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Children in the Films of Alfred Hitchcock

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"The Future's Not Ours to See": How Children and Young Adults Reflect the Anxiety of Lost Innocence in Alfred Hitchcock's American Movies

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Introduction

In *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), the Ambassador, while plotting to kill the Prime Minister, orders the kidnapped American child Hank McKenna killed, telling his would-be gunman, Edward Drayton: "Don't you realize that Americans dislike having their children stolen?" Earlier in the movie, Jo McKenna entertains her son and husband by singing "Que Sera Sera," and its playfulness becomes darkly ironic when she sings "the future's not ours to see" on the eve of her son's kidnapping.

The movie unfolds as a cat-and-mouse game in which the McKennas desperately try to locate and save their kidnapped son, revealing a recurring Hitchcock narrative device in his American movies: He often situates children and young adults in perilous situations that render adults as powerless to provide protection. This essay examines four of Hitchcock's American movies for how they reflect, through their use of children and young adults, a collective societal anxiety of lost innocence during the so-called era of "Victory Culture": The United States, from the end of WWII to the early onset of Vietnam, saw itself as an emerging and subsequently established world superpower. While Hitchcock is certainly not the first and only filmmaker to use children and young adults as reflections of societal anxiety, he demonstrates a unique ability to utilize them as vessels to mirror societal anxiety about the morally-dubious future of the Western "superpower" state even as that state clings to its morally-righteous "Victory" identity. These four movies—*Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), *The Trouble with Harry* (1955), *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), and *The Birds* (1963)—reveal the heart of this anxiety as a glaring inability to protect or shield children and young adults from the horrors of the modern world—horrors that render an "un-seeable" future, which for the American is contradictory to the nation's mythological vision of shaping and controlling the future.

While an extended critical dialogue concerning Hitchcock's treatment of children and young adults is, for the most part, non-existent, many critics point to *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) as a turning point for Hitchcock the social commentator. It is his first movie to *fully* showcase both a child and a young adult in imminent danger. Robin Wood writes that Hitchcock overcame a "cautious" approach to filmmaking in America to hit full stride "with *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Lifeboat* (the sixth and seventh Hollywood films) [where he] begins to grapple with the realities and mythologies (material, cultural, spiritual, and ideological) of 'America.'"[i] He uses children and young adults as symbols of social anxiety for lost community and as representations of communal stability and as progenitors of human existence. And when the community can no longer protect its children, the community's (or nation's or world's) very existence is jeopardized. As Hitchcock frames them, children and young adults in peril become symbolic of something much larger: Inscribed on their beings are the anxieties of a culture at large—anxieties about murder, war, terrorism, apocalypse, and so forth—and how these anxieties are meant to reflect audiences' own proximity to the horrors of the modern world.[ii]

The American period (particularly the late-WWII to late-1960s period) of Hitchcock's filmmaking can be considered his "Modern" period. While American attitudes shifted quite

radically from post-WW II victory euphoria to Cold War anxiety to Vietnam-era (and after) loss of innocence, so, too, does Hitchcock's attitude toward his narratives' children and young adults (and, of course, the adults who are often rendered powerless to keep them out of harm's way). David Trotter argues that "Hitchcock's films continued to represent human experience from the point of view of representation; while acknowledging, in a manner we might call Modernist, that the nature and scope of representation's 'point of view' had become, more urgently than ever before, the issue."[iii] Not surprisingly, then, given the social climate of the United States, this is the period in which Hitchcock "gets serious," and in which he further complicates the elements of claustrophobia seen in his British movies by drawing upon the events of his childhood to inform the work, such as his infamous jail cell experience: "[Hitchcock] 'recalled a story about his childhood when his father sent him, aged four or five, to the police station with a note asking the sergeant to lock him into a cell for five or ten minutes.'"[iv] Hitchcock was indeed locked in the cell for five minutes, and that incident, along with a parental "abandonment" incident when he has very young (his parents left him alone with a maid), contributed to his fascination with suspense narratives, the conventions of which would make him famous, including: "the unexpected complication," "the subjective camera," "claustrophobia," and "the mind of the murderer."[v] Hitchcock's childhood, as many have argued, shaped his artistic vision, including his "obsession with the detail of suffering—perhaps because of his oversensitive and protected childhood" as well as his "general British interest in crime," most notably murder.[vi]

