

Use of Archetypes in Alfred Hitchcock's Movies for Depiction of Women Character

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Abstract: *The article consists of analysis of use of Archetypes for the portrayal of women characters in Alfred Hitchcock's movies. Archetypes, are universal symbols, present as images in the collective unconscious, and are used extensively in movies, literature and poetry. The use of these archetypes helps in creating a subjective, fictional world as created in the movies, it also helps the director to paint the character he thought of, in the minds of the audience. A lot of archetypes, are used, to depict women across different media. Alfred Hitchcock in his movies usually depicts "The Mother" archetype, in his movies, as seen in "Psycho". The ones selected for the purpose of this research paper include, "The Female Hero", "The Femme Fatale" and "The Seeker" (The Seeker, is a general, gender neutral archetype, which has basic desire to find answers, and indulges in logically deducing various issues). Alfred Hitchcock, designs his characters, with utmost precision, in such a manner, that, he captured the public thought and opinion, his movies usually have ordinary characters, with humane fears, thoughts and desires, and while creating these characters he uses various Archetypes. Since already mentioned, Archetypes, are symbols and images embedded, in our unconscious thoughts, these archetypes appeal, instantly to the audience, and they can make quick associations with them. Therefore, Hitchcock, understands and uses the human psyche, and imparts his message, his story, his characters directly to the unconscious of the audience. The movies, analysed include, Spellbound, Vertigo, Strangers on a Train, Rope and Rebecca. The Archetypes involved include, The Female Hero, The Femme Fatale and The Seeker. The research is done on Analytical and Descriptive basis.*

1. Introduction

Alfred Hitchcock, a British film director, is known as the master of suspense. His mastery in story telling, suspense and the technical know how, make him one of the greatest in today's time. He has made more than 50 movies, which include, the critically much acclaimed, The Psycho, Vertigo, Strangers on a Train, Rope etc. Suspense in works of Hitchcock plays an important role; suspense is any kind of non-assurance and non-awareness of the result and anticipation (Qaderi, 2007, 71). The New Wave of French cinema knows him as a discoverer who guides to depth of metaphysical anxieties. He, amongst all film makers, probably is the most conscious individual in having knowledge of general psychology.

He made his debut, with the silent film, "The Pleasure Garden" in the year 1925, his film, "The Lodger: A story of the London Fog", released in 1927, and helped in the shaping of the thriller genre. His films, 39 Steps (1935) and The Lady Vanishes (1938) rank among "The Greatest British Films" of the 20th century.

Throughout his career he was nominated for several, academy awards, of which, The Academy Award for the Best Picture, for Rebecca, but this was just the first for the long journey which was to follow.

His, four directed films, "Rear Window (1954)", "Vertigo (1958)", "North by Northwest (1959)" and "Psycho (1960)" are today ranked, among, the greatest of the world.

In 1979, he received, "The Lifetime Achievement Award" and was also knighted in the same year. Alfred Hitchcock, had a signature type of, film making and some of the following plot devices were used, by him:

- Audience as Voyer
- Build up of Suspense is done through out.
- Audience are kept guessing.

- Mac Guffin: Mac Guffin, can simply be defined, as, a detail which, by inciting curiosity and desire, drives the plot and motivates the actions of characters.
- The Ordinary Person: Alfred Hitchcock, in his movies placed the ordinary man in extraordinary circumstances, which led to his famous, "Wrong man, Wrong time" storyline.
- Helpless Animals: In a lot of Hitchcock's movies, animals are shown helpless, in cages or even stuffed, this leaves the audience with the feeling of apprehension.

Archetypes, as a concept was introduced by Carl Jung, under his theory of analytical psychoanalysis. According to Jung, archetypes are archaic (or primordial) images which, "have existed since the remotest times." They have found expression in tribal lore, mythology, fairy tales, religious systems, and primitive art. These archetypes, are embedded within our collective unconscious, and are carried over the generation. Some archetypes, like, The Sun, The Moon, Mother Nature, exist since the beginning and are common to all humanity, others have evolved. These help in adaptation, evolution and some thinkers, call them, "racial memories." They form and direct the thinking process. Most of them are constant through cultures, for example, The Creator archetype, is huge, old, wise and has more than one head (Brahma of Hindu, Zeus of Greek, Ra in Egypt etc). We also see the Creator archetype actively being used in Animation, both Family Guy and Simpsons have used the same archetype.

