy status and sexuality is ripped away from her as she loses her job and becomes monogamous with Roger. However, patriarchy accepts her by allowing her to join in a loving relationship with Roger, and be married by the end of the film.

### Rear Window

The heroine of Hitchcock's *Rear Window* is Lisa Fremont, a fashionable woman played by Grace Kelly. She is hopelessly in love with a travelling photographer and trying to prove her ability to survive in his world. Her love is L.B. Jeffries, acted by James Stewart, who insists that she is too perfect and unadventurous for him. *Rear Window* is half a week in their lives, yet filled with murder and intrigue. Throughout the film, Lisa struggles with patriarchy. She wants to be part of the patriarchal relationship of marriage, yet many aspects of her life and personality set her outside of the submissive role of a partner. She defies patriarchy by being independent in her job, confident in her appearance, and being more physically powerful than her partner. However, she is controlled by patriarchy from within and without. Her desire to be Jeff's wife demonstrates that she embraces the patriarchal role put upon her. Patriarchy is also enforced upon her from outside by Stella, Jeff's nurse, and by the murder mystery unfolding around them. Lisa tries to get involved with Jeff's obsession with the potential murder across the courtyard, but can never escape her femininity. She can only get involved in feminine ways so as not to completely topple the power balance of the couple and overrule Jeff. Her power and agency are limited by the constructs her gender has confined her to, and she succumbs to the patriarchal role defined for her.

Alfred Hitchcock's film *Rear Window* is based on a short story by Cornell Woolrich called "It Had to Be Murder," published in 1942. Francis M. Nevins Jr. describes Hitchcock's adaptation in his book, *Cornell Woolrich: First You Dream, Then You Die*, "thanks to all the nuances of theme and character and mood that he grafted onto the story's structure ... *Rear Window* the movie evolved into something worlds removed from 'Rear Window' as Woolrich wrote it: richer, lighter, deeper, less obsessive and claustrophobic, but no less suspenseful"

[http://bernardschopen.tripod.com/rear\\_nov.html](http://bernardschopen.tripod.com/rear_nov.html)). The story was the basis for the plot of *Rear Window*, the mystery of seeing the evidence of a murder, but not the actual crime, and how sight can betray a person. However, Woolrich's L.B. Jeffries was almost entirely alone in the short story, except for a black houseman named Sam, the only person Jeff shares his ideas with. The majority of the story consists of their dialogue and Jeff's voyeurism. Hitchcock expanded this short story, adding character development, as well as new characters and secondary plotlines. Since none of the female characters present in the *Rear Window* exist in "It Had to Be Murder," they are Hitchcock's creations. The short story was clearly a jumping point for Hitchcock, who realized the cinematic potential of the story. He adds more female characters to Jeff's line of vision in the neighborhood, and Jeff's companion in the short story, Sam, has been replaced by Lisa Fremont, Jeff's gorgeous love interest, and Stella, the nurse who attends to him. By adding these characters, Hitchcock alters the dynamic of the film to incorporate gender conflict. *Rear Window* now works in the gender universe of women confined by patriarchy, changing the plot to fit a structure found in other of his films.

From her first introduction in the film, everything about Lisa Fremont oozes femininity. The first shot of Lisa is an overwhelming tight close-up on her pretty face approaching the camera, leaning in to kiss Jeff. She is introduced by her beauty. After he teases her by asking who she is, she presents herself as a fashion model. She goes through his apartment lighting one lamp for each word in her name, highlighting herself and her features, until the whole apartment is lit and she strikes a pose, inviting herself to be gazed upon. In *The Women Who Knew Too Much*, Tania Modleski agrees that the lights make Lisa an object of the gaze, but adds, "while the pose confirms the view of her as an exhibitionist, her confident nomination of herself reveals her to be extremely self-possessed – in contrast to the man who is known only by one of *his* three

names” (73). Lisa’s three names give her a sense of importance and grandeur, matched well with her appearance, which Jeff lacks. Lisa exudes confidence, which seems to be centered on her appearance and her subsequent success based on appearances. Her initial introduction with its overwhelming beauty suggests that she could be a femme fatale, but her blind devotion of Jeff and rejection of other men prove that she only wants his gaze.