Hitchcock's emigration to the United States was in fact couched in his desire for more artistic "freedom" in his filmmaking, a direct result of his antagonistic relationship with the British film industry; in the late 1930s, he "began to believe that American audiences would permit him more freedom in his films."[vii] Indisputably, Hitchcock's films during the American period do adhere to certain genre conventions (suspense, psychological thriller, comedy, and even horror). To showcase his children and young adults in peril, Hitchcock often works with genre conventions more commonly associated with the psychological thriller and horror genres, in that he utilizes a threatening, monstrous presence which often serves as the major focus of the narrative. Beyond that, both the source of the monstrous threat and the nature and character of those who combat it and are pursued by it are foregrounded to varying degrees, often leading to a plot sequencing that relies on the stages of "order, disorder, order."[viii]

Finally, many of his movies (including the four films under investigation in this essay) reflect his (and society's) changing attitudes about Americans' ability to shield their children and young adults from the potential harm of the monstrous presence, including a long-standing American film tradition that children must survive. But certainly viewers will remember Hitchcock's British film *Sabotage* (1936), with its terrorist plot leading to the inadvertent death of the child Stevie. Stevie, while unknowingly delivering a bomb for a terrorist, becomes distracted long enough (while petting a puppy, no less) to be killed when it detonates. Hitchcock was not afraid to place the child in harm's way in *Sabotage*, foreshadowing a thematic trend he would continue in his American filmmaking.

Shadow of a Doubt and the Stability of the Idyllic

Hitchcock's monstrous villains are often "charismatic charmers" which "is part of a key Hitchcockian theme: the presence of evil in what seems to be the most innocent of circumstances."[ix] Hence we have the setting for *Shadow of a Doubt*: the idyllic American small town of Santa Rosa, where, as Robin Wood points out, "The small town (still rooted in the

agrarian dream, in ideals of the virgin land as a garden of innocence) and the united happy family are regarded as the real sound heart of American civilization; the ideological project is to acknowledge the existence of sickness and evil but preserve the family from that contamination."[x]

The duality of the Charlies has received a significant amount of critical discussion, for it is in fact the young woman Charlotte "Charlie" Newton who comes of age through her ordeals with her beloved Uncle Charlie, who also happens to be a serial killer known as the "Merry Widow Murderer." Donald Spoto writes that "*Shadow of a Doubt* is really a film about original sin—about a basically imperfectible world, country, family, individual…it concerns an individual who is as yet untempted and untried, and who is forced to undergo a moral education by confronting a 'double.'"[xi] Critics note, moreover, that at the time of *Shadow*'s production, Hitchcock himself "was living with inner demons of lust and possessiveness, of romantic dark fantasies about killing, and of unfulfilled sexual daydreams," and this "duality" is seen in the two Charlies, who form "a spiritual summary of the light and dark sides of Hitchcock."[xii]

Even while Charlie's suspicions of her uncle grow into concrete truth of his deeds, she still withholds information that would incriminate him because the community's integrity ultimately remains at stake. The "light" side of their duality must be preserved while the "dark side" must be removed from the community. But removing it is not enough. All knowledge of its presence within the community must be suppressed so that the community remains stable. At the film's climax, young Charlie pushes Uncle Charlie to his death during a struggle on a moving train—a struggle in which he tries to murder her. This leaves only young Charlie to know his awful secrets. Though she knows of her uncle's true identity, she chooses to let the secret stay with her, revealing only to Detective Jack Graham (whose suspicions are confirmed) that she did in fact have some information about Charlie. Graham, too, agrees to keep the information suppressed. In so doing, she admonishes her uncle's attitude that the world is a "foul sty" and instead allows him to be eulogized as part of the community despite being the very force that would tear it apart. Her suppression of this secret allows the community to exist without knowledge of the evil in its presence; it allows for the *stability of the idyllic*, and the perpetuation of the American ideal.