Jung, called archetypes, "*Forms without content*" and the filmmakers, develop their content, surrounding these forms. There are various archetypes, The Self, The Shadow, The Mandala, The Persona, The Male Hero, The Female hero, Animus Anima, The Seeker etc.

Archetypes, are those cultural images and norms, which appear as motifs and images, and hence they then, get a specific content, which though differ from culture to culture but in essence are all the same. History, Culture, Personal Experience shape these representations.

Archetypes, are heavily, present in contemporary film and literature as they have a collective past and are the unconscious projections and images from the collective unconscious. These images then help in reaching a wide range of audience across cultures.

Since Archetypes are based on subjective experiences, they can usually be not studied systematically, and generalisations are usually made.

All in all, it can be said that these archetypes, are, universal patterns and though are effected by personal thought, can be represented in a generalised pattern across cultures, and is often done in movies, literature and poems.

2. Review of Literature

Varied and different sources comment differently, on the use of archetypes in Hitchcock's Movies and suspense movies in general. In the movie, *The Psycho*, Alfred Hitchcock, uses the archetype, of mother and the child to represent the relationship him and Norman Bates. (McCarthy, 1982).

The principal propaganda technique employed in both these films is the use of archetypes. The main characters in the films represent all such people in similar situations. Archetypes can be used in propaganda to accomplish a variety of purposes, including identification ("These people are just like you"), sympathy ("What has happened to these people is the same thing that has happened to you"), emulation ("You should act like these people, who are like you") and antagonism ("This person is hateful; therefore all such people are hateful"). (J. Justin Custainis and Deborah Jay DeSilva)

In *Bon Voyage*, archetypes have been used in such a way that they influence the situation of war, and are considered to be a propoganda, The British are amiable, but soft and slow witted (*The Innocent*), The Germans are devious, dangerous, ruthless, but ultimately beatable (*The Trickster*) and The members of the French Resistance are cautious, painstaking, brave, and effective in their struggle. (*The Hero*)

Similar, to this, political propoganda, is used in *Aventure Malgache*.

The historian Peter Bogdanovich has suggested, "It can be traced back to an incident which occurred when Hitchcock was about five years old. The director's father wanted to deter his son from pursuing a life of crime and so had his friend, a prison warden, lock young Alfred in a jail cell and walk away for several minutes. That lesson was effective but devastating. Understandably, Hitchcock was traumatized by that experience. No wonder, then, that as a film maker he should have been so obsessed with stories surrounding the wrongly accused." This incident can explain, how and why Alfred Hitchcock, plays so much around, "The wrongly accused Archetype."

The common archetypes, used to build around suspense include, The darker shades of The Parent archetype

(specifically mother), The Child Archetype, The Shadow, The Mandala etc.

According to Parinaz Falsafi, Mothers are shown as intrusive and domineering or at the very least batty as seen in *Rope*, *North by Northwest*, *Psycho* and *The Birds* etc. Mothers in Hitchcock movies hence, correspond with the negative attributes of the mother archetype.

In the research article, titled, "The Portrayal of Women: Alfred Hitchcock's Films", researcher, Joanna Ahti, says, "Women in Hitchcock films are portrayed as heroines however they typically also need saving themselves. Eve in *North by Northwest* is deceitful however she is also a hero. Lying is a part of her job as an agent and she is good at it. As the movie goes on, her voice and actions become more forceful and she even becomes aggressive as she stands up for herself. When Roger finds out that there is a plan to kill Eve he tries rescuing her. Eve has been strong throughout the film but the climax is when Eve needs Roger to save her from falling to her death off Mount Rushmore.