Figure 6: Illuminating herself

Her invitation to be gazed upon is further emphasized by her placement in the frame. In Lawrence Howe’s “Through the Looking Glass: Reflexivity, Reciprocity, and Defenestration in Hitchcock’s *Rear Window*,” Howe notes that Lisa’s head is perfectly aligned with a picture frame on the wall “as if her own portrait were held in this frame. This is purposefully suggestive because it is precisely the framing of Lisa that attracts Jeff to her as an object of desire. But her attempt to draw him into the frame... is the consequential risk that he persistently avoids” (20). This metaphor reflects Jeff’s preoccupation with distancing himself from people and relationships thus he enjoys watching the people across the courtyard because he does not have to interact with them. By the same logic, Lisa is safer to be looked at than interacted with. In her introduction, she is only inviting others to gaze upon her: the issues between her and Jeff have not been revealed yet. Her personal introduction ends with a description of the dress she is wearing, twirling to show the whole dress, linking her identity and her fashion as inseparable. Her beautiful entrance and dress come as a stark contrast to Jeff who displays his distaste and

confusion with fashion immediately, balking at the price of her dress and the thought that people would buy it. This introduction to Lisa's character establishes the dichotomy between her and Jeff.

Even though Jeff is set up as tough and stern compared to Lisa's beauty and grace, Lisa gains power over him since he is the physically weaker of the two. Jeff's confinement to a wheelchair takes away his ability to assert his dominance. Before Lisa gets interested in the murder case, she physically restrains him from going back to look at the window after first moving him away. During this scene however, she is angry at his obsession with watching his neighbors and overpowers him in one of the few displays of her dominance in the film. In their article, "Hitchcock's *Rear Window*: Reflexivity and the Critique of Voyeurism," Robert Stam and Roberta Pearson argue that this act is her forcing Jeff to choose between observing his neighbors from afar or being present with her. They write, "Jeff prefers his thrills to be vicarious...The tension ...takes the form of a physical tussle concerning the direction in which Jeff's wheelchair will face: will it face out the window toward Miss Torso, and metaphorically the cinema, or will it face toward the apartment, Lisa, and 'reality'" (Stam and Pearson 198). Before she gets involved, she sees his focus on the activity outside of the window as disinterest in her. She attempts to seduce him and between kisses he asks her questions about murder and cutting up people. This physical outburst shows her final frustration and exerting of power over him before she enters his world of murder and suspense.

Lisa entering the intrigue is a subject of debate for critics, whether she does it because she wants to solve the murder or to just please Jeff. She does not automatically join Jeff in his crusade; they actually have a fight when he first tells her his ideas. Wood argues that Lisa has ulterior motives, saying, "she does it, obviously to demonstrate these [virtues he can appreciate]

to him, to make him see, not from any abstract desire for justice” (104). This critique falls short when the scene when Jeff tells her about his theories is examined. It is the only time during the movie that Lisa physically lashes out at Jeff and overpowers him. She refuses to listen to him at first, waiting to make the decision for herself, showing that she thinks independently and does not blindly follow him. Howe writes, “she doesn’t simply fold but, instead, becomes a partner, first, as an observer and interpreter of the clues they piece together from what’s seen and not seen, and later, as the kind of active investigator that Jeff cannot become” (24). This critique fits in better with the scene in the movie. Lisa is first extremely angry, refusing to listen to anything, and thinking Jeff’s obsession with the murder across the way is a reflection of Jeff’s disinterest in her rather than of any validity. She is trying to seduce him and draw his attention to her, and he will not yield from his murder mystery. She reacts with anger because of her frustration at his lack of interest in her, as well as his obsession with murder and spying. Jeff gives all of his evidence, and Lisa just gives logical explanations for what he is seeing, much like Doyle does later. She points out all of the flaws in his argument. While Jeff is giggling about why the newlyweds next door have their shades down, Lisa notices something in Thorwald’s apartment. Her gaze is transfixed and she begins to look scared. Thorwald is tying up a trunk with heavy rope in front of his wife’s bed, which he has stripped down and rolled up the mattress. While this is not a smoking gun for Thorwald, Lisa’s interest is piqued by this odd behavior. She asks Jeff to tell her everything he knows, allowing him to have the dominant hand in the relationship by acknowledging his authority in this situation.

The film plays on patriarchal expectations by comparing Jeff and Lisa to the Thorwalds, as Jeff mirrors Mrs. Thorwald and Lisa, Mr. Thorwald. Jeff and Mrs. Thorwald, both invalids, need to have everything brought to them by their doting partners. They are also similar in their

resentment. Mrs. Thorwald laughs at the flower her husband tries to give her, while Jeff is exasperated at the perfection of Lisa's dinner. Before Thorwald is suspected of murder, his character incites a lot of sympathy. Since the cause of his wife's illness is unknown, and it does seem that he tries hard to help make her more comfortable, it is difficult not to feel pity for him when she rejects him, just as it is hard not to pity Lisa when Jeff rejects her.

