Vertigo

Thriller

This scene contains a lot of tension, and could be viewed independently to define the film as a thriller without seeing the rest of the film. The constructions of music and breakthrough use of camera work really build up the 'shock value'.

Genre

I didn't actively look at genre, but picked out two of the main genres this film falls into, which aren't usually seen to go hand in hand, and used them to inform much of my research.

Robin Wood

'There follows a sequence at the Mission of San Juan Baptista, culminating in Madeleine's suicide. Here, in the livery stable, amid the décor of the past, Scottie makes his last effort to explain the dream, to make it reality. ***The suicide itself has a shattering effect on the spectator which is by no means to be explained solely in terms of visual impact, strong as this is*** *– the bell tower, the unnerving "vertigo" shots down the stairwell, the body falling past the aperture then spread out lifeless on the roof below. On one level, again, we have Hitchcock capitalizing on audience expectation by abruptly defeating them: no one, I think, seeing Vertigo for the first time unprepared, thinks that Madeleine is going to die half way through.* ***She is the heroine of the romance****, the medium through which the escape wishes are to be fulfilled: we are prepared for the happy ending, or perhaps for the final grand tragedy, but not for this brutal midway rupture. But Madeline, as I have suggested, represents fulfilment on a deeper and more valid level than that normally offered by the Hollywood film: by this point in the film she has evoked in us all that longing for something beyond the daily reality which is so basic to human nature. We are in fact by this* ***time so thoroughly identified with Scottie that we share his shock****, and the resulting sense of bewildered desolation, in the most direct way, just as we share his sense of helplessness, even out of responsibility. We are stunned, the bottom is knocked out of the world, we cannot at all see where the film is going, what possible sequel this event can have: all is chaos. It is an effect that Hitchcock is to match two films later, in Psycho with the shower bath murder.'*

Camera Work

'The Vertigo Shot'

Romance

Romance is a key theme in the clip I was looking at, as it is pushing the relationship the film is focusing on to its limits, and appears to be ending it.

It also shows key ideas in Madeleine and Scottie's relationship.

Location

The location shows aspects of Madeleine and Scottie's characters. Madeleine: the entirety of her surroundings show historical context, spirituality and death. Scottie: the tower shows vertigo, fear and emasculation.

Music

The music at the start of the clip emulates epic romance, with swelling strings.

As it continues, when they are in the tower it becomes more and more tense.

Suicide

DEAD END

Tension

The use of a rapid succession of notes really builds tension, and works well with 'The Vertigo Shot'.

Women

What is Scotties relationship with the different women in his life?

Madeleine

The Majority of my paths or research appears to lead back to Madeleine.

Protagonists/Romantic Leads

James Stewart is not a typical romantic lead. He's sweet and slightly weedy, as opposed to macho.

The character of **Madeleine** is not a typical representation of a female, and is represented as something to be looked at in a more knowing way than most women in films. She has depth and personality, and isn't there purely for the male lead to have someone to romance.

Midge

For all the glamour and mysteriousness Madeleine represents, Midge represents simple homeliness.

Ideal Woman

Do Midge and Madeleine represent different interpretations of the 'ideal woman'?

Richard Allen

"**Madeleine is a fetish object for Scottie Ferguson** in a manner that is made explicit by the way in which, when he looses her, he reconstructs her image by using the body of one Judy Barton…"

Tania Modleski

'…the male character oscillates between a passive mode and an active mode, between a hypnotic and masochistic fascination with the woman's desire and **a sadistic attempt to gain control over her, to posses her.'**

Obsession

James Stewart

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

Mr Smith Goes to Washington (1939)

Scottie and Midge

Would Scottie and Midge work well as a couple?

Possessively

Key Points of possessive love

- Insecurities
- Lack of trust
- Fear
- Irrationality
- Pride
- Protection and preservation
- Demands, not requests

Emasculation

'The Representation of Gender in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*'

Clinton Adas

'Scottie's erotic obsession based on a castration anxiety'

Fetish

'Fetishizing the Fetish'

Matt Wray

No

Yes

Romantically

Key Points of romantic love

- Caring
- Respect
- Attachment
- Intimacy
- Affection
- Trust
- Commitment

Does Scottie Love Madeleine?

My research shows that in the theories I've looked at have identified two distinct kinds of love for couples in my opinion.

-Obsessive love.

-Romantic love.

LOVE

- Liking vs Loving
- Compassionate vs Passionate Love
- The Colour Wheel Model of Love
- The Triangular Theory of Love

Possession

'Possession and fear in relationships'

Patricia Williams

'The prideful person will never admit he is insecure.'

Scottie

Does Scottie feel insecure and emasculate by his vertigo?

Frank Capra

Director. Very different to Hitchcock.

Heart warming 'fluffy' films as opposed to intense psychological thrillers.