Strong and helpful women are seen again in *Rear Window*. Stella is an insurance company nurse who helps Jeffries. Even though it's her job to serve a man, her wit shines through when he asks her to make a sandwich for him to which she replies, "Yes, I will and I'll rub some common sense on it." Stella puts herself in danger while trying to help solve the mystery; as does Lisa who had previously said "It's always the girl who saves the man." Lisa does her own detective work and ends up face to face with a suspected killer. She uses her smarts to save herself. After she puts herself in danger, Jeffries looks at her in a new light. At one point, it is said to Jeffries "Feminine intuition sells magazines but all it is really is fairy tales." This seems to undermine women and what they're capable of doing. Lisa proves this to be false and is definitely a heroine in the film.

In *The Birds*, Melanie is portrayed as a young, educated, troublemaker who gets all of her money from her successful father. She seems more independent when we find out that she works at the airport and takes courses at Berkeley University. When a woman accuses her of being the evil cause behind the birds attacking, she stands up for herself and slaps the woman. Throughout the movie she takes on the role of caregiver and helps the children and Mitch's mother, Lydia. Hayworth is the main heroine in the film when she dies while saving Cathy, Mitch's sister. Mitch guides Cathy, Lydia and Melanie in an attempt to be their savior. Towards the end, Melanie investigates the house on her own, which was either naïve, fearless or foolish. When she is attacked Mitch comes to her rescue." Hence, pointing towards the hero like attitude of ladies shown in Hitchcock's movies, instead of the popular "Damsel in Distress archetype usually used.

Dreams and Symbolism, were an important part of the Hitchcockian movies, the dreams of the protagonist, gives certain clues and ties the audience to itself.

According to Bidisha, in an article published in, "The Guardian", she says, women in Hitchcock's movies, lie are

deceitful and carry within them undercurrent of sexual energies, (coinciding with the Femme Fatale archetype).

Alfred Hitchcock, in his movies, like , Strangers on the Train and Rope, also show the interplay of animus and anima. The men embrace their female sides, much better in these two films, rather than others.

According to Elizabeth Langenfeld, "In movies like Rebecca, the women are seen as society dames and in ways the patriarchal mentality of men would want to see them."

2.1 Research Question

- What are the common archetypes, used for depiction of women in Alfred Hitchcock's Movies ?
- How are the archetypes, reflected, through dresses, dialogues and character build up?

2.2 Hypothesis

Archetypes, "The Female Hero", "The Femme Fatale" and "The Seeker" are used for depiction of women, characters, in movies of Alfred Hitchcock, are developed in a way, that they are relatable. The character development is done, with elements, dialogues reactions etc. Also, Hitchcock, in his movies, uses characters with a variety of shades.

3. Methodology

The current research is done in Analytical and Descriptive manner. Qualitative Content analysis is done, through a code sheet. The analysis will be done on the following movies:

- Spellbound
- Vertigo
- Strangers on a Train
- Rope
- Rebecca

The experimental design, is exploratory in nature, the researcher attempts to explore the archetypes used for depiction of women characters. For this, dresses, dialogues and general outlook of the character in the story are considered. The purpose the character plays in the story is also considered.

Purposive Sampling is done. Spellbound and Rebecca, are movies from the purpose of women characters. Vertigo, Strangers on a Train and Rope are all psychological thrillers and have undercurrent of tension within them.

4. Observations

The Female Hero, as an archetype today, is best described by, Jordan B. Peterson, he describes it as, "The basic characteristic of a woman, to find a man, to save him and set him on the path of the righteousness."

- In the movie, Spellbound, Dr. Peterson, falls in love with, Dr. Edwardes, and it is later found that Dr. Edwardes is mentally disturbed and has the guilt complex that he has murdered someone (The real Dr. Edwardes) and is an imposter. Overwhelmed by her love for him she risks

her, career, and ventures out on a journey to protect him. While on the journey she saves him at various times, and they are both on the wanted list of the police as they are suspected of murder. She tells him, "Darling, no matter what, I will always fight for you wouldn't give up. I believe in you." This dialogue shows, how her character coincides with the Female Hero.