Lisa mimics Thorwald's role as the caregiver. Her life centers on Jeff's wheelchair, just as the activity of the Thorwalds circles around Mrs. Thorwald's bed. Although none of Mrs. Thorwald's insults or naggings to Mr. Thorwald can be heard, she appears to be crueler to Mr. Thorwald than Jeff is to Lisa. Since the Thorwalds have to be watched from across the courtyard, all of their actions are dramatized and exaggerated to get the same effect as one of Jeff's hurtful comments towards Lisa. Jeff and Mrs. Thorwald both mock their partners, underestimating their value and helpfulness. Whereas Lisa will not give up on Jeff, Mr. Thorwald gets pushed too far and wants to be free of his wife.

The moment when Thorwald gets pushed too far could be when his wife gets out of bed to laugh at him. This occurs when their dinner scene corresponds with Jeff and Lisa's. Both Lisa and Thorwald have gone out of their way to prepare a lovely dinner for their significant other, only to have it scoffed at. Mrs. Thorwald goes so far as to throw the flower her husband has brought for her and he leaves the room. He calls someone and Mrs. Thorwald gets out of her bed to harass him further. This is an important distinction that hurts the parallels set up between the two couples. Jeff cannot get up even when his life depends upon it, but Mrs. Thorwald is clearly very strong. She gets out of bed to mock her husband further about whoever he is on the phone with. Thorwald is clearly angered in a way that Lisa tries to refrain from doing. She more often takes Jeff's insults silently rather than responding. She lacks the anger and the constitution to

hurt Jeff back. When Jeff and Lisa are reflected in these characters it is to an extreme. Lisa could never lash out at Jeff, much less kill him, and remains the doting partner trying to stand by him. Jeff lacks the power of Mrs. Thorwald; he is truly confined to his chair and cannot get out to antagonize Lisa further, nor would he want to be as cruel as Mrs. Thorwald.

Like Mrs. Thorwald, Jeff finds fault in Lisa's dinner, and many other faults in Lisa as well. His demeaning attitude and insults keep her spirit broken and he gains the upper hand in the relationship and asserts his patriarchal dominance through emotional manipulation. One easily attackable aspect of Lisa's life is her involvement with fashion. Jeff's complete lack of interest and respect for the topic displays his distaste. Modleski examines fashion's larger role in patriarchal society, "if, on the one hand, woman's concern with fashion quite obviously serves patriarchal interests, on the other hand, this very concern is often denigrated and ridiculed by men ... they are first assigned a restricted place in patriarchy and then condemned for occupying it" (73). Lisa suffers from this double standard by Jeff. Even though she is extremely successful at her job, showing extreme competence and business savvy, since it is within fashion, he will never see her as capable in his masculine world.

Besides being hindered by her occupation in fashion by Jeff's insult, Lisa also reinforces patriarchy from within by expressing her desire to be controlled by patriarchy by playing the role of a wife. Although she has her independence and a successful life, she craves the patriarchal security of being a submissive wife. Marriage is a weakness for Lisa, something she wants very much with Jeff. The two argue about marriage throughout the film. Their beliefs on marriage fall along gender lines. Lisa, the woman, stresses marriage, while Jeff, the man, sees it as surrendering his freedom. While talking to his photo editor Gunnison, he threatens to do "something drastic" because of the maddening boredom he has suffered from his cast-induced

paralysis and get married. He equates marriage with a last resort of desperation. This conversation is before the viewers have been introduced to Lisa, so nothing is known about the woman that Jeff would deign to marry out of boredom. There is a lack of background information presented on Jeff and Lisa. The audience does not know anything about their relationship, especially why Lisa would want to marry Jeff so badly. His behavior in the beginning of this film does not lead to the conclusion that he would be a suitable husband for her. He comes close to insulting her every time she brings up marriage, even though the pain can be clearly seen on her face, and he makes outrageous claims about marriage and happiness, such as hypothesizing that the songwriter in the complex lives alone because he had such an unhappy marriage.

Robin Wood argues that instead of just not wanting to marry Lisa, Jeff actually wants to break up with her. Wood writes, "Lisa, who wants to marry him, is becoming very pressing. He, consequently, is trying to break with her; whenever the question of marriage crops up, his leg itches under the plaster, he feels an uncontrollable urge to scratch" (101). Jeff mentions to Stella that breaking up would be the honest thing to do, although he does not mention breaking up to Lisa, just that he does not want to get married. The one scene when she threatens to leave him, he becomes extremely worried that she is breaking up with him and keeps asking when he will see her again. This desperation goes against Wood's argument; however, Wood continues his assertion that Jeff wants to be rid of Lisa since he chooses only to watch windows that reflect his belief in the failures and confines of marriage. Wood says, "Each apartment offers a variation on the man-woman relationship or the intolerable loneliness resulting from its absence" (102). Even when comparing scenes in the windows with Lisa, they have very different interpretations, showing the fundamental differences in their viewpoints.

