

HELL

The Marriage of Heaven and

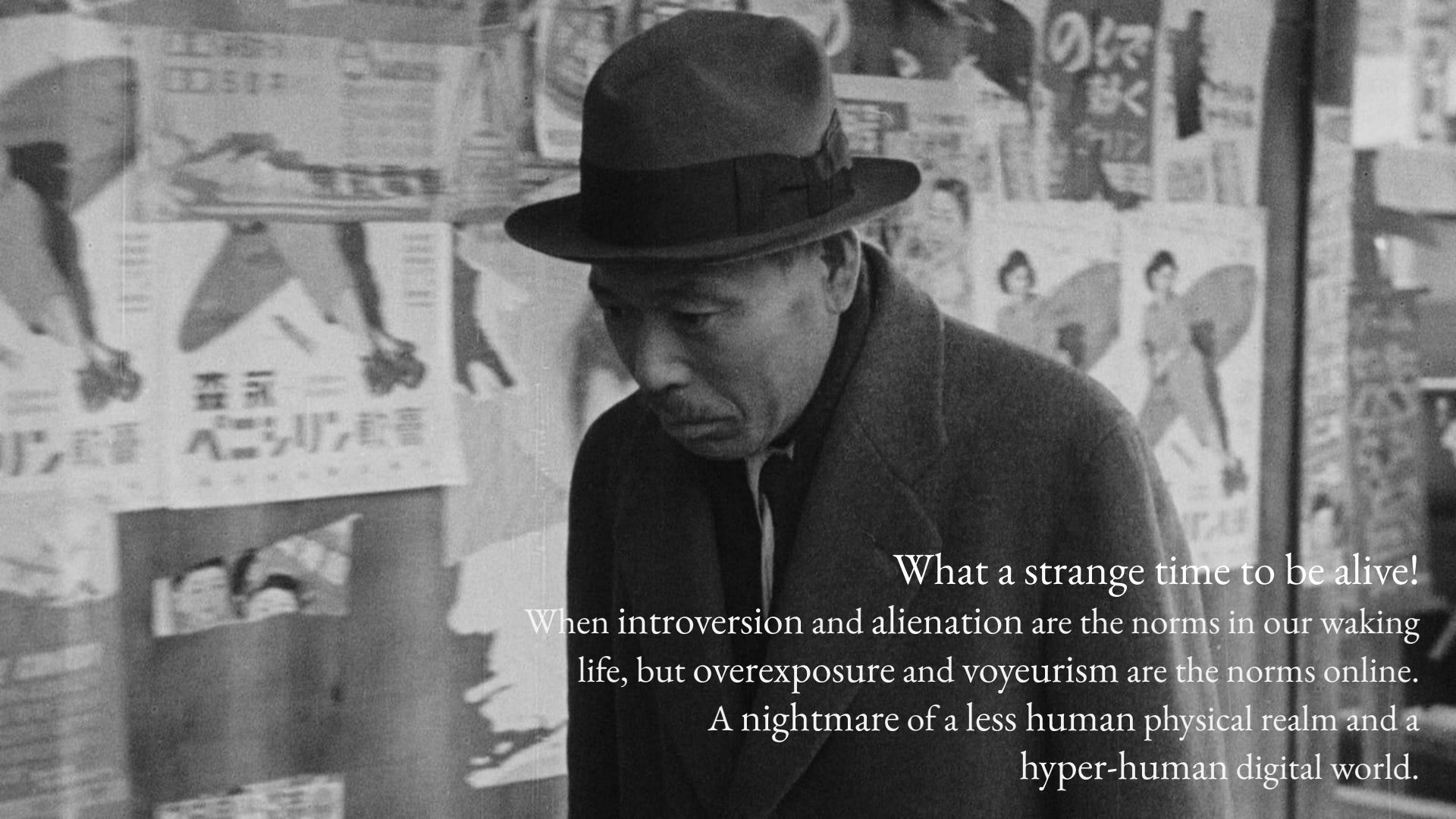


A film by Finn Mactaggart

“There certainly is a demonic state of being, but it appears to be really an intensification of the human one.”

