

2001

"I am not like other people": Tippi Hedren, Vampires and Marnie

Victoria Amador
Western New Mexico University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/dracula-studies>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), and the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Amador, Victoria (2001) "I am not like other people": Tippi Hedren, Vampires and Marnie," *Journal of Dracula Studies*: Vol. 3: No. 1, Article 7.

DOI: 10.70013/19d8e9f0

Available at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/dracula-studies/vol3/iss1/7>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Research Commons at Kutztown University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Dracula Studies* by an authorized editor of Research Commons at Kutztown University. For more information, please contact czerny@kutztown.edu.

“I am not like other people”: Tippi Hedren, Vampires, and *Marnie*

Victoria Amador

[A professor of English at Western New Mexico University, Victoria Amador is presently on leave in Edinburgh, Scotland, completing a book on film actresses.]

In the trailer for the 1964 film *Marnie*, a series of questions flashed across the screen:

Is Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie*...a sex story? ... A mystery?... A detective story? ... A love story? ... Yes and more!

More indeed, because one can also argue that in its use of many vampiric/gothic motifs – in technical aspects, in themes and tropes, in the performances of the two leads, and in the “strange” (to use the Victorian code word for alternative sexuality) relationship between Hitchcock and his star Tippi Hedren – *Marnie* is the closest he comes in his *oeuvre* to a film about the undead.

Unfortunately Hitchcock was something of a snob about being considered a master of suspense rather than one of terror, or even horror. For the multiplicity of interpretations available in the vampire myth seems perfect, fertile territory for the filmmaker. Consider the possibilities. Hitchcock worked best when adapting literature for the screen; the glut of vampire literature offered literally thousands of readings of the genre. A Hitchcock leitmotif was the introduction of instability into stable environments; the vampire disrupts the safe world in which his victims live. Hitchcock highlighted the ambivalence of juxtapositions – blondes and brunettes, attractive villains, respectable spies, untrustworthy police; the essence of the vampire is his bringing to light our shadowed selves. And of course, Hitchcock delighted in repressed or unrequited sexuality, and the vampire represents sexuality in innumerable incarnations. Hitchcock and the vampire would have made a delicious match.

It's unfortunate too that Sean Connery, an actor whose popularity, sex appeal, and critical acclaim seem timeless, never assayed a vampire role in his career. Connery embodies ambivalence and danger in his on-and-off-screen personae. He is a Scottish nationalist who was knighted by Mrs Windsor. His James Bond killed the ladies with a variety of metaphorical smoking guns. He is a serious actor but also an action hero. Even his hairpieces frequently accentuate the vampiric widow's peak. Critic Raymond Durgnat described Connery's performance in *Marnie* as offered “in a manner as incisive as jaunty, with his saturnine, scimitar mouth” (352). A *Dracula* by Sean Connery offers a mouth-watering lost opportunity.

But upon consideration, perhaps Hitchcock and Connery came closer to creating a vampire movie than it seemed when they teamed for *Marnie*. The film was considered a lesser vehicle by many critics of the time; the *New York Times* called it “at once a fascinating study of a sexual relationship and the master's most disappointing film in years” (“Hitchcock's ‘Marnie’” 19.1). But opinion began to shift as early as 1966, led by Francois Truffaut in his landmark interviews with the director. Truffaut acknowledged some of the film's problems, yet he remarked, “I like *Marnie* very much ... because of the atmosphere, which is stifling, a little like a nightmare” (304). Now it is viewed variously as a “noble failure” (Brennan 80), as a stylistic Ur-Hitchcock production, as a study in obsession, and above all, as a film worth considerably more attention than it initially earned.

In that spirit, it is therefore fascinating to explore the film as a kind of un/subconscious homage to the vampire myth. This is a myth most appropriate to a film whose themes include fascination and domination; sexual repression; social class differentiations; fetishism; voyeurism; gender expectations; psychological exploration; religious fanaticism and skepticism; corruption of innocence; and physical, emotional and spiritual violence, to name but a few. Many traditional vampire motifs are employed in the film and echo both literary and cinematic productions concerning the Undead. These are best examined

by categories: the movie's technical values, its themes; the roles played by Sean Connery and Tippi Hedren, and the tortured relationship between Hitchcock and Hedren.