These differences in expectations between Jeff and Lisa are emphasized in their opening dialogue and their following relationship development. During their first conversation, Lisa's role is solidified and she spends the rest of the film trying to escape it. She provides nourishment for Jeff, yet the meal she brings is too "perfect" for his liking. She describes her day in great detail to him, but from his disinterested reaction and teasing, it is obvious that he does not deem her work important. Lisa could also provide Jeff a steady photography job in the fashion industry, which he scoffs at and makes absurd claims about its potential failure. Although they are both jobs involving photography, they represent different worlds and different sides of the camera. She can give him so much stability in the world of fashion, but since it is not in his desired world of travel and adventure, he does not take her seriously and calls her offers nonsense. After Lisa presents Jeff his dinner, the scene cuts forward to the aftermath of an argument about their two worlds. Jeff is unwilling to join Lisa's world and because she has not yet earned his respect of her abilities, he will not invite her into his. Lisa exclaims, "I can't fit in here, you can't fit in there. According to you, people should be born, live, and die on the same spot!" This frustrated accusation sets up Lisa's goal for the rest of the movie: she has to figure out a way to prove herself in Jeff's world so that he will accept her.

Jeff's main complaint with Lisa is her perfection. He says this to her directly about the dinner, but also to Stella, his nurse, when she suggests that only a fool would pass up marrying Lisa. After Stella suggests that any man with a pulse would be eager to marry Lisa, she asks him for his complaints about her. He replies that she is "too perfect. Too beautiful, too talented, too sophisticated, too everything, but what I want." He sees her perfection as an insurmountable opposition to his gritty travelling photographer lifestyle. Modleski argues that there may be a psychological explanation behind his fear of Lisa's perfection. She explains, "there is a certain

psychological plausibility in Jeff's fear of Lisa's 'perfection' – a fear that is related to man's fear of women's difference and his suspicion that they may not, after all, be mutilated (imperfect) man" (72). This claim is supported by the film's emphasis on Jeff's symbolic impotence. He cannot do anything for himself, not even protect the woman he loves. In the face of his limitations, Lisa's "perfections" must seem all the more overwhelming, becoming something to scorn.

As they try to sort out their own relationship issues, Jeff and Lisa try to compare Lisa to the other women in the apartments, namely Miss Torso and Miss Lonelyhearts. From these parallels, it seems that the only options for Lisa are either to be promiscuous or be an old maid. Jeff sees Lisa as Miss Torso, a woman who captivates men and entertains endlessly, which he tells her. Obviously, this is a cruel comparison to make to a woman who is head over heels in love and ready to marry him. Together, they observe Miss Torso holding a party in her apartment and see the scene completely differently. Jeff sees her as the puppet-master, toying with each of the men and clearly in control of the situation, while Lisa sees her as helpless and a victim to these men doing what is necessary to survive. Lisa projects feelings onto Miss Torso based on her own. She assures Jeff that Miss Torso does not love any of the men at her party, and when he asks how she knows that she replies "you said it resembled my apartment, didn't you?" showing Jeff that she only wants him even if other men surround her. In the ending scene when things are being resolved, Miss Torso's boyfriend Stanley returns from the war much to her delight confirming Lisa's interpretation.

The two women, Miss Torso and Lisa, are also linked visually through scene composition and fashion. When Lisa is arguing with Jeff about his obsession with voyeurism, he turns to watch Miss Torso in her window. Fawell writes,

The chief reference point in this scene has to be Miss Torso ... who is dressed in a frothy black teddy that seems to be cut of the same material as Lisa's dress. Ironically, it is Miss Torso at whom Jeff gazes, abstractly, after Lisa has given up trying to seduce him, and stares at him accusingly from the other side of the couch. The suggestion is that as black and lacy as Lisa is she cannot compete with the even blacker and lacier fantasy interest across the street. (*Fashion Dreams* 281)

Lisa is reflected visually in the women across the courtyard, although Jeff seems to take more interest in them than her. Jeff links her the most closely to Miss Torso, often inaccurately. Jeff focuses on Miss Torso's outward appearance and apparent ease with men, and connects that to Lisa's beauty and grace. Even though there are these connections between the two women, there are just as many references to Lisa's similarity with Miss Lonelyhearts.

