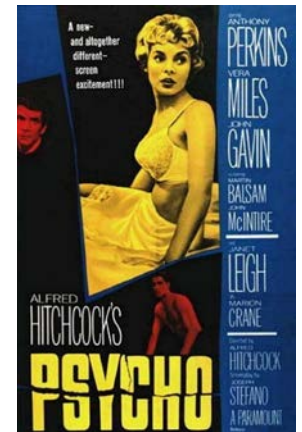


Movies & Languages 2018-2019

Psycho

About the movie (subtitled version)

DIRECTOR	Alfred Hitchcock
YEAR/COUNTRY	1960 / USA
GENRE	Thriller
ACTORS	A. Perkins (Norman Bates), J. Leigh (Marion Crane), J. Gavin (Sam Loomis), V. Miles (Marion's sister, Lila), M. Balsam (Arbogast)



PLOT

Marion Crane is a trusted secretary who steals \$40,000 in cash that her boss entrusts her with, planning to take it to her lover, Sam, and start a new life. However, she is not very good at being a criminal and makes a policeman suspicious, and also a car salesman when she trades in her car.

Due to a heavy rainstorm, she ends up at the Bates motel, which is well off the main highway, where the shy manager offers her a room, a meal and a chat. They have a conversation about life's traps which makes Marion decide to give the money back. However, Marion is murdered in the shower before she can carry out her plan.

Wanting to get the money back without involving the police, Marion's boss, her sister and the boss's associate pay a private detective, Arbogast, to track her down. After notifying Lila and Sam that he is intending to interview Bates' mother, Arbogast disappears, and the two searchers contact the local sheriff. Here they make some discoveries which lead them to go out to the motel themselves and solve the mystery.

LANGUAGE

This movie contains very little complex vocabulary – indeed, it contains relatively little dialogue. The English used, although American in accent, is standard and classic, with the slight exception of the sheriff, who uses a few more colourful expressions (e.g. "Hot creepers" to indicate surprise).

GRAMMAR

The most conspicuous thing about the language use in this film is its use of modals or 'quasi modals', both simple and complex. "Can" is used very frequently, mostly in the Italian sense of "potere", but sometimes not quite. "When I send my wife her alimony, you can lick the stamps". That would probably be a future or conditional tense in Italian: the lover is making a hypothesis, but is close to believing it. However, when he suggests "You could laze around here a while longer", he is making a vague suggestion, with no belief attached. "Where could he have gone?". The woman has no idea, here.

There is little use of “must” in the film: most is “have to” “I have to go, Sam”; “You have to put your shoes on”; “She had to raise me all by herself”; “She didn’t have to work”. These are external imperatives, dictated by society or the life the people lead. There are exceptions: “I must be one of those faces people can’t help believing”; “That must be my mother”; “It must have been a strain!”: conjecture – the person talking is pretty sure that what he says is true (or wants to give that impression).

SHOULD and OUGHT TO: “A man should have a hobby”; “You shouldn’t have bothered”; “You SHOULD mind” = a positive stance, something you are happy about. “You girls ought to get your boss to air-condition you up!”; “One thing people never ought to be when buying cars is in a hurry” ... Here, the person speaking is NOT happy about the situation, but doubts there will be any immediate remedy.

VOCABULARY

<p>"They also pay who sleep in hotel rooms": reworking of a famous line in a poem by Milton on his blindness (sonnet XIX) "They also serve [God] who only stand and wait"</p>	<p>You think I'm fruity: play on words: Fruity=crazy. Norman's mother is being sarcastic about being put in the fruit cellar</p>
<p>fancy (adj): elaborate, showy, superior</p>	<p>dank: unpleasantly cold and damp</p>
<p>parlour: a room used for talking or receiving guests</p>	<p>socked away: stashed, stored, hidden, put in a safe place</p>
<p>to pry: to try to find out about somebody's private business</p>	<p>pull over: bring the car to the side of the road and stop</p>
<p>to claw: to scratch with the nails, like a wild beast</p>	<p>pink slip: a document proving your car is in good condition and safe to drive</p>
<p>"If it doesn't gel, it isn't aspic": basically "I don't believe it"/ "It doesn't feel right". Aspic is savoury gelatin and "to gel" is to start solidifying</p>	<p>to have the guts: to have the courage</p>
	<p>clamped: blocked, stuck</p>
<p>"Old habits die hard": proverbial saying: it's very difficult to stop doing what you've been used to doing for a long time</p>	<p>(doesn't/wouldn't) budge: something that refuses to move or someone whose opinion you can't change</p>
<p>"Drop it in the lap of the law": let the police take care of it</p>	<p>stuffy: an atmosphere where you perceive a lack of oxygen in the air</p>
<p>To throw someone over: to stop seeing s.o. you are (romantically) involved with, usually because you prefer someone else</p>	<p>(To get down to the) nuts and bolts: to consider the basics, practical details</p>