Plot Summary

Before we examine the specifics, let us recall the plot. Following his usual method, Hitchcock and screenwriter Jay Presson Allen loosely adapted their script from a novel, this time by British author Winston Graham. The novel differs from the film in its characters and in a hopeful but retributive ending (Marnie is caught). But the essence of a mysterious female who could appear in any vampire tale remains at the film's core.

Marnie is the tale of a disturbed woman (Tippi Hedren) who earns her living by stealing money from her employers. When we first see her, she's just stolen \$10,000 from one Mr Strutt (aptly named, played with Napoleonic malevolence by Martin Gabel). Changing her name, her wardrobe and her hair color, Marnie swoops down upon a variety of businesses; ingratiates herself in the best vampire style through her beauty and trustworthiness; and then disappears with the lifeblood of the business – cold cash.

Marnie makes a mistake, however, by taking a job with Rutland & Co. The company's president, Mark Rutland (Sean Connery), recognizes Marnie from her last position with Strutt's as "the brunette with the legs." Rutland's is a major client of Strutt's, and Mark happened to be onsite the day her robbery was discovered and remembered her. But she's beautiful, Mark's wife has died, he is a zoologist and a student of instinctive behavior, and so he keeps Marnie around, watching her and waiting for her to act and finally falling in love with her.

Marnie dates Mark briefly, but then commits her expected robbery and escapes. However, Mark finds her and blackmails her into marriage, saying, "It's either that or prison, old girl." Mark's sister-in-law, Lil Mannering (Diane Baker), is none too happy about the marriage as she has eyes for him, and suspects that there's more than meets the eye to this hasty nuptial. Marnie isn't happy about the wedding either, revealing she is terrified of sexual intimacy and haunted by nightmares. And Mark? He is a man with a mission, determined to discover the mystery behind Marnie and, not coincidentally, save their relationship. That mystery is finally revealed to be a childhood trauma, in which she murdered a sailor who had attacked her mother, a prostitute. Her memory of the event was repressed, but the repercussions continued manifesting themselves. After a traumatic primal experience at her mother's house which restores her consciousness of the tragedy, the possibility of a normal life for Marnie and Mark emerges.

Technical Values

Hitchcock was renowned for his painstaking attention to details, and *Marnie* is a peculiar mixture of brilliant visual statements and dreadful misfires. The latter are accounted for by such historians as Donald Spoto, who wrote both *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock* and *The Dark Side of Genius*, as the result of Hitchcock losing interest in the film after a series of events ended his relationship with his leading lady, Tippi Hedren. But the brilliant visual statements offer frightening motifs which resonate the vampire tradition.

Much of *Marnie* incorporates gothic elements which are obviously applicable to the vampire myth. The gothic had tremendous influence upon not just vampire literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Remember John Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," whose "eyes were wild" (l. 16) and who "hath ... in thrall" any number of "pale kings, and princes too" (37-39). Gothic influence continued through the Victorian era right up to the present. Of course Hitchcock, as an Edwardian youngster and perennially black-suited adult, had a healthy appreciation of the gothic tradition. In *Marnie*, the gothic elements exist as part of the romantic thriller tradition, but they also resonate a darker, bloodthirstier note.

1. **Storms** haunt Marnie. When typing in Mark's office during a violent thunderstorm she begs, "Stop the colors." The primary color is red, the color of blood. Even at the end of the film, Mark

takes Marnie to her mother's home for the flashback scene during a raging storm, and when the storm inside subsides, the storm outside ends. Marnie and Mark go home in sunshine, just as at the end of *Dracula*, after the monster has been dispatched, "The sun was right down upon the mountaintop, and the red gleams fell ... in rosy light" (Stoker 326).

2. **Mark's family home**, Wykwin, is a beautiful brick colonial on the outskirts of Philadelphia, but it also features red carpeting, a tall curved staircase, and a surrounding forest, isolating the characters. It marks the us/them, aristocratic/all others class distinctions in such vampire works as *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (consider Mina Harker the working girl versus Lucy Westenra the wealthy lady) and *The Vampyre* by John Polidori (in which the evil Lord Ruthven plays upon lessers because of his societal position). Yet despite its elegance, the house could easily be used as a Hammer horror film set. Its **furniture** is also heavy, formal, and Marnie's lonely marital bed comes complete with canopy and a headboard of tufted pink satin, reminiscent of a coffin.