Lisa more accurately compares herself to Miss Lonelyhearts, who cannot find the companionship she longs for until the end of the film. Although Lisa does not have invisible suitors, she is constantly rejected by the object of her affection, feeling just as lonely as Miss Lonelyhearts. After watching Miss Lonelyhearts toast an imaginary companion, Jeff declares that being alone is something Lisa will never have to worry about. She asks if he can see into her apartment too to know that for certain. Lisa's discomfort when Jeff compares the two apartments as well as her sadness for Miss Lonelyhearts suggests a deep empathy. Besides Lisa's empathy, the film also links the two of them visually. John Fawell's article, "Fashion Dreams: Hitchcock, Women, and Lisa Fremont," describes Hitchcock's process of linking the two women, "he was careful not to color anything else across the way green so that Miss Lonelyhearts's emerald green outfits would stand out more clearly. He matched Miss Lonelyhearts's green dress the night she goes out to brave the singles scene with the heroine, Lisa Fremont's light green suit, so the viewer would unconsciously link the two" (277). Their connection works without words. The audience can link them visually by the two dresses, but they are also linked emotionally. Their sadness at not having someone who loves them can be seen in both of their eyes. Their

similarities become even more defined when Jeff makes jokes at Lisa's expense, showing just how one-sided their relationship is. Lisa might as well be Miss Lonelyhearts, preparing for an invisible suitor, since Jeff never gives her any positive feedback about what she does for him. Since the film uses only diegetic music, they are also linked by song when Miss Lonelyhearts brings home a male suitor. While Jeff turns away out of embarrassment, Lisa watches her closely. The song playing from the composer's apartment is "Mona Lisa" and while Miss Lonelyhearts is being forced upon by her suitor and Lisa is watching, the lyrics are "is it only because you're lonely, Mona Lisa" (Modleski 76). This song links them and gives an explanation for the things that they may do out of loneliness. Although Miss Torso and Miss Lonelyhearts may be the most obvious reflections of Lisa because Jeff and Lisa watch and analyze them so closely, they are not the only reflections of Lisa in the courtyard.

Lisa and Jeff's relationship can be compared to the Thorwalds along gender lines. When on the phone with his editor, Jeff talks about the horror of marriage while looking at the Thorwalds. He describes the banality of married life and his dread of having a wife to nag him. While he is saying this, Mrs. Thorwald is bothering her husband. During this scene, they embody Jeff's fears about marriage and he sees himself as Thorwald, a man who works hard all day and then is nagged as soon as he gets home. Drawing this comparison between himself and Thorwald causes Lisa to be linked with Mrs. Thorwald. This is before Lisa is introduced in the film, but it is assumed that she pesters Jeff, or at least will when she marries him.

Lisa and Mrs. Thorwald can be connected in appearance. Mrs. Thorwald looks like an extremely strong and opinionated woman, despite whatever condition has rendered her an invalid. She may be crueler and more nagging than Lisa, but it is clear that she does not let her husband get away with anything, similar to Lisa trying to persuade Jeff to agree with her. Fawell

suggests in "Fashion Dreams" that Lisa's nightgown and Mrs. Thorwald's negligee offers another connection between them. He writes, "her negligee is a dead-ringer for the one we have seen, from a distance, the murder victim, Mrs. Thorwald wear. Hitchcock made Mrs. Thorwald physically a double for Lisa to emphasize the parallel between Jeff's desire to get rid of Lisa and the murderer Thorwald's desire to get rid of Mrs. Thorwald" (281). Although it is not certain that Jeff wants to get rid of Lisa, during their fight about the future, he does not mention breaking up but just a desire to keep things "status quo." He may see her as a temporary nuisance that he wishes would stop bothering him at times, but his fear at her leaving shows that he is not ready to lose her completely. The Thorwalds' relationship could be a warning for Lisa, that she must not push Jeff too far before he snaps. It is doubtful that he would ever kill her, but he lashes out by verbally abusing her and he could break up with her. The Thorwalds could also be seen as the opposite of Jeff and Lisa, because Jeff and Lisa's relationship survives in the end. Lisa may nag, but she lacks the malicious intent seen in Thorwald's wife. Jeff may dread discussions about their future and marrying Lisa, but when given the opportunity to let her walk away, he does not take it. The Thorwalds can be seen as an extreme version of Jeff and Lisa, instead of a direct parallel, and one that is not likely to happen.

The murder across the courtyard is what helps Jeff move past his fears of commitment and unifies them. Even though it is initially Jeff's obsession to watch Thorwald, once Lisa expresses an interest in it, he gladly brings her into the intrigue. In order to prove herself marriageable, Lisa must demonstrate her capability in the man's world of intrigue and suspense with the tools of femininity that she possesses. Lisa's crossover into his world of adventure changes Jeff's opinions of her. Modleski states, "significantly, he becomes erotically attracted to her only when she begins to corroborate his interpretation of the world around him" (79). His

behavior toward her evolves. First, he is simply eager to share what he knows with her. As she starts becoming increasingly involved and adds her own hypotheses, he becomes enamored with her. After she delivers Jeff's letter to Thorwald, demanding to know what he did with his wife, Lisa comes back to Jeff's apartment and Jeff is leaning over the side of his wheelchair looking at her starry-eyed, a look that has not been seen from him before. Now that she is involved in one of his dangerous adventures, he starts to respect her and take her more seriously.

