Accepted manuscript version of: Schwanebeck, Wieland. "Jaws: Directed by Alfred Hitchcock." Reassessing the Hitchcock Touch: Industry, Collaboration, and Filmmaking, edited by Wieland Schwanebeck, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 241–57, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-60008-6.

Wieland Schwanebeck

Jaws: Directed by Alfred Hitchcock

Historical meetings which sadly never happened were a specialty of MTV-produced comedy format *Celebrity Deathmatch* (1998-2007). In this show, clay-animated effigies of celebrities would meet in a wrestling arena and engage in a darkly humorous form of mortal combat. In one episode from the year 2000, two of the most prominent film directors of the twentieth century meet in the ring: The king of blockbusters, Steven Spielberg, challenges the 'Master of Suspense', Alfred Hitchcock (introduced by the announcer as "the triple-chin terror"), to a duel. As always in *Celebrity Deathmatch*, the confrontation reflects the significance of the two adversaries in popular culture, and both caricatures express their reputation in movie history via their fighting style. Hitchcock, well-known as a pedantic planner, hands Spielberg the storyboard of his impending execution before the fight even starts. The outline has been drawn with great care and mixes elements from *Suspicion* (1941), *Spellbound* (1945), and *North by Northwest* (1959), amongst others.

Spielberg's unfair counter is met with a condescending rebuke from Hitchcock, who resembles a schoolteacher telling off a naughty pupil throughout the subsequent fight. However, Hitchcock's counter-attack comes to nothing, as the knife--viewers who know the shower scene in *Psycho* (1960) will anticipate the punch line--never really touches the body. The only one who can stop Spielberg is Spielberg himself, whose final maneuver backfires. His attempt to kill Hitchcock by releasing the demons from the 'ark of the covenant' (as seen in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, 1981) backfires, and the ghosts get their revenge on Spielberg, who has conned them out of merchandise revenues--Hitchcock wins the fight.

The idea of the two cinematic masterminds engaging in a duel is an enticing one, and not such a glaring anachronism as it would appear. Their careers overlapped at Universal Studios,

where their shared legacy is organized in terms of consistency and continuity today. Visitors who take a tour of the California-based studio are first brought into close contact with the mechanical shark from *Jaws*, before they can observe an Anthony Perkins double heaving a body into the trunk of a car outside Bates' Motel. Naturally, such a linear connection cannot be drawn between their two respective films, even though both are widely perceived as forerunners of the slasher genre whose golden age would start with *Halloween* (1978) a few years after *Jaws*. They are certainly comparable in terms of the traumatic experience which they allegedly inflicted upon audience members. The shark shooting out of the water in front of Chief Brody shocked cinemagoers with the same intensity as the sight of 'Mother's' knife attacking Janet Leigh in the shower: "Where *Psycho* fifteen years before had told the country that it couldn't take a shower, now the other great recreational ablution was off-limits." (Andrews 144)[1]

This chapter will take its cue from the 'change of guard' from Hitchcock to Spielberg that allegedly occurred in 1970s cinema. I will read *Jaws*, the ground-breaking thriller which signaled the dawn of a new age in Hollywood, as a film which shows the Hitchcock Touch being exercised by a filmmaker who is several generations removed from Alfred Hitchcock himself. However, I will not limit myself to the surface comparison which has frequently been invoked to read *Jaws* as a suspenseful example of animal horror reminiscent of *The Birds* (1963), though *Jaws* is certainly indebted to Hitchcock in this respect. I will attempt to go beneath the surface of *Jaws*, a film which derives much of its fascination from the fact that its characters fail to grasp what is coming at them from beneath the sea surface, and highlight some of its less obvious Hitchcockian aspects. In the process, I will reflect on *Jaws*' singular status within its director's career and draw comparisons with the impact which Alfred Hitchcock's *The Lodger* (1927), a film which shares many characteristics with *Jaws*, had in England at the time of its release.