The Double Vision by Northrop Frye





What a strange time to be alive!
When introversion and alienation are the norms in our waking
life, but overexposure and voyeurism are the norms online.
A nightmare of a less human physical realm and a
hyper-human digital world.

WHAT IF
IT WERE EASY?



Outline



A nameless academic journeys to a storied university for an interview, but strikes and protests perpetually postpone his moment of recognition, suspending him in a decaying medieval town. In his hotel room, he finds a peephole to the room next door and becomes fascinated with spying on its ephebic inhabitant. The townspeople attempt to guide him through the intellectual crisis which his voyeurism unleashes, but he remains stubbornly wedded to his own self-destruction.



Thèmes

Our story is concerned with the themes of symbolist literature: a diabolical awakening of desire in a deadening urban environ; irrational phenomena, such as delirium, shadowy silhouettes and repeated sounds that haunt a solitary tragic figure; and crowds which drive themselves toward incomplete acts. These gravely mischievous motifs, an impressionistic rallying cry against objectivity, emphasise a keen sense of mortality.

“Lust, fruit of death upon the tree of life.”

Albert Samain.

Characters

MARTYN TOPE



"The Academic"



ARTUS HOLON





THE EMANATION



THARMONIAN



LOVELOCK
"The Boy"

Vamps



Class Relations by Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (1984)



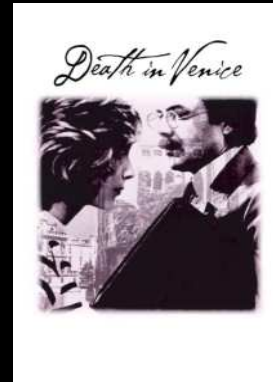
Vampyr by Carl Theodor Dreyer (1932)



The Tenant by Roman Polanski (1976)



Pi by Darren Aronofsky (1998)



Death In Venice by Luchino Visconti (1971)



The Trial by Orson Welles (1962)

Synopsis



Struts arch around a train headed for the coast, passing a glum fishing village populated by neglected traps and lobster pots.





Aboard, MARTYN TOPE. Unable to communicate with anyone around him, he is delivered to a ruined medieval town.

On arrival, he discovers that his hotel is under construction. Nonetheless, a room is found for the desperate soul amongst the paint cans, dust sheets and the sound of clanking hammers.





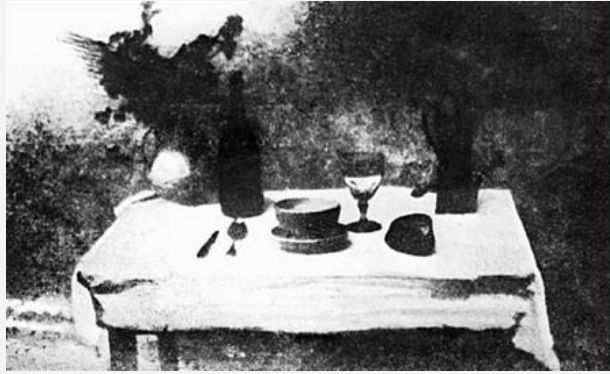
Once settled in his makeshift abode, he discovers a hole in the wall through which the room next door presents itself to his naked eye.



He races downstairs to alert the landlady, ERNA THOMASIN, to the hole, but is interrupted by news that his interview has been rescheduled, owing to a strike.



To kill time, he decides to wander the ancient town. At the harbour, he becomes enraptured with the distant figure of an ephebic beauty, LOVELOCK.



Following LOVELOCK leads him to the university, but his entry is prohibited. Returning to the hotel bar, he encounters ARTUS HOLON, a professor at the university, and interrogates him as to the delay. Talking at cross-purposes, the conversation yields no answers, only more questions about the nature of his visit to this elusive town.





The following morning, MARTYN is informed that his interview has been postponed again, so returns to his room. Peering through the hole, he discovers that LOVELOCK is the occupant next door and watches him have sex with one of the construction workers at the hotel.