That Graham chooses to suppress the incriminating information strikes at the very heart of what would become known as "Victory Culture" after WWII: The United States both celebrates, memorializes, and historicizes its victories (the American Revolution, WWI, and WWII) to the point of cultural indoctrination—of cultural mythmaking—through education, mass media, pop culture, and so forth, while it simultaneously acknowledges, to a certain extent, and often only to a select group of people, the extent of its participation in atrocities (slavery, American Indian genocide) that would hinder its superpower status or undercut its mythological framework. In short, it sweeps the bad stuff under the rug while it espouses the good stuff as central to its existence. One awful byproduct of perpetuating a "Victory Culture" mythology is the nation's necessity to send its children off to war. Hitchcock (and screenwriter Thornton Wilder) anticipated this as well by having Graham use both Charlie and her younger sister Ann as bait to catch Uncle Charlie. Thus, by deliberately placing the child and the young adult in harm's way, Hitchcock affirms that the nation's very identity as a "Victory Culture" is formed by and ultimately framed with the sacrifices of those who fight for it, which is an awful necessity to attain a victorious status, and what plays out in Santa Clara is no different. It is in fact the nation's continual confrontation and subsequent quelling of this awful necessity—this joining of

the horrid and the beneficent, this monstrous double, as René Girard might argue—that allows it to cling to its status as world superpower and to perpetuate is myths unimpeded.[xiii]

Tom Engelhardt, in *The End of Victory Culture* (1995), defines the nation's adherence to and loss of "victory culture" ideals, most notably in the post-WWII, Cold War, Vietnam, and post-Vietnam eras. Both the world at large and some of its citizenry questioned the nation's role of world superpower at the height of the Cold War, and certainly in the aftermath of Vietnam. But for the collective good of the nation, our leaders bellowed, accepting anything less than a "victorious" attitude (for example, the absence of the word "loss" in conjunction with the Vietnam War in history textbooks) must remained unchanged. Engelhardt uses the idea of "triumphalist despair" to define the attitude of a post-WWII generation of American children, mostly boys and many of whom would go on to serve in Vietnam. He writes:

> So those children of the 1950s grasped the pleasures of victory culture as an act of faith, and the horrors of nuclear culture as an act of faithless mockery, and held both the triumph and the mocking horror close without necessarily experiencing them as contraries. In this way, they caught the essence of the adult culture of that time, which—despite America's dominant economic and military position in the world—was one not of triumph, but of triumphalist despair.[xiv]

Hitchcock's ability to anticipate the impending attitudes of a post-WWII United States is not surprising, considering that his body of film often showcased people who would come face to face with evil while often realizing, much to their chagrin, their involvement in plots larger than those of their own lives. Much as *Sabotage* before it, by enmeshing its characters (including children) in terrorist plots that are in direct relation to and also larger than their own lives, *Shadow of a Doubt* plunges the innocent Charlie into a world of murderous evil that is both directly related to and also larger than her own life. Charlie, then, who laments that "nothing happens" in Santa Clara, and that "We're in a terrible rut," comes into contact with both "mocking horror" and "triumph," and in the end, by not vilifying her Uncle Charlie, she chooses not to treat them "as contraries" but as necessary complements of each other. She foreshadows what Engelhardt calls "triumphalist despair": When she expels evil, both she and the community have won, but she also knows the awful truth: both of her uncle's murderous past and, audiences can surmise, of the world at large—the world outside of "peaceful" Santa Clara.

