

Assignment: Write an annotated summary that focuses on certain points made by these reviewers of *Rear Window*:

1. One of Hitchcock's Finest Thrillers, August 24, 2009

Back in my *SeVen* review, I recently felt a bit enlightened because I had just discovered the thriller. Now, a bit jaded from my experience and the thriller tag has worn off, I feel that thrillers can be pretty unthrilling and boring, Hitchcock's thriller's included. Sure, *Psycho* is not one of them, as it has many psychological aspects to extremely excite and create thought. However, some, such as the hugely overrated and boring *Vertigo*, are about as exciting and insightful as a seventh grade seminar on the five senses, not to mention that steaming pile of turd *Knowing* that I sat through. Just because you have characters with thoughts resembling psychology doesn't mean your movie will even be remotely thrilling or entertaining. More often than not, your effort will suck.

Not the case with *Rear Window*. *Rear Window* story is intriguing, but Alfred Hitchcock's directing is probably what turns *Rear Window* into the voyeuristic, interesting thriller that it really is. I wasn't quite sure what to say about the filmmaking of *Psycho*, but *Rear Window* proves that the art of film making is what makes movies art. Furthermore, *Rear Window*'s theme about reclusion and what it can do (including Voyeurism) is a natural for such a intricate use of making movies, so it's themes are very much established by the movie making skills. Real art. The acting isn't stunning, but hey, it's memorable. James Stewart (also known for being in other classics such as *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington*) is very believable as the injury struck Jeffries, and the other characters are played right, with some interest going into the minds of each one.

It's not to say that *Rear Window* is all film-making backing up a flimsy murder story. *Rear Window* has a premise that is interesting enough. *Rear Window* deals with many themes about is pretty psychologically thrilling and can be even viewed with perversion (I think it was analyzed in *The Pervet's Guide To Cinema*). But the camera angles and the way Hitchcock directs is how *Rear Window* becomes a real thriller and actually let's you connect more psychologically with the character. Even the cast themselves were not directed by Hitchcock, as he only worked in the apartment of Jefferies (every other cast member in the other apartments wore earpieces) Special camera angles, certain things obstructing our view (deliberately covered to make the movie build mystery) The whole thing makes the viewer, and not just Jefferies himself, seem like they are seeing and witnessing the murder as well. One view of this will show you why Hitchcock was a master director, and why film making and camera shots that some movie snobs point out actually help a story (if helps that the story is good yes, but fortunately, it is).

The much lauded set is lauded for a good reason. It's actually quite pretty and even more visually stimulating to look at. It's a soundstage of New York City, and it's so well designed it deserves it's explanations on it's virtues. Right from the beautiful shots of the first moments, it's established with very nostalgic architecture, at least for me, some kind of fantastic version of New York City, beautiful shots everywhere. Having an open window let's

you see all of the neighbors, and it's somewhat amusing to see them, such as the athletic blonde and the musician that constantly plays all day (who was a real musician). What's also interesting is the sound design, which is designed so well that it's actually the real sound. There were no use of overdubs at all during the movie, a pretty smart move. HAll of it was I also like the soundtrack a bit as well. The jazz introduction is very good.

Rear Window, like Psycho, is one of those movies that I admire more than I enjoy. However, admiring a movie is a good thing, and yes, it is still entertaining. And I feel that Rear Window is another influence on one of my fav films, Blue Velvet. Rear Window is worth studying for any aspiring film maker of movie buff, or if not that, at least spend a couple hours with some suspense, character, and entertainment. In any case, I highly recommend Rear Window.

2. A perfect example of the Genius of Hitchcock, January 26, 2009 By [J. Green](#)

L.B. Jeffries (James Stewart) is a dashing photographer who usually spends his time out in the field getting the most exciting and difficult shots. Unfortunately, while he got a fantastic photo of a crashing race car, he also got a busted leg and is laid up in his second floor apartment in a cast. For seven weeks (and one more to go) he's had nothing to do but watch the neighbors whose apartment windows all surround the same courtyard. But very late one night he hears a scream and notices one neighbor (a salesman) making repeated trips out into the rain with a large samples case and his nagging wife has disappeared. Jeffries becomes convinced the man killed her.

