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**"A MARVELLOUSLY DRAMATIC SUBJECT":
HITCHCOCK'S TITANIC PROJECT**

Abstract:

This paper focuses on the Titanic film that Alfred Hitchcock was scheduled to make as his first Hollywood production in 1939, and considers, with the help of archival research, both why it was not made, and what form it might have taken. Its central strategy is the creation of a scene-by-scene shadow version of the unmade film, using shipboard sequences from a wide range of films that Hitchcock did make between 1926 and 1944, and constructing a narrative with a clear beginning, middle, and end (shipwreck and rescue). While this strategy is a playful one, it also aims to make serious points about Hitchcock's affinity with the subject, linking it closely to – for instance – the pair of films he made shortly before his move to Hollywood (*The Lady Vanishes*, 1938) and shortly after (*Foreign Correspondent*, 1940), both of which put their characters through severe ordeals in the course of a journey. Finally, it is argued that the Titanic story, whose ending we know in advance, is not at all at odds with the concept of suspense as Hitchcock understood and practised it.

Key words: Alfred Hitchcock, Titanic, David Selznick, suspense, disaster movie, classical Hollywood

Hitchcock's Hollywood career began so successfully with *Rebecca* that it's easy to forget that David Selznick had originally brought him from England with an altogether different project in mind. To quote John Russell Taylor's authorised biography: "In May 1938, when Hitchcock was in the middle of shooting *The Lady Vanishes*, Selznick put forward [for the first time] a concrete proposal: he would like Hitch to come over to Hollywood forthwith to start work on a production based on the sinking of the *Titanic*."¹

This was still the intention six months later, to judge from an interview published in an English film magazine on 5th November in which Hitchcock called it "a marvellously dramatic subject for a motion picture"². By this time, however, Daphne du Maurier's novel *Rebecca* had been published. Selznick bought the rights and suggested it could become Hitchcock's second film for him. There were various delays in getting the *Titanic* film set up, they started with *Rebecca* instead, and Hitchcock never did make *Titanic*.

A wide-ranging three-day conference about the *Titanic* was mounted at the University of Southampton in July 2000, close to the port from which the ship set out on its first and last voyage towards New York in April 1912.³ Many of the conference papers referred to existing film versions of the story, the main emphasis not surprisingly being on the 1997 production by James Cameron. I volunteered a paper on Hitchcock's unmade *Titanic* film, thinking that I could just about fill 20 minutes with some speculative remarks, but the slot allotted was a one-hour plenary, and suddenly it was too late to protest. How could one talk for this long about a film which was not just unmade, but little documented? There is, in fact, rather more documentation than I realised at the time, but ignorance of it is understandable, since it shows up hardly at all in the main Hitchcock and Selznick literature. Leonard Leff's definitive study of the two men's collaboration has only two minor references to the *Titanic* project, and it goes completely unmentioned both in David Thomson's recent biography of Selznick and in Jane Sloan's massive Hitchcock bibliography.⁴ There is not much more in the standard biographies of Hitchcock by Taylor and Spoto, or in the more recent one by Patrick McGilligan⁵. There is nothing surprising about this, since Hitchcock never got down to serious work on a *Titanic* script, and there is, after all, a lot more to write about in the shape of richly documented projects which he and Selznick did succeed in realising, both separately and together.

We do, however, have not only some quotations and documents which throw light on how the project was, in a very preliminary way, being approached, but also a fair bit of material, actually filmed by Hitchcock, which provides an additional angle on how he might have developed a *Titanic* story. Seeking out an appropriate boat scene or two to show from among the films directed by him, I came to realise that there were enough such scenes to put together into a narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end. If Hitchcock was inconsiderate enough never to have made his *Titanic* film, one could, in a sense, do it for him. Ten minutes of the one-hour slot were therefore gratefully taken up with a film compilation, and from that point the paper effectively

wrote itself. The film was fun to put together, and I think the audience enjoyed it too. Copyright factors prevent it being more widely circulated, but readers familiar with at least some of the originals will be able to reconstruct it in the mind's eye; indeed, those with access to the right prints have every chance to put together more polished alternative versions. What follows is a summary of the compilation, and then a version of the paper based on it .