Viewers bear witness to a monstrous, murderous presence who penetrates an unsuspecting, peaceful community, attempts to disrupt the stability of the community, nearly murders the epitome of the community's innocence, and, despite his demise at narrative's end, taints *but does not completely destroy* the innocence of the community with his deeds (seen in young Charlie, who now knows the truth of things as they exist in the "adult world"). James McLaughlin connects the narrative dots of what he observes as a Dracula reference in the film by focusing on Charlie's belief that her Uncle's telegraph announcing his arrival is in fact her doing:

> [Uncle Charlie's] most important similarity to Dracula, however, is that Uncle Charlie is summoned by his niece. Charlie stresses the fact that her uncle 'heard' her, that there is a kind of mental telepathy between them. She wanted him come and, miraculously, he came. 'To be in tune with another person who is on the other side of the country—it's all mental,' she states. Similarly, Dracula does not invite one into his castle; one must make the first move and cross the threshold.

> The presence of Dracula is unconsciously wished for by the other characters in the novel. Dracula also communicates telepathically with women and has strong affinities with children and madmen.[xv]

The Dracula reference in the movie reinforces Hitchcock's use of the monster-as-charismatic-charmer. Genres, such as psychological thrillers and horror, often utilize a gendered slant in that movie after movie tends to feature women as pursued, potential victims of a crazed, monstrous male; at times, the female protagonist can defeat this monster, and in most of these cases, the help of a "good" male is needed to do so. However, if the female does succeed, she is often left crazed and maniacal herself—traumatized and debilitated or perhaps worse: she becomes the crazed killer herself.[xvi] While these genre conventions can be loosely applied to young Charlie, one must note that her condition at movie's end is not one of craze or mania but of a loss of innocence. In order to expel the murderer, *she must become a murderer*; in so doing, she reveals that the child-in-peril narrative becomes its own subversive sub-plot: Potential victim becomes enabled murderer becomes protector of community stability. On a narrative trajectory of order-disorder-order, she befriends, confronts, vanquishes, and, subsequently, internalizes the horror. As a result, she symbolizes the stability of the idyllic.

So, too, in its end, the nation and its emerging "Victory Culture" is fraught with the swings from order to disorder to a shaky sense of order, framed by both loss and the threat of loss: Attaining victory is contingent upon sacrificing (or placing in harm's way) the nation's future generations in order to stop the advance of evil. But even more compelling is that those who survive often have to become murderers themselves. Of course, a society does not in general ascribe the label "murderer" to soldiers who perform their awful duties and survive the horrors of war. But a society often does realize, and keep as a silent truth, that in combat, a soldier must kill or be killed. At the end of the *Shadow*, Charlie tells Graham "[Uncle Charlie] said that people like us have no idea what the world is like." She knows, now, that vanquishing evil comes with a steep price. Her knowledge, viewers can assume, propels her into an adult world where she understands that monstrous horror is just a "telepathic" telegraph away, and that the stability of the community (and of the nation) depends on people who have the power both to suppress knowledge of, and ultimately remove from the community, the horror that would destroy it. One can surmise, then, that through killing her murderous uncle and becoming the holder of a silent truth, Charlie, much as a young soldier in combat, becomes wise to the world of "grown-ups."

Beyond *Shadow of a Doubt*: Unstable Communities at Home and the World Throughout

By using *Shadow of a Doubt* as a blueprint for Hitchcock's work with children and young adults, audiences can assess his work in other films during the 1950s and 1960s. As one would expect, his movies continue to address themes of community stability. Richard Ness suggests that:

> This focus on community in the fifties films can of course be seen as a post-Red Scare response to a climate of fear and mistrust, in which the community can be a source of unity but also an environment in which the individual can be destroyed by lies and innuendo. As in *Rear Window* and *The Trouble with Harry*, a search for truth in 'Incident at a Corner' leads to escalating complications exposing the

> potentially ugly realities in a seemingly orderly community, while ironically also bringing together disparate elements of the community together.[xvii]