3. **Marnie's family home** also bears the marks of a vampire's dwelling, for it is a dark, cramped tomb of a Baltimore brick row house next to the docks. When her mother, played by Louise Latham, descends the stairs after waking Marnie from yet another nightmare, the sound of her limp echoing into darkness combines with the angular shadows to reiterate the film's style, "which alternates between realism and the kind of expressionism found in ... *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. In that masterpiece of 1919, obviously painted sets and drops – distorted reflections of a psychic disorder – creat[e] an atmosphere of the fantastic, the unreal, the emotionally disorienting" (Spoto, Art 1st ed. 405). One expects Nosferatu to arise after Mama descends.

4. **Marnie's hair color** is blonde for most of the film – no surprise to anyone knowing of Hitchcock's fascination with icy heroines – but she also appears raven- and brown-haired. The dichotomy also appears in a number of vampire works. Consider the Hammer women of the late 50s and early 60s, for example: brunettes usually died first, and blondes lived. Her **hairstyles** also represent class considerations. Marnie must demonstrate to the world that she is a lady, just as Mina must write in her journal that she and Lucy may remain friends despite their different classes. Marnie's hair is always styled in a tight 60s Alexandre of Paris creation, except when she is experiencing a free or safe or sexual moment. When she rides her **black steed** through the woods, when she is assaulted by Connery, or at the film's end when she must confront her demons, her hair is flowing, loose, unfettered.

5. **Marnie's clothing** also represents the chic of the gothic/vampire heroine. Throughout the film, the designs by Edith Head portray Marnie as a minimalist chameleon in muted browns, grays, and greens. Almost always, there is a bow at her neck, and always a high neckline. While her wardrobe becomes more elegant after her marriage, the colors remain neutral, the collars high, her last costumes finishing in blacks against whites, reiterating the moral ambivalence of her character. Even the **suitcases** she uses at the film's beginning bear curious resemblances to satin-lined coffins.

6. **Marnie works**, echoing in her competence with office work and new technology (she says she even knows a little about computers) the competence of Mina Harker. Mina even mentions in *Dracula* that she hopes her efforts won't type her as a New Woman, the prototypical feminist of the Victorian era. She is the typical vampire heroine – a nice girl but a bit too feisty, who must be chastened.

7. Even **Marnie's teeth** are noticeable. As Mr Strutt describes her to the police after she's made off with almost ten thousand dollars, he remembers she had "good teeth." Van Helsing notices Mina's teeth as they transform under the vampire's power: "Her teeth are some sharper, and at times her eyes are more hard" (Stoker 281).

8. **Red and white** juxtapositions flood the screen, invoking thoughts of virginity and initiation, blood and flesh. Marnie replaces the red gladiolas in her mother's house with white mums. A drop of red ink soils her white blouse and she flees to the ladies' room. Even a jockey's shirt, white with red spots, causes her to retreat. When after a bad dream, Mark plays a word association game with Marnie, the game becomes a serious step towards her recovery by reiterating the white/red trope:

Mark: Needles.

Marnie: Pins.

Mark: Black.

Marnie: White!

Mark: (pointing his finger accusingly) Red!

Marnie: (weeping hysterically) White! White!

Speaking of needles and pins, **phallic symbols** are vital in traditionally heterosexual vampire stories. Marnie lacks a wooden stake, but she still wields violence that draws blood. When her horse Forio is injured during the foxhunt, she shoots him with a pistol. And in the flashback of the murder of the sailor, we learn that Marnie killed the creepy visitor (played by the 1960s' best creep, Bruce Dern) with a fireplace poker. Of course, we must not forget the most important phallic symbol in the film – Sean Connery, James Bond, Mark *Rut-land*.

9. **Bernard Herrmann's score** echoes his identifiable use of strings as the expression of both romance and terror. As in his other great scores for Hitchcock, Herrmann's music sometimes offers heartbreakingly spare melodic lines in minor keys, interspersing them with violin and cello jabs like storms, or the poundings of a poker.