Change of guard

What is beyond dispute is that Hitchcock took note of the success of the younger filmmaker. All biographical accounts of Spielberg share a characteristic master narrative, that of the ambitious directorial *wunderkind*, who knew early on what he wanted: to make movies at any cost. Universal, which first hired him as an intern and then offered the 22-year-old a contract after having seen his short film *Amblin'* (1968), at this time was also home to Alfred Hitchcock. Having enjoyed a number of stormy liaisons with other studios, Hitchcock had entered into a marriage of convenience with Universal--a relationship not entirely frictionless, but certainly characterized by mutual respect. He did not, as is widely postulated, enjoy Carte Blanche after the immense success of *Psycho*, yet he retained his office and personal staff--even after it became apparent that new projects would remain unrealized due to his ailing health. The Hitchcock brand continued to survive in televised form, where serialized formats such as *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955-65) paved the way for successful science fiction and horror anthologies such as *The Twilight Zone* (1959-64) and *Night Gallery* (1969-73)--for the latter series, Spielberg contributed the pilot episode, "Eyes" (1969). One should not, however, interpret theirs as a mentor-protégé relationship; Spielberg recalls how he desperately wanted to watch his idol Hitchcock at work on set, but was never admitted (cf. Royal 102). The actor Bruce Dern, who played the lead in Hitchcock's last film, farcical crime picture *Family Plot* (1976), recalls how Hitchcock refused to see Spielberg while they were shooting, dismissing him as "the boy that made the fish movie". When asked for a reason, Hitchcock allegedly admitted to Dern that Spielberg made him "feel like such a whore. [...] I'm the voice of the *Jaws* ride [at Universal Studios]. Universal paid me a million dollars. I took it and I did it." (Dern 143-144)

Later, having been crowned the king of the dream factory, Spielberg was no longer in need of Hitchcock's (or anyone else's) public acknowledgement, and he declined the offer to demonstrate his prestige publicly after the success of *Jaws* and to move into Hitchcock's old bungalow on the Universal Studios grounds (cf. McBride 2010, 363). The two directors may have never met in person, but shared some affinity in those years. Spielberg had delivered an impressive calling card to Universal in the form of his Hitchcock homage, *Duel* (1971), a suspenseful thriller written by Richard Matheson, who also contributed scripts to Hitchcock's TV projects. Spielberg refers to *Duel* as "*The Birds* on wheels" in an interview included on the DVD, yet on the evidence of the vast highway wasteland and the faceless threat of the truck, it is tempting to read the film as a feature-length version of the crop-duster scene in *North by Northwest*.

Unlike other titans of Old Hollywood, who saw the next generation of filmmakers as unwelcome competition, Hitchcock reacted with equanimity to the small revolution that was going on in American film at the time. It is no coincidence that his cinematic swansong, *Family Plot*, features numerous actors associated with New Hollywood. However, he places them in his well-known movie topography--a simulacrum of America, the artificiality of which is hardly concealed by any effort on behalf of the set designers. In the mid-1970s, Hitchcock's continued reliance on rear projections (most notably in one chase sequence which emulates Cary Grant's drunk driving from *North by Northwest*) could not but evoke a certain melancholy. *Family Plot* proved to be a worthy coda to Hitchcock's career and did some respectable business at the box-office, though it was a far cry from *Jaws*' record-breaking revenues in the previous summer. This difference is symptomatic for the situation of the industry. In the 1960s and the early 1970s, the studios released a number of star-studded, big-budget blockbusters such as the disaster movie cycle, yet few of them turned a profit. Prestigious flops like *Hello, Dolly!* (1969) or *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (1970) not

only brought some studios close to bankruptcy, but also signaled the end of Old Hollywood distribution models. Television had turned into a serious competitor (a shift which Hitchcock had anticipated and cleverly exploited by marketing his iconic persona in anthology shows like *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*), and the rift between movie industry and youth culture had become too great.

It was two inexperienced (and independent) producers and a 26-year-old director who were to deliver the movie of the hour in *Jaws*--a film that was by no means the pride of New Hollywood; in fact, while many view Spielberg's film as the beginning of a consolidation period and as a return to Old Hollywood values, traditionalists saw its success as another symptom of decline. Hitchcock's contemporary Billy Wilder, whose last movies deliver an increasingly cynical take on the changing (movie) world, would praise Spielberg's technical craft, but at the same time, he spoke with sarcasm and bitterness about its production model. Shortly after the release of *Jaws*, Wilder commented that anyone could produce a movie today, provided that he "knew a second cousin of a reader who got hold of an unfinished book at Random House about a big fish off Martha's Vineyard, and for some reason or other his brother-in-law gave him ten thousand dollars and he put it down, and now suddenly he has the rights for *Jaws*" (Wilder in conversation with Stevens 324). Wilder's glorification of the old production apparatus and his denigration of *Jaws*[2] is not an isolated case. Hitchcock, however, did not voice any such attitudes. During a 1976 press conference for *Family Plot*, critic Gene Siskel attempts to coax him into a comment on recent Hollywood films' alleged lack of subtlety, when it is all about "sharks biting people", but Hitchcock remains unfazed: "Big action pictures will always have their day. We always had them for the last 20 or 30 years." ("Alfred Hitchcock Press Conference") Moreover, he was a much too clever businessman not to employ strategies of the system that Wilder criticized, and repeatedly acquired the rights to best-selling novels. In fact, Hitchcock may have played coy with Bruce Dern over his alleged

