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**Paula Marantz Cohen**. *Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism.* Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1995. 198 pp. + 8 pp. of plates. $30.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8131-1930-4.

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In *Alfred Hitchcock* and the *British Cinema* (University of Illinois Press, 1986), Tom Ryall calls the director a hybrid, "a marooned figure, too businesslike and commercial to be an 'artist,' yet too 'artistic' to be fitted comfortably into the British entertainment cinema of the time" (p. 183). Like Ryall, like others, Paula Marantz Cohen has sensed the anomalies in the director and his work. Unlike others, she has found an unusual way to explain them.

Marantz Cohen links the subjectivity of the Victorian novel to that of the cinema–inevitably a clash, since we associate literature with the female point of view, movies with its suppression. She then shows how the director of such utterly contemporary pictures as *Psycho* and *Notorious* was in fact locked in the nineteenth century and caught between two strains of Victorianism: "the feminine legacy of feeling and imagination associated with the domestic novel and the masculine legacy of law and hierarchy–the world of the schoolyard–associated with dominant institutions and values" (p. 3).

Marantz Cohen, who engages in close analysis of a dozen or so films, not only visits such familiar sites as *Psycho* and *Sabotage* but goes off trail to explore *Spellbound*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and (the richest section of the book, its turning point and the key that unlocks much of *Vertigo*) *The Wrong Man.* Her readable and intelligent study relies on no one critical or theoretical methodology; instead, she uses feminism, psychoanalysis, and especially family systems to prove (among other things) how the father-daughter relationship functions in Hitchcock as a romantic ideal. Mainly, she succeeds: *Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism* offers a new and bracing approach to an old problem.

Now, one caveat. "Hitchcock's family of origin laid the foundation for his identity," Cohen says in the introduction. "Yet, in the context of his career, of more interest than that childhood family was the family he 'made': his wife, Alma (nee Reville), and his daughter, Patricia" (p. 6). Marantz Cohen calls the family "an evolving system," and while her comments on the family in general have staying power, her analysis of the Hitchcock menage itself appears forced. Bruno's murder of one woman and "assault" by another in *Strangers on a Train*, Marantz Cohen states, "can be said to trace the story of Hitchcock's own journey with respect to his daughter as an autonomous figure tied to him in essential ways" (p. 84). Likewise, the role of the secretary in *Psycho* (she infers) was "conceived as revenge against Pat for marrying" (p. 75). Since Marantz Cohen has little access to the director called "Hitchcock," via personal letters or even memoranda he wrote, she must base her assertions chiefly on the films, which, ultimately, are ill constructed to bear the weight of such speculation.

Still, *Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism* contributes to the burgeoning scholarship on the director. It not only positions Hitchcock in an unusual way but adds to the cultural history of film.

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