Themes and Tropes

Many of Hitchcock's themes in *Marnie* are repeated in his other works, and not coincidentally, also appear in many vampire works. First of all, voyeurism plays an important part in the vampire film, and in some of Hitchcock's films, including *Rear Window*, *Vertigo* and *Psycho*. Of course, the entire act of watching a movie is an act of voyeurism "in its alignment with the fantasies of the voyeur" (Doane 216), like walking down a dark street and peering through a window into a lighted room. And the vampire is the watcher at the window, enacting our voyeuristic fantasies. In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey applies the pleasures of cinema to Freud's interpretation of scopophilia, and says cinema offers "circumstances in which looking itself is a source of pleasure, just as, in the reverse formation, there is pleasure in being looked at ... [it is] taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" (8). Of course, the vampire is known for its penetrating gaze, for its "eyes that seem to be burning" (Stoker 246), as it objectifies its victim and submerges it into its own vision. The vampire has also traditionally epitomized the "conflation ... of seeing/being seen with opposition male/female," according to feminist film critic Mary Ann Doane (216).

Consider, for example, the "first shot of *Marnie*. Its primary function is to arouse the spectator's curiosity/voyeurism," asserts Robin Wood. Tippi Hedren walks on a train platform away from the camera. At least we think it's she: "She has black hair, so it can't be Tippi Hedren; except that ... it may be dyed, so perhaps it **is** Tippi Hedren after all ... our chief desire is to see her face" (33). After he has "trapped" Marnie, Mark begins watching her with the fascination of one of his zoological experiments. Finally his studying of Marnie as a means to unlock her secrets/possess her virginity drives her to declare, "Stare – and that's what you do. You stare and stare and say you care but you're unfair." Marnie also watches her boss get the combination to the safe over and over, and Lil eavesdrops on Mark and Marnie from the window. Vampires are everywhere.

Another theme, the doppelganger, is intrinsic to the vampire myth, in that the ambivalence of morality/immorality provides one of the primary tensions of the myth. In her biography of Bram Stoker, Barbara Belford notes that "Stoker, like Wilde and Twain, found the doppelganger theme irresistible: the

unseen face in the mirror” (132). David J Skal in *Hollywood Gothic* reiterates the notion that again, in Stoker, “The theme of the divided self . . . was presented with a vengeance” (21). In Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*, his heroine Laura says in the last lines of the story, “to this hour the image of Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alterations – sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl; sometimes the writhing fiend I saw” (137).

Hitchcock too acknowledged this double-sided quality in *Marnie*. When he was speaking with Art Director Robert Boyle about his vision of *Marnie*, he said, “[I]t’s a leitmotif that goes through the film. . . . The contrast between the thievery and the way she was dressed . . . quite modestly, as a clerk, and so forth” (Gottleib 324). Throughout *Marnie*, then, we see comparisons between characters, and tensions within characters, which illuminate this notion of the double:

- a. The washerwoman and Marnie at Rutland’s during the robbery. We see Marnie robbing the safe on one side of the film frame while a woman scrubs floors on the other. The only thing separating the two is Marnie’s willingness to take from others. Without that, she might be scrubbing the same floor.
- b. Marnie and Jessie and Mama. Marnie is blonde, her mother is blonde, and her mother cares for a blonde girl named Jessie. Both Jessie and Marnie compete jealously for Mama’s attention, and when Mama brushes Jessie’s hair, she remarks, “Gosh, that kid and her hair. Puts me in mind of your hair when you was little, Marnie.” Or as Raymond Durnat put it, “Different figures, similar attitudes” (264).
- c. Marnie and her personae – that “Mary Marnie brown-haired blonde” as Lil calls her. She changes from Marion Holland to Mary Taylor to Margaret Edgar with the flip of a new social security card and a hair rinse.

Actress Janet Leigh commented about Hitchcock and his creation of her *Psycho* character, Marion Crane, “He’s always doing that split personality thing, because he always has shown that everyone has this split personality, and it’s the degree of the split that matters” (*Dial H*).

Dreams and trances provide another point of thematic comparison. The dream in vampire literature and film allows the victim to be victimized without guilt. It also allows the vampire’s control of the victim’s memory and emphasizes the concept of domination and power. Inevitably, whether in *Dracula* or in *Carmilla* when her victim Laura says, “I had a dream that night that was the beginning of a very strange agony” (102), the Undead’s chosen “beloved” seldom has full memory of the penetrative experience. Marnie has bad dreams. Throughout the film there is her repeated dream of a knocking three times, then cold, then leaving her bed like a sleepwalker. Lucy Westenra is thought to be sleepwalking again when Dracula lures her from her safe home: “Gradually she became more and more uneasy in her sleep, moaning and sighing occasionally . . . she did not realize all at once where she was” (Stoker 88-89). Lucy cannot remember the particulars of the dream, nor can Marnie, until the traumatic climax of the film.