- In Vertigo, the female lead, both as Madeline and Judie (Judie, was an actor hired by Gavin, so that he could stage the murder of his own wife Madeline) try to save Scottie in their own ways. Madeline, tries to help Scottie in fighting his fear of heights and helps him beat loneliness simply by being there. As Judie, she goes to even further distance, when she tries to help him out of depression, changes herself for him, and even risks the chances of being caught for Murder, to save Scottie
- Strangers on a Train: Anne Morton, girlfriend of Guy Harris, depicts the archetype, Female Hero in this movie. When Guy, is falsely accused of the murder of his own wife, Miriam, Anne, without caring about her reputation about her family's reputation, goes after, Bruno, to protect Guy, and in the end buys him enough time to prove his innocence.
- Rope: In the movie, Rope there are aren't many female characters, and therefore, The Female Hero archetype is absent in the movie.
- Rebecca: Fontaine's character, the new Mrs. de Winter, is the typical representation of The Female Hero archetype, she saves a man, Mr. de Winter, from jumping off the cliff and then marries him. She enters his mansion and tries to make it home, and later even relieves him of his guilt of murdering his first wife, Rebecca de Winter.

The Femme Fatale, as an archetype is Naturally Seductive, has Vanity and lacks focus, this archetype can be compared to the image of Aphrodite, Venus etc. One of the key elements of this archetype is beauty.

- Spellbound: The first patient coming to Dr. Peterson, is Mary, who embodies the Femme Fatale Archetype, she is specifically looking for male doctors and carries with herself excessive sexual energy. She is very beautiful and wears a rather bold outfit, as compared to other women in the movie.
- Vertigo: Midge, Scottie's ex girlfriend, embodies, the Femme Fatale archetype, she lives with Scottie and when he drifts apart from her and is attracted towards, Madeline, she paints suggestive paintings, stalks him and tries her best to win him over by hook or crook.
- Strangers on a Train: Miriam, Guy's wife, is the Femme Fatale in this movie, she goes out with different men, flirts with them and her gestures are rather bolder than other female characters. She specifically tries to attract male attention.
- Rope: Even though Rope has limited female characters, we see Janet portray the Femme Fatale, when her past relationships with the guests at the party are discussed, she is beautiful and is prim and proper at the party. The house help, also, Phillip and Brandon's house help, tries to seek attention, of, Rupert Candell, who is the professor, of Phillip and Brandon. She is suggestive in her actions around him.

- Rebecca: Mrs. Edythe Van Hoper, is the Femme Fatale, when she tries to gain attention of Mr. de Winter, by repeatedly calling him and leaving messages for him. She, even leaves her carriage when he calls her, hence embodying the Femme Fatale.

The Seeker: This Archetype, carries with it a general air of curiosity and searches for things. They are naturally observant, and intelligent in their approach. They search and find meanings of things.

- Spellbound: Dr. Peterson, is The Seeker, as she searches for the truth and tries to prove Dr. Edwardes innocent. She connects the smallest of clues that come through dreams and memory gaps of Dr. Edwardes and find the truth.
- Vertigo: Madeline is The Seeker, as she tries to find her lost identity and peace. Midge is also shown as The Seeker, when she tries to understand the reasons for Scottie's absence.
- Strangers on a Train: Both Barbara Morton and Anne Morton are shown as seekers, as they try to figure out and find Miriam's murderer.
- Rope: Janet is, The Seeker, as she tries to find the reason of David's absence.
- Rebecca: The new Mrs. de Winter, is the seeker, as she seeks for love, her identity and belongingness within the household.

5. Conclusion

According, to Marley (2008) Alfred Hitchcock, is famous for persecuting his leading ladies and use them for, supportive roles rather than, the movie depending upon them. They worked as shadows, but, this changed with the direction of Rebecca, when the movie was told and depended on shoulders of the famous lead.

Many of Alfred Hitchcock's films contain a strong female lead. From Grace Kelly's Lisa in Rear Window to Ingrid Bergman's Alicia Huberman in Notorious, these actresses were characteristically assertive, intelligent and rarely allowed themselves to be sublimated by men.

Alfred Hitchcock is therefore in grey light, when it comes, to being a feminist. But, a common thing in his movies and the women characters is that they are intelligent. Their role might be supporting or the lead, they are all intelligent, women of substance and know what they want

His women characters are depicted by "The Female Hero" "The Femme Fatale" and "The Seeker" archetype. The Hypothesis therefore decided is accepted

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