'shame', yet he showed himself very pleased about the box-office records of *Jaws* (news of which reached him during the filming of *Family Plot*), as he held Universal stocks and thus saw his personal fortune increased through the success of Spielberg's film (cf. Lubin/McBride 70)--there may be some poetic justice in that, seeing as how much the producers of *Jaws* relied on marketing strategies which Hitchcock himself had shaped when he (already on Universal's payroll) established his 'brand' throughout the 1950s and 1960s, producing TV formats which young Steven Spielberg was to grow up with. Though the trailer for *Jaws*, with its famous baritone narration by Percy Rodriguez ("There is a creature alive today who has survived millions of years of evolution ..."), includes much more footage of the finished film than, for instance, Hitchcock's publicity materials for *Psycho*, it adheres to the latter's key lesson: to arouse the audience's curiosity without revealing too much. While the *Jaws* trailer contains bits from all of the film's major set-pieces, it shows not more of the creature than the *Psycho* trailer (Hitchcock's 'guided tour' of the Bates estate) had revealed of 'Mother'. There is no first-hand testimony of Hitchcock's reaction to *Jaws*, yet it is safe to assume that Hitchcock (who often had new releases screened for him in his own projection room) saw the film, in spite of claims to the contrary (Dern 144). Pauline Kael was the first to report Hitchcock's enthusiastic reaction to "young Spielberg's" achievement, particularly his radical usage of cinematic space (Turnock 325). The commentary has been repeatedly cited since then, but its authenticity cannot be guaranteed. A key choice of personnel on behalf of Hitchcock does more to highlight his appreciation of *Jaws*. John Williams, who suddenly became the most sought-after composer in Hollywood once *Jaws* had been released, was hired to score *Family Plot*. He even persuaded Hitchcock to forgo the obsessively modern use of synthesizers on the soundtrack which Hitchcock had in mind for his film (Sullivan 233). Such circumstances have inspired various attempts to file *Jaws* itself amongst the 'What ifs' in Hitchcock's career: as a potential project, as 'the one that got away'. After all, was Lew

Wasserman not Hitchcock's agent before he started managing Universal in 1962,[3] and was it not *him* who had arranged the *Jaws* deal with producers Richard D. Zanuck and David Brown? For Joseph McBride (2010, 231), it is enough to voice the entirely unfounded assumption that Universal must have intended *Jaws* as a Hitchcock vehicle--a highly implausible scenario, even though Brown remembers a conversation with Hitchcock (McBride 1983, 37). Given how even the major studios had already adapted to the new aesthetics of realism and authenticity at the beginning of the 1970s, it seems very unlikely that Universal would have entrusted one of the hottest literary properties of the day (Peter Benchley's best-selling novel) to an aging director like Hitchcock. More and more major film stars of the day were experimenting with method acting (a far cry from Hitchcock's 'hit your mark and say your lines' approach), car chases (like the one in William Friedkin's *The French Connection*, 1971) were filmed on location and no longer in the studio, and moreover, Hitchcock stood for the exact opposite of the collaborative approach to filmmaking which New Hollywood producers like Zanuck and Brown emphasized (cf. McBride 1983, 37). To hire an established movie star and to put him on-board a model of the Orca swimming in a basin (instead of the open sea) may have resulted in *Jaws* being more firmly linked with the disaster movie cycle (especially if the studio had gone with its first idea and cast Charlton Heston in the role of Brody), but it would not have aligned the film with the young audience whose appreciation of *Jaws* signaled the beginning of the blockbuster era. In addition, a production of this caliber (substantially more laborious than Hitchcock's ocean-set thriller, *Lifeboat*, 1944), which was exposed to the whims of nature and current weather conditions, would have hardly been manageable for Hitchcock in the 1970s. His faculties were declining, and he even considered his brief spell of on-location shooting for *Family Plot* almost too demanding.