Name changes are part of literary vampire lore as a way for vampires to camouflage themselves. For example, *Carmilla* is also known in her various incarnations as Mircalla and Millarca. Count Dracula, when he arrives in London, passes himself off as Count DeVille. Even in a rather campy horror film like *Son of Dracula*, Lon Chaney, Jr. is Count Alucard. Thus Marnie/Margaret/Mary/Peggy follows the tradition perfectly.

Vampires mock the iconography of Christianity even as they are defeated by it. Marnie is haunted by the contradiction of what she does for a living with her mother’s overt moralism. When she says to her mother, “Like the Bible says, ‘Money answereth all things,’” the ex-prostitute Baptist replies, “We don’t talk smart about the bible in this house, Missy.” When during their Freudian word association game Mark offers the word “water,” Marnie declaims in evangelical fashion, “And his tears shall wash away thy sins and make thee over again. Mother used to take me to church twice on Sundays.”

Love is another common theme. In a documentary about *Dracula* on the Arts and Entertainment network, Tina Rathbone, a member of The Vampyre Society, noted, “Vampires offer sex, death, and fancy costumes. Who could ask for more?” This is the essence of the vampire myth and the essence of *Marnie*. Marnie spends the entire film either repulsing or invoking love. To Mark, who has informed her that he’s forcing her into marriage because he loves her, she responds, “You don’t love me. I’m just something you’ve caught – trapped.” To her mother, however, who shies from Marnie’s touch, Marnie

plaintively asks, “Why don’t you love me, Mama? I’ve always wondered why you don’t.” This attraction/repulsion reminds one of the scene in *Dracula* when his three ironically named brides accuse the Count, “You yourself never loved; you never love!” (Stoker 43); “Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so?” (43) Dracula replies. In *Marnie*, love seems to exist only in the past, not the present.

And of course there is repressed sexuality. Strutt and Rutland have a curious rhyming ring. Strutt’s upset about the robbery because he couldn’t have Marnie; witness the detailed description for the cops that he offers. Mark is frustrated because Marnie screams at their wedding night, “I can’t! I can’t! If you touch me again, I’ll die!” Marnie is a case study of repressed sexuality, from her declaration that “I am not like other people” to Mark Rutland’s anger that she “cannot bear to be touched by a man – any man.” Screenwriter Jay Presson Allen noted, “Hitch was a very Edwardian fellow... He put lids on himself. To work out his repressions, he created a framework – his art. It was his way of legitimizing everything” (Spoto, *Art* 2nd ed. 472). The same could be said of virtually every vampire author until the mid-twentieth century. Of course, repressed female sexuality ties in with fear of female sexuality. Perhaps Hedren summarizes this connection best when she notes, “The female characters that Hitch would choose – he would take these women and try to tear them down, with basically the man’s control. She would not want to give in, and he would insist upon it” (*Dial H*).

The original screenwriter, Evan Hunter, was fired from the project because he fought with Hitchcock over the rape scene. Frustrated by spending several chaste nights during their honeymoon, Mark Rutland tears the modest Virgin Mary blue gown off Marnie, then encloses her with his bathrobe like Dracula with a cape, then kisses her, leaning her down upon the bed. The close-up of his eyes absolutely parallels the close-up of Lugosi’s eyes as he goes in for a kill in *Dracula*. Feminist critic Elaine Showalter has noted that both penetration of women by vampires, and the subsequent staking of the women after they become vampires, are obvious rape metaphors.

A charming villain has become a staple of vampire literature. As for *Marnie*, “You’ve got to make the villain the most charming, fascinating, complicated person in the movie,” says Jonathan Demme. “He had to be charming, attractive. If he weren’t he’d never get near one of his victims” (*Dial H*), said Hitchcock. And who is the villain? Is it Marnie the thief, or Mark the obsessive husband?

The Central Performances

Tippi Hedren is both predator and victim. Connery as Mark Rutland speaks about the “female of the species” as one of the most dangerous of predators, and of course it’s disturbing in vampire film and literature that women could be warm-blooded killers and innocent heroines. Throughout the film, there are echoes of the vampire bride and the virginal sacrifice in Hedren’s performance.