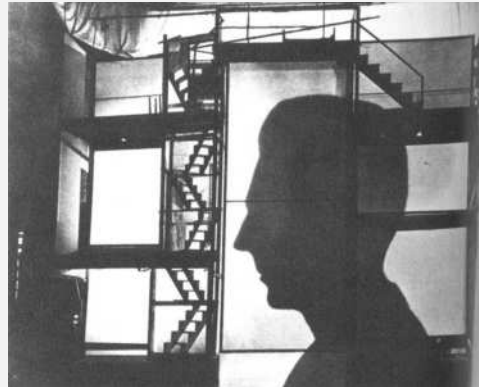




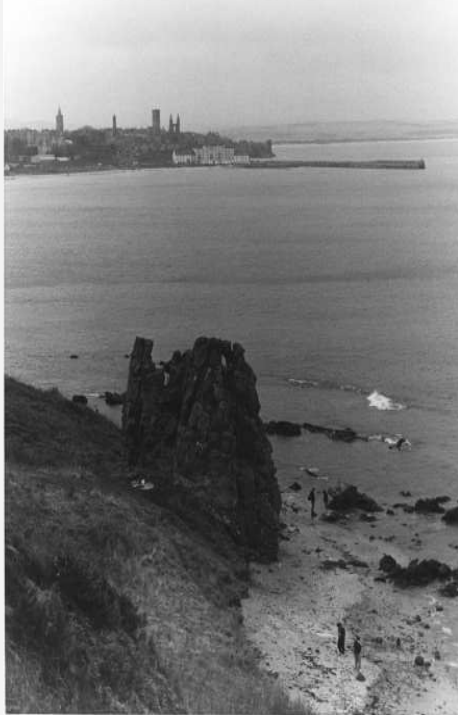
MARTYN finally readies himself for his long-awaited interview. ARTUS offers to accompany him and reveals he is working on a new book about a man who has closed himself up that he can only experience the world “through a narrow chink in his cavern”. Panicked that his voyeurism has been discovered, MARTYN escapes to his room, ineluctably drawn back to the hole. In his mania, he bangs his head on a hook and collapses, blood pouring down his face. ARTUS enters and drags him to his interview.



MARTYN wakes in a daze, still bleeding, in a room with no walls, facing a beach. His interview is conducted by the radiant figure of THARMONIAN. Afraid, he clambers out of his chair and escapes.



MARTYN stumbles out onto the beach. In the distance, he sees LOVELOCK bounding about in the sea joyfully. Hopelessly seeking some certainty, MARTYN begins to count the grains of sand.



Statement

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell is a protest against the financialization of daily life, a nightmare scenario in which quantification has become the only means of ascertaining the true and the good. Liberalism has freed modern man from the expectations of custom and tradition, and yet by conceiving nature along modern scientific lines as a vast machine governed by mechanical laws, it determines its subjects as driven by purely animalistic desires. The liberal state guarantees rights to the atomised individual to pursue these wants but it does not guarantee goods for society as a whole. Consequently, society has become anomic, rootless and without purpose, while for the individual, the exclusive focus on private ends has only led to conformism.

MARTYN TOPE (an anagram of *pantometry*) represents the paradigmatic liberal subject: a mediocre philistine awash in the carnage of total anarchy. The university represents an alternative state, articulated by the figure of ARTUS HOLON who attempts to introduce MARTYN to absolute wisdom, represented by THARMONIAN. However, his empiricism limits his ability to engage with such wisdom: since only the finite is unproblematically real to him, that which is infinite is denied existence. LOVELOCK, a figure whose beauty should initiate his contemplation of the sacred becomes an idol through his voyeurism. In mistaking desire for the part with desire for the whole, LOVELOCK is fetishized. MARTYN safeguards alienation and non-reconciliation in order to maintain this perverse stance. When everything is exposed to the eye, there is no longer anything to see, so this erotic experience in fact perpetuates indifference. This hypervisibility of matter is also the imminence of the end, the sign of the apocalypse.

MARTYN demands clarity and exactness, indicative of a mind which delights in breaking things down into logical component parts. Necessarily, this nihilistic drive toward the total elimination of contradictions results in his own breakdown. That truth which logic determines as $A = A$ is merely the determination of a simple and static immediate. Contradictions, however, are the engine of all movement and vitality. This “point of indifference” which MARTYN thinks of as truth is death. Without insight into the dependence of his *humanitas* on the universal culture of reason, he is left to count grains of sand on the beach.