Alfred Hitchcock's *Jaws*

It is tempting not just to approach *Jaws* by way of Hitchcock's cinema, but as the greatest Hitchcock film *not* directed by Alfred Hitchcock himself--not only because of the temporal overlap.[4] On the level of suspense, though, *Jaws* is not as much indebted to the Hitchcock Touch as some critics suggest. Spielberg hardly resorts to the variety of suspense typically favored by Hitchcock, who puts much emphasis on deadlines and discrepant awareness. Spielberg's suspense is of the 'direct' variety (cf. Smith 22-25) and more in line with the horror film. We do not experience fear on behalf of characters who are about to encounter a threat unknown to them, but we fear for their lives because we are in the exact same situation as they are: on-board the Orca, not sure when or where the shark will appear next. Many assessments of *Jaws*, however, point out the obvious parallels to *Psycho* and especially *The Birds*, stressing how serious Spielberg was when he voiced his intention to make a movie to emulate and rival Hitchcock (cf. Biskind 199): (1) Spielberg uses the shark's perspective (from below) in the establishing shot, while Hitchcock once employed the very literal bird's-eye view to show the chaos wreaked by the birds from their perspective; (2) in order to draw an analogy between Chief Brody's fear of water and Scottie Ferguson's (James Stewart) fear of heights, Spielberg, in one of the beach scenes, uses a dolly zoom, which was not developed but certainly popularized by Hitchcock in *Vertigo* (1958);[5] (3) and like in *Psycho*, the first victim claimed in *Jaws* is a blonde woman, whose death scene reveals a thoroughly sexualized subtext, as she suffers an orgasmic yet fatal *petite mort* (cf. Gordon 32-35).

This is not where the parallels end. The Hitchcock Touch is visible in the depiction of Amity, the seaside resort which is ruled by Mayor Vaughn, a dubious figure clearly modelled on Richard Nixon. Tellingly, Hitchcock has been likened to an anthropologist for the way he portrays American society, his outsider's gaze allowing him to record rituals, and his role as a curious witness in trailers and other paratexts effectively marking him out as an observing

participant (cf. Freedman/Millington 3-14). This may be pushing the comparison a bit. Hitchcock is not a documentary filmmaker, and all his ethnographic efforts ultimately concentrate on a fictionalized, even hyperreal America that is entirely rooted in artifice. His rear projections are as much indebted to studio aesthetics as his replicas of American landmarks such as the statue of liberty (*Saboteur*, 1942) or Mount Rushmore (*North by Northwest*). Even if it were not obvious that these are recreations, Hitchcock's bucolic small town tends to be so overdrawn as to create unease. Another Hitchcockian motif emulated by Spielberg is a somewhat cartoonish, distorted view of the people. In this respect, *Jaws* provides a number of cynical images, particularly of bathing hedonists who present their distorted grimaces to the camera(s), that is, *their own* cameras (when they pose for holiday snapshots) and the *movie* camera. This gallery of imperfect bodies and grotesquely memorable faces is reminiscent of Hitchcock's numerous digressions into the circus milieu (see *The Lady Vanishes*, 1938, or *Saboteur*). The fat lady who appears as a swimmer in *Jaws* before the second shark attack not only reenacts the circus attraction of the same name; her appearance also echoes the sight of the floating Hitchcock in the trailer for *Frenzy* (1972), a 'grease drop' to garnish the cannibalistic gourmet meal Hitchcock serves in this film (fig. 1).

Fig. 1: The fat *auteur* and the fat lady (*Frenzy* and *Jaws*).

The idyll of small-town America is always a distorted one in Hitchcock's films, 'reality' always hyperreality--as 'real' as the plastic shark, as real as Disneyland, "a fantasy world more real than reality" (Eco 45). This is especially true for Santa Rosa, Hitchcock's refuge of American virtues in *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) and his "most recognizably American portrait" (Pomerance 229). Its idyll has to implode at the end of the movie, because it is based on a lie, though the ending makes clear that the truth about 'Uncle Charlie' will not become part of the

town's shared memory. Instead, the inhabitants continue to radiate neighborly friendship, an image that clearly anticipates the suburban nightmares of following movie decades. Hitchcock remains primarily a director of the urban space, but in his few excursions into small town life, the distortion becomes more and more evident. The autumn leaves in *The Trouble with Harry* (1955) are already a symptom of the gradual vanishing of bucolic America (Pomerance 20). In *The Birds*, Bodega Bay is hit by an enigmatic apocalyptic wrath, just as Amity's great white shark remains an unexplained natural anomaly. We are in the realm of what Slavoj Žižek refers to as 'Thing movies', which are characterized by a deeply ideological narrative. The catastrophe that befalls a destabilized order works as a corrective, signaling the "payment for some social-sexual transgression" which must be punished in the narrative logic (Žižek 2001, 167). In *Titanic* (1997), it is a romantic encounter which threatens to disrupt the hegemonic class system, whereas in countless other disaster movies, the threat of destabilized family relationships poses a risk to the status quo. This would also apply to *The Birds* with its oedipal mother-son-dyad--the birds only attack when Melanie (the interloper) gets too close to Mitch (Žižek 2000, 97-106). There is a noticeable similarity in the depiction of Bodega Bay and Amity: People smile a little *too* amicably in both towns, and the protagonists, who are (in the case of Melanie Daniels) either visitors or (in the case of Chief Brody) explicitly reminded of their status of *permanent* outsiders (or non-natives), never feel comfortable here. Their 'friendly local neighbors' instinctively associate them with the external threat, and both films feature uncomfortable scenes showing the protagonists being blamed by local women for the animal attacks.