The entire movie is shown from the point of view from Jeffries' apartment, and illustrates perfectly Hitchcock's genius. He tells the story by what he shows with the camera (pay attention to the very clever opening sequence for a good example), by what Jeffries sees and does, and what you see of the neighbors. Has a murder really been committed? Hitchcock interjects subtle humor throughout, from Jeffries and the various neighbors, such as "Miss Lonelyheart" or "The Newlyweds." And when Hitchcock decides to turn on the suspense, he turns it on all the way. One part I found slightly unbelievable is Jeffries' resistance to his beautiful girlfriend (Grace Kelly) who offers repeated hints about marriage. C'mon, Grace Kelly?!? What's he waiting for?

But it's all part of Hitchcock's larger theme here, and this movie was lots of fun to watch noting how clever Hitchcock is and looking for his cameo appearance (and I'm not really much of a film buff). There is also an entertaining documentary included with the "extras" that talks about the challenges, such as filming in such a small space. An excellent movie from a director on a level with few others.

3. A British eye spying on America, August [Jacques COULARDEAU](#)

14, 2008

(OLLIERGUES France)

This film has become a cult film with time. Everything seems to be at that level though the situation and plot are rather light. What is important here is that Hitchcock transforms this back yard and garden surrounded by buildings all around and a highly voyeuristic microcosm into a complete vision of human society with all its dramas, and its pleasures and joys. To transform such a small microcosm entirely closed onto itself into a vision of the whole society we hardly get a couple of glimpses of through an alley opening onto the main street is marvelous and amazing. The second phenomenal fact is that the main actor is a wheelchair-ridden man with a severely broken leg in a cast. How can the whole world completely turn and whirl around that sole man? It is only possible because it is absolutely seen through the only eyes of this man or the eyes of the people standing next to him. There is only one instance when the point of vision is not his own eyes but a point outside in the yard-garden: at the end when he is being dropped from his window and then we get for a very short period of time the vision from the cops' eyes. This gives to that film such a personal dimension that it is nearly sickening: we have the impression of invading the privacy of that man. In fact what I have just said is false because he alternates what the man can see and close-up shots on him to show his personal reactions to what he has just seen. This constant alternating of voyeuristic sequences from the eyes of one man and close-up shots on his body language and language forces us into his own skin, body, bones. We are no longer voyeurs but ghosts in him seeing through his eyes. We are the direct witnesses of what he sees because we see it with him, through his own eyes and we start feeling the same emotions as he does. Of course everything is seen through the camera, but Hitchcock even uses some tools to emphasize the voyeuristic dimension and force us into it: a camera with a zooming lens that is so big that the camera becomes minuscule, or binoculars that are of course too big for the distance across the back yard and later the flash bulbs to force us not to see through the eyes of the murderer but to be seen through the eyes of the murderer. The last point I would like to insist on is that Hitchcock shows a murder but he is not interested in the murder per se but in the reactions of the witnesses, those who see everything and how they are blind to what they see. Then he builds up the slow recognition in their eyes, language and behavior, and then they become obsessive about it, to the point of becoming if not courageous at least unconscious of the risks they are taking or running. That too is remarkable and that nearly makes us get out of the simplistic voyeurism I have spoken of all along and climb into some kind of distantiation from the penned up impression of before, a distantiation that leads us to the idea that courage in a human society is often the result of a conviction that makes us blind to the danger or risk we are facing. Courage is the result of a lack of consciousness more than intensified consciousness. This is the human dimension Hitchcock always brought to his films. And that is kind of lost in our modern action films that do not have one single second now and then to just rest and digest what has happened before.

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