Costumer Edith Head puts her in neutral colors which emphasize her initial lack of identity, designing her last costumes to be white (the caped evening dress) or black (the cat burglar) or black and white (her hunting garb), all signs of ambivalence. Her name changes also reiterate the mysterious identity of the vampire, and her isolation and loneliness suggest both the vague histories of most vampires and the vulnerability of their victims. Also, in a direct reference to *Carmilla*, Marnie supports her poor old mother, and in that way she’s indirectly pimped by her mother like Carmilla by the mysterious woman who poses as her mother. Marnie’s hair color, her charm and her coolness further reiterate light/dark ambivalence. She works and is obviously competent, just as Mina Harker knows how to type and take shorthand. And while we admire these New Women, Marnie/Mina must be punished for entering the working world of men.

Sean Connery as Mark Rutland also represents the ambivalent pursuer and hapless victim because of his love for Marnie. In many ways, Mark Rutland embodies the vampire king. He finds Marnie after she robs his company through tracking a horse she liked – “Telepathy.” The close-ups of his kisses suggest the shameless voyeuristic interference of the vampire with his victim. Stoker’s description of the Count sounds like Connery: “His face was a strong – a very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose ... with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His

eyebrows were very massive.... The mouth ... was fixed and rather cruel-looking ... the lips['] ... remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality” (23-24). Also in the film, Connery’s Mark Rutland notes that his family marries/preys upon an heiress every other generation to keep the fortune. His honeymoon with Marnie occurs on a ship, and Mark attacks Marnie there like Dracula attacks the crew of the *Demeter*.

Mark is also a victim, however. He knows she’s “a cheat, a liar and a thief” but it’s his “misfortune” to have fallen in love with her, like Keats’ knight with “La Belle Dame Sans Merci.” He is Dr Van Helsing, trying to cure Mina and rid the world of the vampire’s curse. As Van Helsing says of Mina in the last line of Stoker’s novel, “some men so loved her, that they did dare much for her sake” (327). The same can be said of Mark Rutland.

Diane Baker’s Lil equals Lucy. The single spinster who wants Mark and should have been “married off” already. Cast against her starlet stereotype, Baker embodies the unwed holdout who doesn’t behave as passively as she should and who will be punished. What is the real evil in the novel? It is that the vampire eroticizes the women. The more Dracula is involved with them, the more erotic they become. Lil’s thwarted desire for Mark eroticizes his dead wife’s baby sister into action. Once again, Hitchcock and Edith Head speak volumes through the use of color. Lil always wears autumnal colors, bruised blood colors. At home, she dons an ice-blue kimono with a fang/v-shaped neckline. She wears blood-orange at the party where she betrays Marnie with Strutt. At the wedding, Marnie’s in beige and Lil in blood red velvet with high shawl collar, white skin. She also has the Hitchcockian brunette hair given to other nice but unfulfilled Hitchcock second-string heroines (think Suzanne Pleshette in *The Birds*). Yet despite her jealousy of Marnie, she is sympathetically protective of Mark – “I have absolutely no scruples ... I was waiting for you. I’m queer for liars.” He was married to her late sister Estelle, and Lil fell in love with him and wanted him. With typical Hitchcock ambivalence, we are in Marnie’s court, but we can understand Lil’s passion for the elusive, tormented Mark Rutland.

Hitchcock and Hedren, Dracula and Mina

Perhaps the eeriest vampire connection of all is the relationship between Tippi Hedren and Alfred Hitchcock. This has been documented thoroughly in many sources, and it is always offered with a mixture of pity and revulsion.

Hitchcock discovered Hedren when he was watching television with his wife, Alma Reville. He signed her to a seven-year contract, determined to create his ultimate star. This was particularly poignant in that Hitchcock had been planning to have Grace Kelly star in *Marnie* as her screen comeback. Kelly had to turn down the role due to the outrage of the Monegasques, however, and so he would create her doppelganger in Hedren.