However, the appearance of the threat is coded differently in *Jaws* and *The Birds*. In Hitchcock's films, the community and the family have already lost their innocence and appear as their own perverted caricature: nasty matriarchs who are associated with sinister clans. In Spielberg's oeuvre, on the other hand, the family is usually intact as a refuge, worth

protecting and worth fighting for--a trope that unites films as diverse as *E.T.* (1981), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and *War of the Worlds* (2005). Tellingly, the shark's appetite in *Jaws* is never aimed at the tourists (whose money the city council does not want to lose under any circumstances), but exclusively at the citizens of Amity, including Brody's own family. It was not before *Jaws: The Revenge* (1987) that the poster would proclaim that "this time it's personal", but actually, it was personal right from the beginning of the saga--with Spielberg, it usually is. The duel between human and animal is shaped differently than in Hitchcock's movies, even though *Jaws* and *The Birds* are both still considered trailblazing genre films and exhibit many structural parallels. There are further significant similarities to uncover when we leave Hitchcock's American period behind and instead go looking for links between *Jaws*, that great island adventure, and Hitchcock's own insular (British) period.

"Women and children first!"

Given the unlikely success story of *Jaws* (a young nerd taking it upon himself to consolidate the ailing movie industry), Hitchcock's American films are possibly not the appropriate reference point to assess its impact on the filmmaking industry and the way it established its young director as a name to remember. It is rather Hitchcock's British works that recommend themselves for a useful comparison with *Jaws*, as they are also characterized by the ongoing search for a distinctive voice and directorial style. There is a minor provocation in the first half of *Jaws* which can easily be overlooked: The film inverts the well-known rule of "women and children first" in dangerous situations and thus challenges audience assumptions about the family-friendly genre films. In *Jaws*, it is not only a woman (the swimmer Chrissie Watkins) and a child (Alex Kintner) whom the shark claims as its first victims--a dog also falls foul of the shark during the second attack, which nixes the unwritten Hollywood law that the smallest and most defenseless creatures must be spared. Spielberg thus gets away with a crime for

which Hitchcock had been flagellated forty years before: *Jaws* intertextually references the paradigmatic 'bomb on a bus' sequence in *Sabotage* (1936), a scene that Hitchcock would repeatedly single out as one of the biggest lessons of his career. On the one hand, the scene in which Verloc sends young Stevie on his way with a package (which, unbeknownst to Stevie, contains a ticking bomb), applies all the fundamental rules of suspense the way Hitchcock formulates them in his conversation with Truffaut (73). Early on, the scene establishes a deadline and allows the audience to know more than the character, thus encouraging them to accept an almost parental responsibility for the protagonist (cf. Smith 18-20). The scene's resolution, however (which Hitchcock would later call as "a grave error", Truffaut 109), is cruel: The bomb explodes and Stevie dies, as does the cute little dog which has been placed provocatively next to him.[6] The scene is clearly echoed in *Jaws*--both films not only share a certain adolescent gesture in their disrespectful attitudes towards conventions, but also a distinct meta-cinematic experience, problematizing their directors' roles in the process. Arguably, the terrorists in *Sabotage* are directors themselves, who fight for media attention and break the audience contract,[7] while Spielberg's shark reminds us that we (like the swimmer) are at the mercy of the cinematic apparatus, sitting in the dark and subjecting ourselves to forces we cannot control, even if we believe ourselves to be safe: "What has she done to you? Nothing. She's just food: food for a shark; food for a camera. What's your agenda? Well, your agenda is pleasure. This is cinema--remember?" (Gilbey 83)

Even beyond this provocation, the films demonstrate an immense degree of adolescent zeal. Like Hitchcock's early works, *Jaws* is an adorably imperfect film. The numerous production mishaps are as much inscribed in the movie as their creators' youthful enthusiasm and limitless reservoir of ideas. At one point, Spielberg himself had to surrender to the weather conditions and let continuity go overboard--the lighting alters significantly throughout the film's second half, and the number of barrels tied to the shark fluctuates. Even Verna Fields's

magnificent, Academy Award-winning work as *Jaws*' editor cannot contain all the continuity errors in Quint's death scene.[8] Additionally, *Jaws* is an eclectic work with an exuberant variety of voices. Spielberg not only references influential B movies such as Jack Arnold's *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954) or Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), but he also shows off his in-depth knowledge of European cinema, employing jump cuts in the manner of Jean-Luc Godard (cf. Hunter 12) and even including a reference to Vittorio de Sica's 1948 *Bicycle Thieves* (*Ladri di Biciclette*, cf. Gilbey 84). His fast-paced montages inspired Pauline Kael to quip that *Jaws* indicates "what Eisenstein might have done if he hadn't intellectualized himself out of reach" and "if he'd given in to the bourgeois child in himself" (136). Early Hitchcock films such as *Easy Virtue* (1928) and *Rich and Strange* (1931) exhibit a similarly confident grasp of cinematic techniques. Significantly, both of these movies are memorable for their plentitude of ideas, not for their plots.