In *Shadow*, viewers bear witness to an "ugly" presence invading the community; however, in *The Trouble With Harry*, viewers bear witness to both an invading presence *and* an "ugly" presence that emanates from within the community. The movie concerns itself with the discovery of Harry's dead body outside an idyllic, pastoral small town. Three of the community's residents—a rabbit hunter; a hiker; and Harry's wife Jennifer—think they may be the one who killed Harry, and with the help of an artist, Sam Marlowe, these three people attempt to protect themselves and hide the death (and the body itself) from the law. The response to the discovery of Harry's dead body form the movie's black comedic aspects: The body's discoverers are neither at all concerned about Harry's death nor are they truly concerned, ultimately, about hiding it from authorities. Hitchcock himself discusses *Harry* as "amusing":

> The type of humor I wanted to use on TV was the type I employed in my film, *The Trouble With Harry*. In that film, Harry was a dead body who was a botheration to those who were alive. The awkward question, 'What'll we do with Harry?' was always popping up. There were those who found the notion gruesomely amusing, so I told myself that if no reverence for a dead body is amusing, no reverence for a live sponsor might be amusing too.[xviii]

Critical consensus reveals that the film is about "the universal guilt of fallen humanity"[xix] and that "Love and death in *The Trouble with Harry* are treated straightforwardly, without shame, terror, or prurience."[xx]

While issues of confronting forces that would threaten to tear apart a community are not new to Hitchcock, with *Harry*, he creates a fine antithetical complement to *Shadow*: By the time each of the "suspects" (after burying, exhuming, moving, re-burying, etc., Harry's body) learns that Harry died of natural causes, whatever horrors (murder) might have disrupted the community's stability have been conveniently swept aside. In fact, love has prevailed: Sam and Jennifer have begun a romance and so too have the hunter (Captain Wiles) and the hiker (Miss Gravely).

However, despite his movie's "larkish" tone, Hitchcock does save his sharpest criticism not for his adult characters but for the child in their presence. Hitchcock uses Jennifer's child, Arnie, as a lens for viewers to gauge a collective passivity toward death. Arnie is Jennifer's son from her marriage to Harry's brother, who has died. Harry and Jennifer marry, in what appears to be a Levirate marriage, but it does not take, so Jennifer changes her name and, along with her son, moves to the secluded life of the small town. When Harry discovers them and pays them a visit, he and Jennifer fight, culminating with her hitting him on the head with a milk bottle (hence her implication in the "murder"). Jennifer does not want to be married to Harry, and she attempts to vanquish the would-be external threat to her now-peaceful life as well as her now-peaceful community.

Arnie's significance to the narrative cannot be undersold. First, he discovers the body while playing with his toy "ray-gun" on the outskirts of town. The stability of the idyllic is immediately jeopardized by this discovery, for the child—not unlike Charlie in *Shadow*—is the first to bear witness to the possibility of a threat to the community. Second, Arnie fetches his mother and takes her to the body, yielding the following conversation:

Jennifer: "Don't touch it, Arnie…Harry, thank Providence. That's the last of Harry."
Arnie: "Why doesn't he get up?"
Jennifer: "He's asleep. He's in a deep sleep. A deep, wonderful sleep…. You forget you ever saw this man…just think of something else."

Jennifer promises to make Arnie lemonade, and the two return home. When viewers next see Arnie, he is playing with a dead rabbit that he found in the woods, asking the visiting Sam about how rabbits are born. He then trades with Sam, the rabbit for a frog, and moments later asks for the rabbit back so he can continue "trading."