Location



Cadragé
12 Mar 2025 at 2:27:35 PM
Film 16mm | 16mm | 1.78:1
Generic Zoom Lenses | H: 65.5" V: 39.8" D: 72.9" 8mm
TILT -7° 5 195°



Cadragé
12 Mar 2025 at 12:47:20 PM
Film 16mm | 16mm | 1.78:1
Generic Zoom Lenses | H: 65.5" V: 39.8" D: 72.9" 8mm
TILT -8° NW 294°



Cadragé
12 Mar 2025 at 12:54:43 PM
Film 16mm | 16mm | 1.78:1
Generic Zoom Lenses | H: 65.5" V: 39.8" D: 72.9" 8mm
TILT -3° NE 33°



Cadragé
12 Mar 2025 at 2:02:33 PM
Film 16mm | 16mm | 1.78:1
Generic Zoom Lenses | H: 65.5" V: 39.8" D: 72.9" 8mm
TILT -90° W 264°



Cadragé
12 Mar 2025 at 1:12:35 PM
Film 16mm | 16mm | 1.78:1
Generic Zoom Lenses | H: 63.5" V: 36.3" D: 70.7" 8.3mm
TILT -1° SW 222°



Cadragé
12 Mar 2025 at 1:09:39 PM
Film 16mm | 16mm | 1.78:1
Generic Zoom Lenses | H: 63.5" V: 36.3" D: 70.7" 8.3mm
TILT 36° SW 228°





Style

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell will be shot in monochrome because it is a film about first principles. The photographic image begins in monochrome, then naturalism demands it be coloured, as if it should represent precisely that image seen by the human eye. Why? This is a film determined to push against such sentimentalism and focus instead on developing a clear understanding of the operation of light and dark — the fundamental perceptual category.

Interiors will have a studied elegance to them, and an austerity akin to a Vilhelm Hammershoi painting or the dystopic architecture of an Andrei Tarkovsky film. Scenes will be furnished sparingly, but very deliberately, with every object having a function, so as to challenge the idea of a world of things existing apart from man.





Sound

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell will be presented with post synchronised sound in order that image capture be the sole concern of shoot days and to ensure that the sonic aspect be considered as one cohesive whole. This disjunction between sound and image is crucial for creating a space so radically dislocated that it becomes a mental landscape.

Music will not act as an accompaniment to the film, covertly manipulating the audience's sentiments, but as an actor or commentator with a clearly defined role. A window might speak with the voice of a chamber choir and a door may close with the sound of a gong from the Peking Opera. Instruments from around the world will engineer the non-specificity of *Hell*, while low-fidelity electronics and symphonies with ambivalent tonality will determine the audience be active, not soothed by sonic platitudes. Abrupt halts in sound will be used to assert the supremacy of the visual image.

[Listen to the playlist.](#)

Finn Mactaggart

is a filmmaker and creative director based in London. His films have been shown at Spazio Maiocchi in Milan and MoMA PS1 in New York.

Finn began life as Creative Director of irreverent avant-garde record label PC Music which “defined a generation of pop”. Finn directed their sold-out label showcases in London, Beijing and New York, the latter dubbed a “high-concept extravaganza” in a review on the cover of the Arts’ section of the New York Times.

Finn has worked in the fashion industry, soundtracking shows on the London and New York Fashion Week schedules, and gained a reputation as a trusted cultural critic, hosting panels for Tate Britain and SHOWstudio. Finn’s first foray into video was directing the fashion film *Family* for Vogue Fashion Fund winner, Telfar, followed by the short documentary on Telfar’s origins *Lefrak*. Shortly after, Finn captured *The Great American Mud Wrestle*, an off-the-wall mud-wrestling event featuring celebrity contestants like Julia Fox and Lily-Rose Depp. His fashion films for brands such as Wales Bonner and Kiko Kostadinov have been featured on Dazed and i-D.

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