The most direct line of influence, however, can be drawn from *The Lodger* (1927), which exhibits a wild mix of styles just like *Jaws* and indicates that the Hollywood paradigm of narration was known in England at that time, but was not yet slavishly imitated and taken as gospel. Hitchcock's first thriller to revolve around a 'guiltlessly guilty' man on the run from the police (and widely considered the first 'proper' Hitchcock film) employs montages of contrast and association in addition to classic narrative montage, and frequently gets close to Hitchcock's ideal of *pure cinema*.[9] Both *The Lodger* and *Jaws* are based on best-selling novels of their time, themselves inspired by sensation-seeking media coverage,[10] which makes them exploitation cinema *avant la lettre*. Both were the third completed feature films of ambitious young directors in their mid-twenties and played pivotal roles in their careers, marking their breakthrough.

Hitchcock, ever the self-proclaimed autodidact, would later describe *The Lodger* as a completely instinctive exercise in filmmaking (cf. Truffaut 44). Like *Jaws*, it portrays a

community whose fragile peace is disturbed by the forceful intrusion of an outsider. The shark that haunts Amity's beaches is also an undesirable 'lodger' which the locals want to get rid of. In both movies, the anger of the exaggerated mob is fired by the media and directed towards the wrong person: Hitchcock's nameless protagonist and Chief Brody, respectively. The latter neglects his duties ('to serve and protect') and is consequently blamed for Alex's death by Mrs. Kintner; he only ceases to act as the scapegoat when the authorities present the measly tiger shark as the culprit before disposing of it: "Let's cut this ugly son of a bitch down before it stinks up the island," the mayor declares after having posed with it for press photographers. In both films, the swath of violence is symbolized by a triangular shape. It is the sign of Hitchcock's Avenger killer, and it also signifies death in *Jaws*, in the shape of the shark fin (fig. 2). Needless to say, connotations of sexual violence are inscribed in the symbol, the triangular 'venus delta' invoking both the sexual subtext of Hitchcock's take on the 'Jack the Ripper' myth and the ambiguous role of the shark as both phallic aggressor and 'vagina dentata' (cf. Pollock 42).

Fig. 2: Triangular threats in *The Lodger* and *Jaws*.

That *The Lodger* and *Jaws* laid the respective foundation for their creator's successes is especially noteworthy when one considers their meta-textual propositions. Both movies are about two outsiders (the lodger on the one hand, Chief Brody on the other) who find themselves initially in a liminal space between a sworn, insular community and a threat coming from the outside (the Avenger and the shark, respectively). Both are initially rejected by the community, but then seek solidarity *with* the group. "You're not born here, you're not an islander, that's it," Ellen Brody hears from a local at the beach; however, Brody will later (just before going on the shark-hunt himself) confirm to his wife that he now considers Amity

their home. The narrative of the intruder who eventually wins a space in the community almost prophetically predicts what would happen to Hitchcock and Spielberg following the massive success of their films. Each of them was lauded as a director *wunderkind* by the press, saviors and major protagonists of a new movement that was hoped to revolutionize an ailing film industry. British cinema of the 1920s had a poor reputation internationally, whereas the established U.S. movie industry of the 1970s on the other hand was looking for a way to get back in touch with the Zeitgeist and to turn a profit at the same time.

Both filmmakers would grow into the most celebrated representatives of their guild and leave their mark on an entire era. Significantly, though, both would later break with the promise of their first works. Hitchcock remained a major force in British cinema of the 1930s (particularly with his 'thriller sextet'), yet he followed David O. Selznick's call to Hollywood in 1939 and thus played no role in the so-called 'Golden Age' of British cinema, which is linked to names such as Michael Powell, David Lean, or Ealing Studios. Spielberg, on the other hand, who had made some headlines with unpolished, rebellious movies like *Duel* or *The Sugarland Express* (1974)--films that presented radically different takes on the American dream--acquired a similar reputation as a Danton figure, one who sabotaged the revolution that he had helped initiate years before. While Martin Scorsese continued to address the aftermath of the Vietnam trauma on the streets of New York (*Taxi Driver*, 1976), Spielberg's path as a major player in Hollywood literally went 'back to the future': a highly successful, box-office shattering regression into the world of invulnerable, suave adventurers and cute extraterrestrials. "We need summer dollars," Mayor Vaughn pleads with Chief Brody in *Jaws* when Brody threatens to close the beaches and thus to dry up the tourist streams. Like Spielberg, who in *Jaws* effectively invents the modern summer blockbuster, Brody in the end helps to restore the cash-flow.