Even though she becomes involved in the murder investigation, her femininity is present. Lisa brings what she knows into the investigation, her feminine intuition and fashion. Fashion is a very important part of Lisa, and it becomes even more of a contrast to the macabre around her. Modleski writes, "Lisa's exquisite costumes give her the appearance of an alien presence in Jeff's milieu, more strange and marvelous than the various exotic wonders he has encountered in his travels" (73). Lisa may be digging up the ground and climbing through windows, but she is still impeccably dressed, creating an even greater disparity between her actions and her appearance. Her fashion is also importantly visually in the scenes to create a dichotomy between her and Jeff. Fawell describes Hitchcock's process by saying, "Hitchcock has Lisa parade around in the latest fashions not only for the sake of her elegance... but to bring out certain cruel and immature tendencies in Jeff, who is afraid of committing to Lisa and who rationalizes his fear by attacks on her style and way of expressing herself" (*Fashion Dreams* 279). Her beautiful costumes stand out even more against Jeff's bland pairs of pajamas, his outfit for the entire film, further emphasizing the difference between them, between her beauty and his dullness.

Even though Jeff and Lisa seem to approach the investigation in different ways, feminine intuition solves the case for both of them, even if Detective Doyle does not agree. Lisa asks Jeff to tell her all the things he has seen in the apartment. When he mentions that Thorwald made

phone calls while looking through his wife's jewelry and purse, Lisa knows his wife must be dead. She explains thoroughly to Jeff that no woman would treat her things like that. She elaborates,

A woman has a favorite handbag – it always hangs on her bedpost where she can get at it. Then she takes a trip and leaves it behind. Why? .... And the jewelry! Women don't keep all their jewelry in a purse, all tangled, getting scratched and twisted up. ... And they don't leave it behind them. A woman going anywhere but the hospital would always take makeup, perfume, and jewelry.

Since Mrs. Thorwald has left behind her things, which Lisa would not do, Lisa concludes that it is also something Mrs. Thorwald would not willingly do. Modleski writes, "Lisa is able to provide the missing evidence because she claims a special knowledge of women that men lack: the knowledge, in this case, that no woman would go on a trip and leave behind her purse and her wedding ring" (77). Since Lisa is a woman, she feels that she can understand Mrs. Thorwald and her behavior. Since Mrs. Thorwald's behavior does not match what Lisa, an ideal woman, would do, there must be something out of the ordinary. Even though Jeff and Lisa believe they have it figured out, when they present their theories to Detective Doyle, he scoffs at the idea of feminine intuition. He snaps at Lisa, "Look, Miss Fremont. That feminine intuition stuff sells magazines, but in real life, it's still a fairy tale. I don't know how many wasted years I've spent running down leads based on female intuition." He believes feminine intuition to be a lack of logical reasoning, a traditional patriarchal view. Since fashion does not hold as much importance for men, Doyle cannot understand the significance of jewelry and a purse being left behind or value it as highly as Lisa does. He cannot acknowledge that an alternate perspective from his male view may be correct.

In another feminine attempt to fit into a masculine world, Lisa tries to prove her resourcefulness to Jeff by packing an overnight suitcase as small as a purse. Even though she has

packed extremely light, the things she packed are a silk nightgown and slippers. Jeff's challenge is to live for a week out of one suitcase and Lisa's rebuttal is to live overnight out of one suitcase. Fawell explains, "Lisa mocks Jeff by following through on his orders, but on her own terms ('I bet yours isn't this small.')

She trims herself down to one bag, but a bag specifically tailored to her view of life" (*Fashion Dreams* 281). Although she declares that it is much smaller than any of Jeff's suitcases, it is still a feminized way of packing. She has no focus on the essentials, and although she is making strides into Jeff's world, she still has much to learn.