Ten-Minute *Titanic*

Hitchcock director credit against background of waves and rocks (*The Manx-man*). Title indicates destination: "America". Couple leave house, take train, embark, enter cabin (*Champagne*). Another couple embark, fail to get a cabin (*Foreign Correspondent*). A third couple, Fred and Emily, embark; ship leaves (*Rich and Strange*). Wife waves from shore to departing husband, who settles on deck (*The Pleasure Garden*). Hitchcock on deck of a ship at sea (*home movies*). Descriptive sequence of shipboard life (Fred looking ill). Title: 'Night at Sea'; Emily on deck with attentive older man (*Rich and Strange*). Stormy night, couple on deck, love scene (*Foreign Correspondent*). Fred in bed in cabin: nauseous response to sight of the menu (*Rich and Strange*). Another young man on bed in cabin, looks out at the sea (*Downhill*). Ship in collision, is holed, starts to sink, Fred and Emily trapped: water seeps under cabin door... then they escape via porthole (*Rich and Strange*). Men and women struggling to stay afloat in the ocean (*Foreign Correspondent*). Man rescues woman from water (*Number Seventeen*). More struggling in the water (*Foreign Correspondent*). Ship's funnel sinks beneath waves – debris floats past. Lifeboat with survivors, one of whom speaks of "the sea, so big and terrible". Hitchcock's second cameo, via newspaper slimming advertisement (*Lifeboat*). Survivors spot ship steaming towards them and identify it as American (*Foreign Correspondent*). The End: a Selznick production (*Rebecca*).

Cumulatively, I think this set of extracts does two things. Firstly, it confirms that Hitchcock was extremely interested in setting stories, or key elements of stories, at sea: the *Titanic* story would in many ways have been an absolute natural for him. Secondly, it helps to suggest some ways in which he might have been inclined to shape a film about the *Titanic*. *Might have, would have, could have...* formulations of this kind will inevitably recur, but I hope that such speculation is sufficiently grounded to make the exercise worthwhile.⁶

From the *Odyssey* and the book of *Exodus* onward, and no doubt before, journeys have been a central feature of narrative, for obvious reasons. The physical journey can function as a symbolic or spiritual journey: the passage from place to place, or from continent to continent, can function as a national, and/or personal, *rite of passage*. Hitchcock was always ready to exploit this in the classic manner. In the days before World War 2, sea journeys were, like train journeys, a much more central feature of life than they have since become, train and boat having been so much displaced, in films as in life, by car and aeroplane; in doing a lot of boat travel himself, and featuring it in his films, Hitchcock was not, for someone of his generation, unusual. But he does



BOARDING – *CHAMPAGNE* (1928)



MID-OCEAN – *RICH AND STRANGE* (1931)



SINKING – *LIFEBOAT* (1944)



HITCHCOCK'S APPEARANCE – *LIFEBOAT* (1944)



THE COUPLE – *RICH AND STRANGE* (1931)



THE COUPLE – *FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT* (1940)

seem to have had a particularly strong feeling for it. His major script collaborator of the 1930s, Charles Bennett, has testified that when Hitchcock felt that a script was not developing in the right way, he once hired a large boat to take them down the Thames for a floating script conference⁷. The place he chose to propose marriage to Alma Reville, at the outset of their joint careers in the mid-1920s, was on board ship, at night, in the middle of a channel crossing⁸. And I think analysis would confirm that watery settings of various kinds, oceanic and otherwise, are at least as prominent in Hitchcock's films as in those of any other film-maker. (Think ahead, for instance, to *Strangers on a Train*, 1951, where the killer stalks his victim by boat, and subsequently escapes the same way; to *The Birds*, 1963, where the first attack on Melanie Daniels takes place at the end of her complacent two-way boat journey across a lake; to *Marnie*, 1964, where key scenes in the relationship of Mark and Marnie are played out at sea, on the honeymoon cruise; and to early and late scenes between Paul Newman and Julie Andrews in *Torn Curtain*, 1966, set on passenger ships in Scandinavian waters).