By the same token, Hitchcock and particularly Spielberg did for some time suffer a reputation as gifted filmmakers who all too often settled for mere, conventional entertainment. Hitchcock managed to shake off the slur with the help of the French *auteur* movement, whereas Spielberg is still regarded as something of an 'unfinished genius', one who never tapped his full potential but settled for his winning streak as "King Midas of Hollywood" (Seeßlen 8, my translation), regularly delivering formulaic box-office hits; some compulsively 'grown-up', political films like *Munich* (2005) or *Bridge of Spies* (2015) notwithstanding.

Post-scriptum: assembly-line work

From the secure environment of the studios, the student will continue to occasionally acknowledge his teacher. Spielberg not only cites famous Hitchcock shots quite frequently (cf. Palisson), but he has even claimed the role of the executor of Hitchcock's will, filming a sequence that Hitchcock describes to Truffaut as an unrealized idea for *North by Northwest*. The intended scene would have been set in a car factory, where Cary Grant interrogates a worker while a car is being assembled: "Finally, the car they've seen being put together from a simple nut and bolt is complete, with gas and oil, and all ready to drive off the line. The two men look at it and say, 'Isn't it wonderful!' Then they open the door to the car and out drops a corpse" (Hitchcock in conversation with Truffaut 257). In *Minority Report* (2002)--itself a variation of the most Hitchcockian of all themes, the innocent man who goes on the run from the police--Spielberg presents his own version of that idea, blending it with the assembly line from Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) and making his protagonist (played by Tom Cruise) disappear into the machinery himself. From his futuristic car-cum-escape vehicle, the hero stares at his persecutors for a second and then rushes off. Evidently, Spielberg remains 'last man standing'.

Works cited

"Alfred Hitchcock Press Conference for *Family Plot*." *Vimeo* 3 June 2012, https://vimeo.com/43334945. Accessed 14 March 2017.

Andrews, Nigel. *Nigel Andrews on 'Jaws': A Bloomsbury Movie Guide*. London: Bloomsbury, 1999.

Baer, William. *Classic American Films: Conversations with the Screenwriters*. Westport: Praeger, 2008.

Biskind, Peter. "A 'World' Apart." *Steven Spielberg: Interviews*. Eds. Lester D. Friedman and Brent Notbohm. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2000. 192-206.

Bradshaw, Jon. "'You Used to Be Very Big.'--'I Am Big. It's the Pictures that Got Small.'" *Billy Wilder: Interviews*. Ed. Robert Horton. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2001. 89-98.

Buckland, Warren. *Directed by Steven Spielberg: Poetics of the Contemporary Hollywood Blockbuster*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2006.

Dern, Bruce. *Things I've Said, But Probably Shouldn't Have: An Unrepentant Memoir.* Hoboken: John Wiley, 2007.

"Dialogue on Film: Billy Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond." *Billy Wilder: Interviews*. Ed. Robert Horton. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2001. 110-131.

Eco, Umberto. *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays*. Trans. William Weaver. San Diego; New York; London: Harcourt Brace, 1986.

Freedman, Jonathan, and Richard H. Millington: "Introduction." *Hitchcock's America*. Eds. Jonathan Freedman and Richard H. Millington. New York; Oxford: OUP, 1999. 3-14.

Gilbey, Ryan. *It Don't Worry Me: The Revolutionary American Films of the Seventies*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2003.

Gordon, Andrew. *Empire of Dreams: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Films of Steven Spielberg*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

Hunter, I.Q. “Exploitation as Adaptation.” *Scope* 15 (2009): 8-33.

Kael, Pauline. “The Current Cinema: Notes on Evolving Heroes, Morals, Audiences.” *The New Yorker* 8 Nov. 1976: 136-145.

Lerner, Ivan. “Alfred Hitchcock’s *Jaws*.” *Lerner International Enterprises* 11 July 2012, lernerinternational.blogspot.de/2012/07/lie-27-alfred-hitchcocks-jaws.html. Accessed 14 March 2017.

Lubin, David, and Joseph McBride: “Hitchcock: A Defense and an Update.” *Film Comment* 15.3 (1979): 66-70.

McBride, Joseph, ed. *Filmmakers on Filmmaking*. Vol. 1. Los Angeles: Houghton Mifflin, 1983.

McBride, Joseph. *Steven Spielberg: A Biography*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2010.