Jeff's admiration for her swells as she invades Thorwald's apartment to search for evidence. The evidence she collects is Mrs. Thorwald's wedding ring, connecting her to Mrs. Thorwald and proving her resourcefulness to Jeff. Marriage has been such a point of contention for them, and she appears victorious over both Jeff and Thorwald by getting the ring. At first, when Thorwald discovers Lisa, Jeff is castrated by his inability to protect her. He is trapped in his chair across the courtyard, and cannot save Lisa from Thorwald. He fails his patriarchal male role as the provider of protection and safety. However, Lisa's ability to work her way out of the situation impresses him further. She allows herself to be arrested because that is the safest place for her. When Detective Doyle calls for Jeff, he coos "boy, you should have seen her!" before recounting everything she accomplished by going into Thorwald's apartment. He is clearly very proud of her ingenuity and her bravery in the face the danger. He begins to accept her as a legitimate marriage prospect because she is escaping her mold of fearful fashion-dominated woman and getting her hands dirty while investigating the murder. Unfortunately, in showing her acquired ring to Jeff she gives away Jeff's location to Thorwald. The wedding band proves to be the doomed object he fears, and his life is nearly destroyed by marriage in a way he never expected.

Some critics of the movie have argued that the moment when Lisa enters Thorwald's apartment is the first time Jeff begins to respect Lisa, rather than earlier in the film. Robin Wood writes in his essay "Rear Window," "he comes to respect her for the courage and initiative (virtues he can appreciate) which he didn't know she possessed" (104). Wood's reading of the couple is extremely pessimistic. Since this scene is so late in the film, Wood argues that Jeff has not cared for her for the majority of the film, while Jeff's actions speak differently. He shows concern when she threatens to leave him, admiration when she delivers the note to Thorwald, and his feelings towards her grow much earlier. Wood argues that until Lisa enters Thorwald's apartment that Jeff has a subconscious desire to murder Lisa, just as Thorwald had the ability to murder his wife. Wood also argues that Lisa only enters Thorwald's apartment to get Jeff's attention. The suggestion that Lisa puts herself in harm's way just to prove something to Jeff takes away the theme of vigilante justice that is an underlying subtext of the film. These two have managed to solve a murder without any help from the authorities and all they need is solid evidence. Jeff does not seem so narcissistic, or Lisa so desperate, to deserve Wood's reading that all actions are for his benefit. Regardless, Wood is correct in emphasizing the importance of this scene, but not that this scene displays the first distinct shift in their relationship.

Besides a murder investigation uniting Jeff and Lisa, Stella tries to push them into a patriarchal relationship. Stella is the insurance nurse assigned to Jeff after he breaks his leg in the photography accident. If Lisa is the movement of the action in the film, Stella is the voice of the film. She often insults Jeff and has one-liners that express what everyone is thinking but unwilling to say. She starts out as the voice of reason, skeptical at Jeff's behavior and quick to correct him. At first, she strongly chastises his voyeurism. In John Fawell's article "Torturing Women and Mocking Men: Hitchcock's *Rear Window*," he mentions Stella's merciless teasing.

He says, “Stella is disgusted with Jeff for not committing to Lisa and she rides him mercilessly for his lack of passion and virility from the minute she walks in his room” (95). She accuses him of having a hormone deficiency, being abnormal for not wanting to marry Lisa, and reminds him that any man would be ecstatic to marry Lisa. She is always searching for the truth behind his words and rejects the explanations he gives.

Stella can stand up for Lisa when Lisa cannot. When Lisa tries to stand up to Jeff on the issue of marriage, she appears nagging and obsessive. Stella can speak freely because she is secure in her marriage, which anchors her and gives her freedom of expression. Stella is the enforcer of patriarchy, wanting all couples to marry and be together forever with the man as the ruler of the house. Since both Stella and Lisa have marriage desires, it shows that this topic transcends class. She tries to bring him back to reality by reminding him how wonderful Lisa is and how any man would be lucky to have her. He would be marrying above his class, which shows that he just may be determined not to marry. When Jeff tells Stella that his reason for not wanting to marry Lisa is that she is too perfect for him, Stella has no qualms about telling him that he is crazy. When Jeff distances Lisa for the same reasons, she cannot defend herself since he refuses to listen to anything she says. Stella can tell him he is wrong, that his logic is flawed, and try to encourage him to rethink the situation. Since Stella is in the position of caretaker, she can give out advice freely.

Stella willingly gives out moral advice. She represents patriarchy’s interests by trying to set down controls and uphold the law in contrast to Jeff’s childishness. She chastises Jeff for looking out the window and laments what society has become. She scolds him for sleeping in his chair at night instead of his bed, and assumes it is because of his obsession with looking out the window. She can tell by his eyes and muscle tension that he has not been listening to her. She

openly tells him that what he does is wrong, something that Lisa will only do when she is extremely angry. Stella does not even pretend to entertain his theories. In his book *Hitchcock as Philosopher*, Robert Yanal argues that Stella functions as the ethicist. He writes, “Stella and Doyle represent the ethical attitude in the film: both frown on peeping, each is happily married, though each falls under the sway of the aesthetic (...Stella against her better judgment gets involved with peeping at Thorwald)” (157). With the exception of Doyle, she is the last to agree with Jeff’s opinion of the happenings in the other windows. It is not until after the dog is murdered, which is very late in the film, that she becomes involved with the intrigue. She has kept a discerning eye on the entire situation, and not until she has decided that there is enough evidence against Thorwald will she listen to Jeff’s theories, after which she has no hesitations about adding her own thoughts, which are often a bit crass. Stella is more of an equal to Jeff than Lisa, since she is already in a committed marriage and does not seek his approval in the same way.