But let's go back and look in more detail at the earlier films used in the compilation, in the chronological order of their production:

The Pleasure Garden (1926), Hitchcock's first film as director, supplies the scene of the woman waving as the boat departs. It is carrying her husband back to his job in Africa, and the physical distancing is also an emotional distancing, as his flirtatious behaviour on deck already begins to suggest. *Downhill* (1927), Hitchcock's fourth film, supplies the shots of the young man (Ivor Novello) lying on his bed, and looking out of the porthole: he is on his way back home to his family after traumatic experiences in France. *Champagne* (1928) contributes the first scene, of the rather sinister older man taking the heroine, Betty Balfour, onto the boat. It's an strongly Oedipal story, much of which is played out at sea, on two separate Transatlantic crossings, one in each direction. *The Manxman* (1929) simply provides Hitchcock's director credit, against a suggestive background of water and rocks. The story is set on the Isle of Man, and a sea journey to South Africa and back is a key factor in the narrative, but it takes place mainly offscreen. *Rich and Strange* (1931) is the first sound film used, and features more prominently in the compilation than any other. A childless couple, Fred and Emily, go on a world cruise, have various adventures, and return home at the end, like Novello in *Downhill*, sadder and wiser. The main shipboard extracts are taken from this film, including the documentary-type material of crew and passenger activity, and the crucial element of the shipwreck. A short scene from near the end of *Number Seventeen* (1932) is fitted in after that shipwreck. A boat train has gone out of control at the ferryport and crashed into the water; the woman being rescued, and the man who rescues her, are about to form a romantic couple. The cameo appearance of Hitchcock on deck is taken, possibly, from a *home movie* of his Transatlantic journey in 1939, making the momentous career transition from Britain to Hollywood⁹. His first Hollywood film, *Rebecca* (1940), provides the end credit, a reminder that his *Titanic* film would have been a Selznick production. *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), starring Joel McCrea and Laraine Day, was the film he made directly after *Rebecca*, and is the next most abundant

source of footage for the compilation after *Rich and Strange*. In addition to an embarkation and a love scene, it provides the main images of people struggling in the water, and the sighting of the American rescue ship. Finally, *Lifeboat* (1943) is set entirely on a lifeboat adrift in the Atlantic, after an American ship is sunk by a U-Boat, and it supplies the scenes that begin with the ship's funnel being swallowed up by the sea.

Consistently, then, these films associate the sea voyage, and the water, with themes of ordeal, of change, and of romance. The two most suggestive, from the point of view of the *Titanic* project, are clearly *Rich and Strange* and *Foreign Correspondent*. The former is like a prototype or sketch for it, including as it does the scenes of the ship being hit and fatally damaged. The communication of disaster by the carefully managed offscreen sounds of screams and running footsteps – the rising panic as the couple find themselves trapped – the telling detail of the water sliding under the door: these are the kinds of element that could very plausibly have been reworked in Hitchcock's *Titanic*. And *Foreign Correspondent* can, I will argue, be seen as in some ways a displaced version of the *Titanic* film he had by then failed to make.

One striking point about this list is the gap between 1932 and 1939. The series of films which made Hitchcock seriously famous and brought him to the attention of Hollywood contain little or nothing in the way of watery scenes: I refer to the series of six thrillers that begins with *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *The 39 Steps* and ends with *The Lady Vanishes*. They are full of significant journeys, but either these are not sea journeys or, if they are, they are not shown¹⁰. However, I think these films further reinforce the sense of the *Titanic* project being an entirely appropriate one for Hitchcock. For one thing, as I point out in my book on *English Hitchcock*, they have in common a tight and lucidly organised *time-span* of a few days and nights: three or four or five¹¹. Typical of this is *The Lady Vanishes* – the film that Hitchcock was in the middle of shooting when Selznick lined him up for the *Titanic* project. Day one, in the Alpine hotel; day two, on the train; day three, back to England by boat, though this is covered in a single token long-shot of the the boat; day four, arrival in London. The period of time is comparable to that of an Atlantic crossing; it was on its fifth day out from Southampton that the *Titanic* hit the iceberg.

Moreover, *The Lady Vanishes* is like all of Hitchcock's thriller series of the 1930s, other than *The Man who Knew Too Much*, in creating a new romantic couple in the course of its short time-span – a couple who have not previously met¹². Compare Margaret Lockwood and Michael Redgrave in this film with the couple who meet and fall in love in the four-day narrative of *The 39 Steps*, Robert Donat and Madeleine Carroll, and with the couple who do the same in the five-day narrative of *Young and Innocent*, Nova Pilbeam and Derrick de Marney. Compare, for that matter, the couple who meet and fall in love on board the *Titanic* in James Cameron's film: Kate Winslet and Leonardo di Caprio. That film is a fine example of the merging of a public and a personal story – the story of the ship, and the love story – which is typical of Hollywood narrative, and of which Hitchcock early on became a master, with the indispensable help of his strong writers of the 1930s, Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, who wrote

The Lady Vanishes, and Charles Bennett, who did the main constructional work on the other five in the series. *The Lady Vanishes*, like *The 39 Steps*, but unlike *Rich and Strange*, involves its romantic couple in a strong public story, centred on a conflict with sinister foreign powers, and on the penetrating depiction of a cross-section of British society. In fact, I see *The Lady Vanishes* as the third crucial film for the imagining of Hitchcock's *Titanic*, alongside *Rich and Strange* and *Foreign Correspondent*.