Osteen, Mark. “‘It Doesn’t Pay to Antagonize the Public’: *Sabotage* and Hitchcock’s Audience.” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 28.4 (2000): 259-268.

Palisson, Arnaud. “Hitchcock’s Influences on Spielberg: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* as Example.” *The Raider* 4 Sept. 2006, http://www.theraider.net/features/articles/hitchcock_01.php. Accessed 14 March 2017.

Pollock. Griselda. “Jaws.” *Spare Rib* 4 April 1976: 41-42.

Pomerance, Murray. *Alfred Hitchcock’s America*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.

Robey, Tim. “We’d Like to Thank the Academy: The Ten Most Richly Deserved Oscars.” *Ten Bad Dates with De Niro: A Book of Alternative Movie Lists*. Ed. Richard T. Kelly. London: Faber and Faber, 2007. 36-41.

Royal, Susan. “Steven Spielberg in His Adventures on Earth.” *Steven Spielberg: Interviews*. Eds. Lester D. Friedman and Brent Notbohm. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2000. 84-106.

Seeßlen, Georg. *Steven Spielberg und seine Filme*. Marburg: Schüren, 2001.

Smith, Susan. *Hitchcock: Suspense, Humour and Tone*. London: BFI, 2000.

Stevens, George. *Conversations with the Great Moviemakers of Hollywood's Golden Age at the American Film Institute*. New York: Knopf, 2006.

Sullivan, Jack. "Hitchcock and Music." *A Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*. Eds. Thomas Leitch and Leland Poague. Malden: Blackwell, 2011. 219-236.

Thomson, David. "Hitchcock and the System." *39 Steps to the Genius of Hitchcock*. Ed. James Bell. London: BFI, 2012. 62-69.

Truffaut, François. *Hitchcock*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984.

Turnock, Julie A. *Plastic Reality: Special Effects, Art and Technology in 1970s U.S. Filmmaking*. New York; Chichester: Columbia UP, 2015.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. Cambridge; London: MIT P, 2000.

Žižek, Slavoj. "The Thing from Inner Space: *Titanic* and *Deep Impact*." *Psychoanalysis and Film*. Ed. Glen O. Gabbard. London: Karnac, 2001. 161-167.

---

[1] Carl Gottlieb, the screenwriter of *Jaws*, claims that it was their goal to inflict the same traumatizing effect upon the audience as *Psycho* (cf. Baer 97).

[2] Wilder keeps coming back to the historical caesura of *Jaws* in interviews: In a conversation with students at the American Film Institute, he advises his listeners not to become directors but to specialize in the visual effects department, given "the need for bigger and bigger fish" ("Dialogue on Film" 116); he would later poke fun at his own declining career and fantasize about coming back with "a porno-horror movie" to "capitalize on two of the going trends. The plot would have a sloppy hooker who gives all of her innocent customers crabs. The crabs grow into giant octopuses and eat New Orleans. Do you see the beauty in that? You get both nudity and animal horror in the same picture. I might call it *Deep Jaws*." (Bradshaw 2001, 91)

[3] On the Wasserman/Hitchcock relationship, see Thomson 69.

[4] Whilst researching this chapter, I even came across a blog whose author imagines in detail what Hitchcock's version of *Jaws* may have looked like, including a cast list, trailer, and scene descriptions (cf. Lerner).

[5] Warren Buckland discusses the intertextual dimension of the dolly zoom (99). Will Self uses the same effect as a literary device in *Shark* (2014), his novel about the sinking of the U.S.S. Indianapolis.

[6] "I made a serious mistake in having the little boy carry the bomb. […] The boy was involved in a situation that got him too much sympathy from the audience, so that when the bomb exploded and he was killed, the public was resentful." (Hitchcock in conversation with Truffaut 109)

[7] Both as a cinema owner and as a terrorist, Verloc faces complaints in the first scenes of the film: angry audience members want their money back after the lights have gone out in the theater, and his contact shows himself disappointed in Verloc's latest terrorist strike. See Mark Osteen's insightful take on the role of the audience in *Sabotage* for more details.

[8] Fields' exceptional achievement put her in Tim Robey's list of the ten most deserved Academy Award wins of all time (cf. Robey 40). Fields would later become vice president of Universal and was even considered as a director for *Jaws 2* (1978).

[9] "In truth, you might almost say that *The Lodger* was my first picture. […] I took a pure narrative and, for the first time, presented ideas in purely visual terms." (Hitchcock in conversation with Truffaut 44)

[10] Marie Belloc Lowndes' novel *The Lodger* was based on the 'Jack the Ripper' case, while Peter Benchley took his cue for the novel *Jaws* (1974) from some wildly exaggerated media reports about shark attacks.