The scenes with Arnie are brief, but telling. First, Arnie has seen the body. If one of the three "suspects" does in fact become the guilty party, then one can presume that Arnie (along with the others) would have to be silenced, much as Uncle Charlie attempts to silence young Charlie in *Shadow*. Second, Arnie's interaction with the dead rabbit reveals the film's attitude toward death: One can trade something dead for something alive (this benefits Jennifer greatly, as Harry's death frees her to pursue a romance with Sam). These two scenes reveal Hitchcock's larger critique about a nation's attitude toward its youth. In this particular case, the mother's attempt to shield her child from potential harm is couched in her telling him that Harry is only "in a deep sleep" and to just "forget" it. Stability is immediately jeopardized with Arnie's discovery, but then, as the community of adults work to remove Harry from sight (and mind), stability begins to return, as seen in the blossoming relationships. While viewers never feel that Arnie is in any real danger, the subtext—and in fact, the gag—suggests that if the adults are willing to go through such travails to conceal Harry's body, then they might be willing to continue concealing information, including silencing witnesses, were they discovered as Harry's killer. With *Harry*, Hitchcock uses comedy to reveal just how far a community will go to shield its youth from the horrors of the modern world

The director would soon return to a much darker treatment of these themes in his remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and in *The Birds*, both of which see as crucial narrative devices children and young adults (primarily children) in danger. Both share commonalities with *Shadow of a Doubt*, as Elsie Michie explains:

> Despite differences between the two films, the positioning of the family in the narrative follows virtually the same pattern in *Shadow of a Doubt* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. In both, the family is initially, very briefly, represented as a harmonious unit that is then broken: in the first film, by the intrusion of a foreigner; in the second, by the loss of a family member. [xxi]

Critics tend to agree that Hitchcock's remake of his own movie makes a startling statement on masculinity in America.[xxii] Ina Rae Hark writes that "Hitchcock ridicules the behavior of men under patriarchy yet assures women that if they will pursue their own assigned roles vigorously enough, their men blunder through to success in the end."[xxiii] Robin Wood, moreover, writes that

> The film raises very strikingly one of the major features of gender-division in our culture, the notion that men are rational while women are emotional/intuitive…. It

> is Ben's rationality that leads him to sedate Jo before telling her what has happened, subjugating her emotional response to the kidnapping of her son; the film is quite unambiguous, I think, as to the monstrousness of this, and it colors our reading of the character throughout.[xxiv]

Paula Marantz Cohen regards the sedative scene as the monstrosity Wood claims it is by stating that Jo "becomes a threat to masculine order and action . . . . [And] She must be put out of play."[xxv]

And "put out of play" she is. Once Ben sedates Jo, he is able to pursue Hank and his kidnappers, in effect rescuing his son from the assassin's bullet because he is able to operate without the interference of his wife. Despite Jo's pleas to Ben ("Oh Ben, let me find my baby…I want my boy"), Ben chooses to operate as the lone American hero, traversing the tenets of American Victory Culture by attempting to shield those he loves from evil while he attempts to rescue those in danger from the clutches of evil. Because they become inadvertently mixed up in an international assassination plot, the McKennas have their son Hank kidnapped by the conspirators. As I mentioned earlier, the Ambassador, while plotting to kill the Prime Minister, orders the kidnapped child killed, telling Drayton: "Don't you realize that Americans dislike having their children stolen?" Indeed they do, and the movie makes a case for the triumphant order of masculine heroism by having the male "hero" (who hails from the nation's heartland, Indianapolis) save the child from death, thus restoring a sense of order in that the national community knows it can thwart the vile act of killing of a child for political gain.

Children (and, in fact, *everyone*) in *The Birds* don't fare as well as Hank does, however. While the movie does not show the death of a child, it does imply that children, young adults, and adults die as a result of bird attacks. The movie is perhaps Hitchcock's bleakest, especially in terms of its conclusion: The survivors make their way via car through flocks of birds, though audiences have no sense of whether or not humanity will survive this avian terror. Alarming, too, is that it reveals "a striking resemblance to the Hitchcock household after the death of his father, when Mrs. Hitchcock gradually depended more and more on her son"[xxvi] The movie places *everyone* in harm's way, including its young adults and children, forming a Cold War "total annihilation" allegory that alludes to the Bay of Pigs/Cuban Missile Crisis of 1961-2 (the film is set in Bodega Bay) and reinforces the fact that even innocent children would not be safe in a nuclear war.[xxvii] Debbie Olson's reading of the movie is crucial in this regard: "Hitchcock's children suggest a state of innocence that *never was* . . . . The children in *The Birds*, and even the birds themselves, suggest an ongoing spectacle of not-innocence, a reification that defies the expectations of both the child (or bird) body and the physical, material conditions of children."[xxviii]