What made *Titanic* an attractive project in the late 1930s? Partly the sheer size and drama that have, ever since 1912, drawn writers, film-makers and audiences to the story; but it also relates suggestively to two contemporary media phenomena. Firstly, the fascination with disaster manifested most spectacularly in three diverse media events: the real-life Hindenberg airship disaster, subject of a celebrated live radio report in 1937, the Orson Welles radio adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* broadcast in 1938, and the Korda film of another H. G. Wells story, *Things to Come*, which was made in England in 1936 and had a lasting impact on public consciousness through its picture of the destructive effects of aerial bombardment. All three of these events made an impression out of all proportion to the size of their immediate audience, being much rehearsed and discussed in the media. They demonstrated, and reinforced, a fascination with scenarios of disaster that can plausibly be related to the growth of political tension in Europe (a connection supported by the sociological study of the *War of the Worlds* panic that was made shortly after the broadcast¹³).

The second connection is with a cycle of films of the late 1930s that offered a particular take on British class society, and that were popular with American audiences – films ranging from the Hollywood film of *David Copperfield*, produced by Selznick himself in 1935, to the high-budget films that MGM produced, very successfully, in Britain a few years later. *A Yank at Oxford*, 1937, and *Goodbye Mr Chips*, 1939, offered particularly colourful, affectionate, sentimental pictures of a Britain steeped in class and tradition. The latter was produced for MGM-British by Hitchcock's old associate Victor Saville, whose career had run very much in parallel with his, and who likewise relocated from Britain to Hollywood in 1939¹⁴. What could be more suitable as the first Hollywood project for the director who had become the *titan* of British cinema, in terms of reputation as of build, than this quintessentially Anglo-American story of the voyage of a ship that housed, and seemed to epitomise, the British class system – like the Brookfield School of *Goodbye Mr Chips*, whose narrative spans the years 1870 to 1928, and which even refers in passing to the sinking of the *Titanic*? *The Lady Vanishes*, which foregrounds British eccentricities more systematically and wittily than any of Hitchcock's previous films, immediately became a greater success than any of them in America, and operates, in a sense, like a *Titanic* on train wheels: the complacency of the British travellers is threatened by disaster *en route*, a disaster which leads some to behave cravenly, others heroically.

Why then, with so much apparently going for it, was *Titanic* not made? It has sometimes been said, even by Hitchcock himself, that it was just not a suitable subject for him, but I hope to have established that this is far from the truth. To argue, as Simon

Mills does, that “even the Master [of Suspense] would have had difficulty injecting suspense into a film where the entire audience would be anticipating disaster before it is even begun” is, surely, to misread the concept of suspense, as opposed to surprise, that Hitchcock consistently both articulated and practised¹⁵. Hitchcock’s own comments are, as so often, inconclusive, indeed contradictory. To support the claim that the project was a ‘hopeless’ one from the start, Spoto quotes him as follows:

“I remember thinking that the only way to make it cinematic would be to start the opening credits on a tight close-up on a huge rivet on the side of the ship. The camera would then dolly back as the credits roll – slowly, very slowly – and two hours later the audience would at last see the whole ship in long shot and I would flash the words *The End*. Nothing else really struck me as very interesting.”¹⁶

This striking conceit – suggesting an inversion, at twice the length, of Michael Snow’s classic structuralist exercise of 1967, *Wavelength* – comes from a conversation dated 1977. A year earlier, Hitchcock had shown much greater retrospective enthusiasm in an interview for *Rolling Stone* magazine:

“I wanted to go to a card table, where four men were playing poker: go close to the whiskey and soda... the level is changing in the glass, tilting, you see... We might go down to the kitchen and I’d see a chef is putting the final touches to a beautiful cake with a pastry bag... And the audience would say, “Don’t bother! Don’t bother! It’s never going to be eaten! The ship’s going down!”¹⁷

Since he had in 1938, in the interview quoted at the start, called the *Titanic* disaster “a marvellously dramatic subject for a motion picture”, it’s not at all hard to imagine the project developing a strong momentum on the back of such vivid ideas, provided he had been brought together at the right moment, as he always needed to be, with an appropriate writer or two, ready to provide a strong structural framework.