After surviving a murder investigation and potentially taking Stella’s advice, the couple seemed relaxed and well in the end. The final scene shows some of Lisa’s scheming and inability to leave all of her other world behind. She has entered Jeff’s world and proven herself successful, placating him to her potential as a wife. Yet, when he is asleep, she sneaks in her fashion magazine to prove that she has not totally given up herself for him. This scene has been read in many different ways. The last scene contains no dialogue, and no signifying symbols of a change in their relationship such as an engagement ring. Hitchcock has created an ambiguous ending for the reader to interpret. Before showing Jeff and Lisa, he pans the courtyard showing resolution in the neighborhood, but both happy and unhappy relationships.

Robin Wood suggests that “None of the problems between them has been solved; but the fact of their engagement, and Jeffries’ symbolic back-to-window position, tells us they have been at least in a sense accepted” (106). However, the serenity of the scene and their concern for the other’s safety in the previous scenes with Thorwald suggest that there have been changes in their relationship, and that it is stronger than ever. Modleski interprets the scene with a reading based on gender roles, that Jeff remains castrated as a man, if not more so from his two broken legs and that Lisa becomes “the mirror image of the man – dressed in masculine clothes and reading a book of male adventure” (79). Her “masculine” clothes are a pink button-down shirt and a pair of nicely tailored jeans. The problem with this reading is that it does not address that Lisa may only reading the adventure novel to please Jeff, and when given the choice she reads her fashion magazine, suggesting that she is not attempting to cross over into masculinity but just to create a compromise in order to improve the likelihood of marriage.



Figure 7: Lisa's final look

John Fawell addresses these issues. He says, “the jeans and flannel shirt, like the Mark Cross handbag, suggest she is willing, to a point, to play Jeff’s game. But, the sharp crease in the jeans, the Vogue magazine she has hidden..., and her feline pose of self-satisfaction suggest she will do it according to her sense of style” (*Fashion Dreams* 282). Of the critics, Fawell seems to

capture the mood of the scene the best. He calls to attention the feminine touches that are still left in Lisa's appearance. She has not crossed completely into masculinity and cannot. Her femininity will always be present, as it is an integral part of her, and she has found a way to compromise with Jeff. She also cannot make the leap into full masculinity because it would overthrow the balance of patriarchal structure in their relationship. Lisa may have gained a lot of respect and power from Jeff, but she cannot want it so completely that she leaves her femininity behind in the process. She still has other perceived feminine weaknesses that give Jeff the upper hand in their relationship.

Like the other two heroines, Lisa must go through trials and tribulations before becoming an acceptable marriage partner. Each of the three women starts out with specific strengths, which translate as threats to patriarchal order. During high stakes adventures, they must learn how to control them, or have them taken away, before being able to take her place by a man. Beauty is one trait they all have in common. Hitchcock uses very beautiful women as his leading female roles, because their looks weaken the men around them. Each woman benefits and gains power from the gaze in a different way. Alicia uses her beauty and notoriety to rekindle an old flame and seduce men. Eve uses her sexuality as a weapon, to destroy men purposefully and leave them weak so that other men can defeat them. Lisa has made a career out of her appearance and being looked at, drawing in wealth and power. Each woman also gains power from knowledge. They either know secrets or have a unique perspective that makes them formidable in the situations they are placed into.

In three different ways, each film, *Notorious*, *North By Northwest*, and *Rear Window*, reaffirms patriarchy in the end, following the Classical Hollywood Narrative. The ending shot in each film shows the couple secure in their relationship with each other and safe from whatever

madness has been plaguing them. Each woman passes her patriarchal cleansing and can be accepted as a partner. By subduing the women, Hitchcock also cures the male protagonist of the crisis of masculinity at hand. Each of the heroes is temporarily diminished by their powerful counterpart while they are attempting to solve the plot crises. The addition of a powerful woman creates doubt and insecurity for the man. These women get dangerously close to emasculating their partners and overpowering them. However, before full emasculation, the balance of power is redistributed to allow the man to take control again. This undulation of power is expedited by the strenuous situations the couple is forced to go through, creating the need for security and structure in order to return to ordinary life. In Hitchcock's film world, women may threaten the patriarchal power structure, but they are never successful because of their inherent need for protection and love.

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