It does not take a reader long to confirm a suspicion that the author of *Hitchcock’s Films*, British critic Robin Wood, wishes himself identified with the *politique des auteurs* as pursued by *Cahiers du Cinéma* in France and by *Movie* and *Motion* in his native England. In his thirty-six page introduction, Wood staunchly establishes his solidarity with the hitchcockians by defending Hawks’s *Rio Bravo*, digresses into a defensive attack on “the characteristic ‘Establishment’ line” (as followed by Penelope Houston and *Sight and Sound*), and tells us finally that he will concern his study with the five most recent Hitchcock films, as they represent “an unbroken chain of masterpieces and the highest reach of his art to date.”

The British films are dismissed entirely because they are “overshadowed by (Hitchcock’s) recent development,” yet *Marnie* is the subject of a labored, 29-page essay. Wood adumbrates the merits of the director’s early Hollywood work, then proceeds to the meat of his book. Besides *Marnie* (“one of Hitchcock’s richest, most fully achieved and mature masterpieces”), there are analytical essays on *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, *Psyche*, and *The Birds*. These are preceded by studies of *Strangers on a Train* and *Rear Window*, important, we are told, “in relation to Hitchcock’s oeuvre as a whole.”

When Wood advances his thesis, however, his book is often fascinating. He builds a strong case for the theory that Hitchcock’s films reveal a “therapeutic” theme, whereby “a character is cured of some weakness or obsession by indulging in it and living through the consequences.” With sometimes captivating (and unusually detailed) exposition, Wood proceeds to demonstrate how Hitchcock extends the “therapy” to the spectator. In watching *Rear Window*, for example, we actually do tend to identify with Jeffries through Hitchcock’s use of a standard filmic convention—the subjective shot, which imprisons both the protagonist and the audience within the confines of a single room, from which all of the action is viewed. As Jeffries spies on his neighbors, we find that we are indeed “spying with him, sharing his fascinated compulsive ‘Peeping-Tom-ism.’” And the long tracking shots in *Psycho* do serve to make us “see things we are afraid to see.” When Lila

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**HITCHCOCK’S FILMS**

By Robin Wood. (New York: Barnes, 1965)
goes into the Bates menage, her slow, determined exploration is rendered in subjective dolly shots which build almost unbearable suspense by putting us in her shoes. As Wood points out, we dread her entrance to the house; but, at the same time, we greatly desire it—if only to satisfy our morbid curiosity—because we want to be frightened, we want to see another murder. In such observations, the author has at least excelled in defining the nature, the exact nature, of the suspense in most of Hitchcock's films. Wood's conclusion seems to be that the director's approach is that of a twentieth-century moralist and that the suspense itself serves as our instructor, arousing within us as it does conflicting reactions to the predicaments of Hitchcock's protagonists.

—James Michael Martin
Alfred Hitchcock Hitchcock Film Classic Horror Movies Horror Stories Horror Films Scary Movies Good Movies Extreme Close Up Camera Shots. What It Is: Psycho Screenshots Why I Like It: It depicts prominent scenes within Alfred Hitchcock's 'Psycho' that suit the genre of 'suspense'. The camera shots used within the film made it stand out amongst other horror films, therefore making it unique and memorable. For example, extreme close ups are extensively used for effect. Strange Harbors. We rank and review all 52 Alfred Hitchcock movies in the director's 61 year career, from silent classics (The Pleasure Garden) to epic thrillers (Vertigo). The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956). Hitchcock's remake of his own 1934 mystery (see No. 24) isn't a bad film per se—it's a workmanlike version of his signature wrong-man scenario, with James Stewart playing a vacationing American doctor swept up in an assassination plot.