In one particularly excellent shot, Hitchcock situates viewers so that they inhabit the POV of the birds, for as Hitchcock's birds watch the humans in the diegesis, so, too, do viewers watch the plight of these humans as the "beastly spectators swoop down from their separate planes of observation to attack adults and schoolchildren, break windows, and peck through doors and shutters, the barriers that separate observers from observed are savagely broken, allegorically shattering the illusion of what Tom Gunning calls the 'self-contained diegetic world' of classical cinema."[xxix] Whatever idyllic stability exists at the movie's start disappears quickly with the bird attacks. The birds attack children at birthday party, in a home, and, most frighteningly, at school—a horrific metaphor given the school shootings that have occurred in the United States and elsewhere in the past twenty years. The school attack is particularly awful, given its chaos

and brutality. The birds draw blood, and children are left maimed and bleeding in the aftermath of the attack.

In these movies, viewers see Hitchcock continuing to disrupt the stability of the idyllic, suggesting that in the modern world, a community's children and young adults are constantly in peril, whether they hail from a single mother in a seemingly peaceful country town, a prominent family from America's heartland rent asunder while traveling abroad, or a makeshift family under assault from a supernatural power that threatens both the nation and the world at large. When viewers consider these movies in terms of Hitchcock's treatment of children and young adults, a startling worldview emerges: The stability of the community—and consequently of the nation and the world—depends on adults who have the power both to suppress knowledge of, and ultimately remove from the community, the forces that threaten to destroy it. Jennifer and her fellow community members attempt to shield Arnie from potential internal and external threats. Ben McKenna narrowly averts disaster and restores some semblance of familial stability, comforting viewers with the knowledge that the vigilance of the male will protect it. The poor souls in *The Birds*, however, aren't so lucky, as they are forced to sweat out an uncertain future while crawling, in their car, through a sea of birds who may or may not destroy them at any moment.

Conclusion

Each of these movies is at once a re-affirmation of America's identity as a "Victory Culture" and a grim reminder that the celebration of victory is both fleeting, and in the presence of powers that cannot be controlled by humans, irrelevant. Hitchcock's narrative attention on children and young adults in peril constitute significant statements on community from the late WWII to the early Vietnam periods in American history. Filmmakers during this period found rich narrative possibility in the nation's complex relationship with ideas of "Victory Culture" and "Superpower Status," and Hitchcock did, too, through his sophisticated fusion of genres as well as his understanding of what how far he could advance the representations of children and young adults. He fully embraced the possibilities of newfound filmmaking freedom in the United States. His careful attention to what I have called the stability of the idyllic, often framed through the lens of children and young adults, helped pave the way for new generations of filmmakers to explore increasingly more horrific portrayals of them as well as the communities to which they belong and the adults who attempt to protect them from the horrors of the modern world—horrors that render a future shaped not by the potential for victory but by the potential for loss. In these movies, the anxieties of a culture at large are inscribed upon children and young adults, and these anxieties subvert an audience's understanding of a victory narrative as "victory for us" by reminding it that "victory for them" is also a very real possibility. Each, in varying degrees, relies on the narrative trajectory that order can be befouled at any moment by the monstrous which creates disorder; and each, also in varying degrees, forges ahead with its own uneasy sense of order sprung from disorder—even if that order exists as an unknown future fraught with looming danger.

NOTES

[i] Robin Wood, "Plot Formations," in *Perspectives on Alfred Hitchcock*, ed. David Boyd (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1995), 43.