This came closer to happening than is commonly realised. The one reference found in the main literature to any kind of *Titanic* script comes from Donald Spoto, who mentions a novel by Wilson Mizner and Carl Harbaugh. It seems that this was in fact a screenplay, written earlier for Howard Hughes at RKO, which long predated Hitchcock’s involvement, and which no-one took very seriously¹⁸. However, an enterprising piece of research by Eric Schaefer in the mid-1980s turned up a lot of additional material in the Selznick papers housed at the University of Texas at Austin; the resulting article deserves wider circulation than it got in that University’s in-house *Library Chronicle*¹⁹. Schaefer discovered that, after another false start, “the hope that an acceptable script could be developed finally returned with the hiring of English novelist Richard Blaker, who attacked the project under the watchful eye of [Val] Lewton and with input from Selznick”. On 18th November 1938, Blaker submitted a 22-page treatment, which Schaefer describes as “compelling”. He indicates that its time-frame is at the other extreme from the compact model of Hitchcock’s most recent films (or of the Cameron *Titanic*), in that it opens with the building of the ship and ends, after the disaster, with the launch of a sister-ship; but it resembles them in being centred (predictably enough) on a range of personal stories, including that of “a young couple in love”.

Despite Lewton's enthusiasm, "Selznick was dissatisfied, and Blaker returned to England".²⁰ Hitchcock himself was still in England at this time; there is no indication as to whether he was directly involved in discussion of the Blaker treatment, then or subsequently, though further trawling of the Selznick archives might throw light on this question. Schaefer did, however, find memoranda showing that Hitchcock, after his arrival in Hollywood, made two positive suggestions for developing a new *Titanic* script. One was to involve the novelist and playwright J. B. Priestley, who had worked in a minor capacity on his last British film, *Jamaica Inn*; but "Priestley proved difficult to negotiate with, and Hitchcock concluded that he would not give them the kind of script they desired". The other suggestion was to use his assistant Joan Harrison, who had accompanied him and his family to Hollywood, and who had likewise had a script credit on *Jamaica Inn*. The idea was that she would go back to England "to do more research and to interview survivors".²¹ However, the outbreak of war in Europe soon put paid to this idea – and, indeed, to any possibility of taking the *Titanic* project any further.

By then it was surely already doomed, for a variety of reasons. In retrospect, it is difficult to visualise Selznick ever actually committing himself to handling the logistics of another epic-scale production while still preparing for the release of *Gone With the Wind*, but he evidently did try seriously to get hold of a real ocean liner, the *Leviathan*, to represent the *Titanic*.²² If his failure to do so was one direct factor in the postponement, another was his wish to cash in on the success of the novel *Rebecca* by filming it as soon as possible, so that it became Hitchcock's first Hollywood project rather than his second. Meanwhile, there were problems on another front. Mills and Schaefer between them, using documents found respectively in British official records and in the Selznick Archive, provide a fascinating account of the pressures exerted by British shipowners who were fearful of the adverse effects that a *Titanic* film might have on their business, and who started to mobilise official support for their case²³. But the danger was more than simply commercial. *Titanic* would surely have been an exceptionally awkward subject for an English director, and for a predominantly Anglophile Hollywood, to undertake at this period of international tension and of apparently imminent war. The forces which threaten the British characters of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *The 39 Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes*, creating ordeals through which they come, for the most part, triumphantly, are malignant ones that represent a spreading European fascism; you can't get away from the fact that the iceberg is an impersonal force that hits the ship, and is fatal to the ship, primarily because of British carelessness and complacency. As the 1943 German *Titanic* film shows, the story was rather more easily adaptable, at this time, into a German propaganda vehicle than an Allied or neutral one²⁴.