The level of his obsession is chronicled most thoroughly in Donald Spoto’s *The Dark Side of Genius*, and some of its specifics are most appropriate to this discussion of parallels with the vampire myth. Her screen test included a shot for shot doppelganger duplication of the picnic scene featuring Kelly and Cary Grant from *To Catch a Thief* (452). He “was always staring at her” and directed her “down to the movement of an eye and every turn of my head” (456), as Hedren recalled. Hedren increasingly absorbed Hitchcock. His obsession reiterates the dream motif as well, Hitchcock telling Hedren he’d dreamed that she’d come to him and confessed her love for him. When Hedren said, “But it was a dream, Hitch ... just a dream” (472), it was the beginning of the end. The end came, in fact, when Hitchcock “attacked” her finally in her trailer. When she refused, he insisted he would ruin her, and “[f]rom that day forth he ... lost all interest in *Marnie*” (475-76). He never spoke directly to her again, dismissed the film in his conversations with Francois Truffaut, and it represented the end of his greatness. Although he made four films after this, none seemed to epitomize the perfection of the Hitchcock vision; the will to create had disappeared like a ghost with the morning light.

Closing thoughts

Hitchcock once said that his idea of perfect happiness was “a clear horizon.” We might say the same of the vampire myth. The woman’s purity is restored; the man’s manliness is restored; societal order is restored; the rain has stopped. *Marnie* ends with such a hopeful note, but as in all good vampire films, we know that the earth will rotate and the sun will again set. The sun set for Hitchcock and Hedren; it set after *Marnie*, the film that ended the great years of his filmmaking from 1951 to *The Birds* in 1963; it set upon Hedren’s acting career. But with that great ability to be reborn, *Marnie* is now receiving new critical appreciation, as is Hedren, as did Hitchcock before his death in 1980.

As Dracula explains to Jonathan Harker, “Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told” (Stoker 35). So too is the story of what Donald Spoto described as Hitchcock’s “last emotional statement on film” (Art, 1st ed. 340). Spoto also calls Hedren’s performance “one of the finely honed, multileveled displays of film acting of the 1960s” (341). The tale of Hitchcock and Hedren and Connery, of *Marnie* and of the vampire, continues to find new blood and new life in the new millennium.

Works Cited

- Alfred Hitchcock*. Narr Peter Graves. Perf Janet Leigh, Tippi Hedren, Ernest Lehman. A&E Biography, 1999.
- Belford, Barbara. *Bram Stoker*. New York: Knopf, 1996.
- Brennan, Simon. “Noble Failures.” *Premiere* (August 1998): 80-81.
- Dial H for Hitchcock: The Genius Behind the Showman*. Dir Ted Haimes. Narr. Kevin Spacey. Perf Tippi Hedren, Jonathan Demme, Joseph Stefano, Janet Leigh. Universal, 1999.
- Doane, Mary Ann. “Woman’s Stake: Filming the Female Body.” *Feminism and Film*. Ed E Ann Kaplan. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Dracula*. Narr Melvyn Bragg. Perf Winona Ryder, Leonard Wolf, Christopher Lee. A&E Biography, 1993.
- Durnat, Raymond. *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock*. London: Faber and Faber, 1974.
- Gottlieb, Sidney. *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews*. Berkeley: U California P, 1995.
- Graham, Winston. *Marnie*. London: Pan Books, 1997.
- “Hitchcock’s ‘Marnie,’ With Tippi Hedren and Sean Connery.” *The New York Times* 23 July 1964: 19.1.
- Keats, John. “La Belle Dame Sans Merci.” *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Gen. Ed. M.H. Abrams. 5th ed. Vol. 2. New York: Norton, 1986.
- Le Fanu, Sheridan. “Carmilla.” In *The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories*. Ed Alan Ryan. London: Penguin, 1998.
- Marnie*. Dir Alfred Hitchcock. Perf Tippi Hedren, Sean Connery, Diane Baker. Universal, 1964.
- Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *Screen* 16.3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18.
- Schindehette, Susan, et al. “A Man Called Connery.” *People* 18 December 1989: 57-62.
- Skal, David J. *Hollywood Gothic*. New York: Norton, 1990.
- Spoto, Donald. *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of His Motion Pictures*. 1st ed. New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1976.
- . *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of His Motion Pictures*. 2nd ed. New York: Anchor Books, 1992.
- . *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1993.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Eds. Nina Auerbach and David J Skal. New York: Norton, 1997.
- Truffaut, Francois, and Helen G Scott. *Hitchcock*. Rev. ed. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985.
- Wood, Robin. “Retrospective.” *A Hitchcock Reader*. Eds Marshall Deutelbaum and Leland Pogue. Ames: Iowa State UP, 1986.