[ii] This essay also works in tandem with Debbie Olson's argument that "Hitchcock's use of children is particularly significant in certain films as an important part of the diegetic play between guilt, innocence, sex, and death…. [as] significant criticism of adult illusions about the state of guilt or innocence." Debbie Olson, "The Hitchcock Imp: Children and the Hyperreal in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*," in *Lost and Othered Children in Contemporary Cinema*, eds. Debbie Olson and Andrew Scahill (Lanham [MD]: Lexington Books, 2012), 288.

[iii] David Trotter, "Hitchcock's Modernism," *Critical Quarterly* 52 (2010): 126. Also see David Freeman, *The Last Days of Alfred Hitchcock* (Woodstock [NY]: The Overlook Press, 1984), 35-6.

[iv] Trotter, "HM," 137.

[v] Sam P. Simone, *Hitchcock as Activist: Politics and the War Films* (Ann Arbor [MI]: UMI Research P, 1985 [1982]), 1, 13-14.

[vi] Donald Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983), 33-4.

[vii] Simone, *HAA:PWF*, 22-25.

[viii] Anthony Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie*, (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989), 19.

[ix] Gene Adair, *Alfred Hitchcock: Filming Our Fears* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), 54.

[x] Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* (New York: Columbia UP, 1989), 297.

[xi] Donald Spoto, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock* (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1976), 139.

[xii] Spoto, *TDSG*, 262-3.

[xiii] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1979).

[xiv] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War American and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Revised Edition) (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2007 [1995]), 9.

[xv] James McLaughlin, "All in the Family: Alfred Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt*," in *A Hitchcock Reader*, eds. Marshall Deutelbaum and Leland Poague (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1986), 145.

[xvi] Carol Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992).

[xvii] Richard R. Ness, "Family Plots: Hitchcock and Melodrama," in *A Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*, eds. Thomas Leitch and Leland Poague (Malden [MA]: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 121.

[xviii] Pete Martin, "I Call on Alfred Hitchcock," *The Saturday Evening Post*, July 27, 1957, 71.

[xix] Gene D. Phillips, *Alfred Hitchcock* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 135.

[xx] Lesley Brill, "'Love's Not Time's Fool': The Trouble with Harry (1955)," in *Hitchcock's Rereleased Films: From* Rope *to* Vertigo, eds. Walter Raubicheck and Walter Srebnick (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1991), 276.

[xxi] Elsie B. Michie, "Hitchcock and American Domesticity," in *Hitchcock's America*, eds. Jonathan Freedman and Richard Millington (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 3.

[xxii] While his argument is rooted in queer sexuality, David Greven makes the claim succinctly: "*Man* figures American manhood as a monolithic entity under siege." David Greven, "Cruising, hysteria, knowledge: *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956)," *European Journal of American Culture* 28.3 (2009), 236.

[xxiii] Ina Rae Hark, "Revalidating Patriarchy: Why Hitchcock Remade *The Man Who Knew Too Much*," in *Hitchcock's Rereleased Films: From* Rope *to* Vertigo, eds. Walter Raubicheck and Walter Srebnick (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1991), 219.

[xxiv] Robin Wood, *HFR*, 369.

[xxv] Paula Marantz Cohen, *Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism* (Lexington: The UP of Kentucky, 1995), 118.

[xxvi] Spoto, *TDSG*, 464.

[xxvii] Walter Raubicheck and Walter Srebnick, *Scripting Hitchcock:* Psycho, The Birds, *and* Marnie (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2011), 97-99. Also see John Hellmann's "The Birds and the Kennedy Era," *The Hitchcock Annual: Volume 17*, eds. Sidney Gottlieb and Richard Allen (New York: Columbia UP, 2012), 95-127.

[xxviii] Olson, "THI," 295.

[xxix] Leslie Abramsom, "The Savage Audience: Looking at Hitchcock's *The Birds*," *Film & History* 41.2 (Fall 2011), 26.

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