Directly after *Rebecca*, however, Hitchcock did direct, in *Foreign Correspondent*, the single most vigorous piece of pro-Allied propaganda to come out of Hollywood before Pearl Harbor. Reunited, for the last time, with Charles Bennett as script-writer, he treated the raw material, a reporter's account of rising tension in Europe in the 1930s, in the same manner as one guesses he would have wanted to treat the raw material of the *Titanic* story. That is, the material becomes not just a public story – in this

case, the countdown to war – but a personal one, a love story with, as so often in Hitchcock's work from the 1920s to the 1970s, intensely Oedipal dimensions; indeed this personal story becomes, in the classic manner, the *vehicle* for the public story. In the course of his personal and political rite of passage, the America reporter, played by Joel McCrea, encounters representatives of Britain, notably the George Sanders character, who seem eccentrically decadent but show steel in a crisis. The climax is a Transatlantic crossing from England to America, but by aeroplane rather than ocean liner. The plane is brought down, but by German gunfire rather than a natural hazard, with the results that are included in the climactic part of the compilation film: a desperate struggle to stay afloat, which some survive and others don't, and then a rescue, leading to a successfully upbeat ending, in both personal and political terms. Like some of his other films, *Rich and Strange* in particular, *Foreign Correspondent* offers strong clues as to how Hitchcock might have handled the *Titanic* story, in different circumstances, and at a different time.

As early as 1927, Hitchcock wrote an article for a London newspaper setting out the opportunities that lay ahead for British film-makers. Though it may seem that "the Americans have left us very few stories to tell", he insists on the cinematic potential of narratives rooted in British life, and his list of examples builds to this climax: "And there is the sea, our particular heritage: not only the Navy, but the great business of the mercantile marine should have a place on our screens".²⁵ *Titanic* could have been a decisive fulfilment, at once spectacular and dangerous, of this aspiration. Having started out with only a vague awareness of, and interest in, Hitchcock's *Titanic* project, I now regard it as – like his *Mary Rose* – one of the most tantalisingly attractive of all unmade films.

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<http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-16002-5/hitchcock-annual>

Endnotes:

¹ John Russell Taylor: *Hitch, The Life and Work of Alfred Hitchcock* (London, Faber and Faber, 1978), 148.

² "The Censor Wouldn't Pass It": Alfred Hitchcock interviewed by J. Danvers Williams in *Film Weekly*, 5th November 1938, 6-7. The two-page spread is reproduced in Ken Mogg *et al*, *The Alfred Hitchcock Story* (London: Titan Books [!], 1999), p 183, and the text is reprinted in Sidney Gottlieb (ed), *Hitchcock on Hitchcock* (London/California, Faber and Faber, 1995), 196-201.

³ "Nights to Remember: Memory, Modernity, and the Myth of the Titanic", Conference held at the University of Southampton, 20-23 July 2000. I am grateful to Professor Pam Cook, the Conference Director, for encouraging me to research this paper.

⁴ Leonard J. Leff: *Hitchcock and Selznick* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988); David Thomson, *Showman, The Life of David O. Selznick* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993); Jane Sloan, *Alfred Hitchcock: A Filmography and Bibliography* (California/London, University of California Press, 1995).

⁵ Taylor, *op cit*; Donald Spoto: *The Life of Alfred Hitchcock: The Dark Side of Genius* (London, Collins, 1983); Patrick McGilligan, *Alfred Hitchcock: a Life in Darkness and Light* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2003)

⁶ For their help in making my speculation more grounded than it would otherwise have been, through their books and then by personal communication, I am especially grateful to Sid Got-

tlieb and to Simon Mills. Gottlieb, *op.cit.*; Simon Mills, *The Titanic in Pictures* (Chesham, England: Wordsmith, 1995).

⁷ Charles Bennett interviewed in Lee Server: *Screenwriter: Words Become Pictures* (Pittstown: Main Street Press, 1987), 21.

⁸ Hitchcock's account of his proposal of marriage to Alma Reville is given in, for instance, Spoto, 65.

⁹ The footage of Hitchcock on deck is taken from the programme on Hitchcock in the *Omnibus* series, directed by Tristram Powell and broadcast in two parts on BBC TV in 1985.

¹⁰ A minor exception here is the film that followed *The 39 Steps*, *Secret Agent* (1936), but a climactic train journey has much greater weight.

¹¹ Charles Barr: *English Hitchcock* (Moffat, Scotland: Cameron and Hollis, 1999), chapters 5 and 6.

¹² It seems possible that the romantic couple of *Sabotage* (1936), played by Sylvia Sidney and John Loder, have met casually before the four-day narrative begins, but this does not affect the basic pattern.

¹³ See Hadley Cantril: *The Invasion from Mars: A Study of the Psychology of Panic* (New York: Harper & Row, 1940)

¹⁴ For more on Saville, and the links with Hitchcock, see Charles Barr, "Desperate Yearnings: Victor Saville and Gainsborough", in Pam Cook (ed): *Gainsborough Pictures* (London, British Film Institute, 1997). On the cycle of Anglo-centric Hollywood films, see Mark Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain: the Hollywood 'British' Film 1939-1945* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999)

¹⁵ Mills, 39

¹⁶ Spoto, 180

¹⁷ Chris Hodenfield, "Muuuurder by the Babbling Brook", in *Rolling Stone*, 29 July 1976; quoted by Leff, p 34.

¹⁸ Spoto, 179; contrast Mills, 34, and Schaefer (see next note), 59.

¹⁹ Eric Schaefer, "The Sinking of David O. Selznick's 'Titanic'", *Library Chronicle of The University of Texas at Austin*, 36 (1986), pp.57-73. I am indebted to Bob Peck and Simon Mills for telling me about this, and providing a copy.

²⁰ Schaefer, 71. I have found no evidence of any film credits for Richard Blaker (1893-1940), who published a dozen novels between 1922 and 1938. Though he went back to his home in England after writing the *Titanic* treatment, he soon returned to California, and died there in February 1940, evidently from the after-effects of active service in World War 1. Details from Stanley Kunitz and Howard Haycraft (eds), *Twentieth Century Authors* (New York: H.H.Wilson, 1942)

²¹ Schaefer, 72. For more data on Priestley and Harrison, see Barr, *English Hitchcock*, 242

²² Mills pp 32-33

²³ Mills pp 34-37, based on material found among the Board of Trade files in the Public Record Office in Kew, London. Hitchcock himself refers to this pressure in the *Film Weekly* interview: "The shipping companies are trying to prevent me making the picture. They seem to think that if I recapture all the horror and violence of the situation it will stop people going on cruises". As late as 1957, the producer of a new *Titanic* film for the Rank Organisation encountered similar concerted opposition: see William MacQuitty, *Titanic Memories: the Making of A Night to Remember* (London: National Maritime Museum, 2000), pp 13-15. Schaefer quotes reports sent to Selznick by an American diplomat in London, Arthur Houghton, of a tense meeting that he attended in September 1938 along with Hitchcock and representatives of the shipowners.

²⁴ *Titanic*: Tobis Films, 1943, directed by Herbert Selpin and Werner Klingler. Details in Mills, chapter 4: "Goebbels' Folly".

²⁵ *Evening News*, 16th November 1927; quoted by Spoto, 102.

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**“VELIČANSTVENO DRAMATIČNA TEMA”:
HIČKOKOV PROJEKAT *TITANIK***

Sažetak:

Tekst se bavi nerealizovanim filmom *Titanik* koji je trebalo da bude prvi koji će Alfred Hičkok snimiti u holivudskoj produkciji po dolasku u SAD 1939. godine. Istraživanje je prevashodno oblikovano traganjem za odgovorima na pitanja: zašto film nije snimljen i koju formu je mogao da ima? Glavna strategija sastojala se u kreiranju imaginarnog filma – sa jasnim početkom, razradom i krajem (brodolom i spasavanje) – za koji su poslužile scene iz nekoliko Hičkokovih ostvarenja nastalih između 1926. i 1944. godine. Iako ova ideja može da bude shvaćena kao svojevrsna zabavna igra, ona zapravo precizno ukazuje na rediteljev afinitet prema temi, očigledan u nekolicini filmova snimljenih neposredno pre (*Dama koja nestaje*, 1938) i nakon njegovog dolaska u Holivud (*Inostrani dopisnik*, 1940). U oba filma glavni likovi prolaze kroz ozbiljna iskušenja tokom putovanja. Konačno, u tekstu se tvrdi da saga o Titaniku, čiji kraj je unapred poznat, uopšte nije u suprotnosti sa konceptom napetosti kako ga je Hičkok shvatao i primenjivao.

Ključne reči: Alfred Hičkok, *Titanik*, Dejvid Selznik, napetost, filmovi katastrofe, klasični Holivud

(KATEGORIJA ČLANKA: NAUČNI ČLANAK – ORIGINALNI NAUČNI RAD)