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## Hollywood, Hitchcock, and the Postwar Era

After the sprawling chase picture *North by Northwest* (1959) became Alfred Hitchcock's most commercially successful movie, the director long accustomed to production gloss and generous budgets made a characteristically shrewd decision. A keen observer of the audience, Hitchcock noted that lowly exploitation horror movies like AIP's *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957) and Allied Artists' *The House on Haunted Hill* (1959) were striking gold. So he made one of his own. *Psycho* (Paramount, 1960) became Hitchcock's most famous film and one of the most influential of the coming decade. His study continued. As he contemplated his next project in 1961, Hitchcock conducted some research that initially seems surprising. Records indicate that the Master of Suspense went to a screening room and watched Ingmar Bergman's *The Magician* (1958) and *The Virgin Spring* (1960), Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Avventura* (1960), and Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960) – among the most acclaimed and demanding works of the postwar European art cinema.<sup>1</sup> The result was *The Birds* (Universal, 1963) with its combination of spectacle and oppressive mood, unusual soundtrack, and open, anticlimactic ending.

In 1962 Hitchcock sat for a series of career interviews with critic-turned-director François Truffaut, pillar of the French New Wave movement and fresh from the release of his latest work, the radiant *Jules et Jim* (1962). Their relaxed and respectful conversations became more direct versions of the artistic dialog Hitchcock's recent work had undertaken with drive-in exploitation and art house experimentation – with cinemas, that is, seemingly anathema to his proven command of the crowd-pleasing, big-studio genre movie. He was at the forefront of a significant trend. Over the next twenty years, while many Hollywood movies remained doggedly traditional, more ambitious filmmakers worked to incorporate alternative film styles into commercial frameworks with fascinating results. Hitchcock's unique talents aside, his work throughout the postwar era reflected emerging patterns in the Hollywood industry as well as larger cultural currents in American society.

Coming to America in 1939, Hitchcock made a string of commercially and artistically successful pictures through the World War II years. After the war,

while many of his peers struggled in a changing business, Hitchcock thrived. He did so by skillfully engaging virtually every innovation, trend, or challenge that Hollywood faced in those years, often with greater success than the industry as a whole. Hitchcock was an artist of original talent. Yet his continuing success, indeed climb, to popular and aesthetic heights was also due to his being a consummate industry professional. He succeeded not through a single-minded and rigid method but by careful observation and adaptation to changing industrial and social contexts.

As actors, directors, and producers left the long-term exclusive contracts that had bound them to particular studios (even before that system was ended by the 1948 Paramount anti-trust case), the era of independent production began, in which the studios acted as financiers and distributors rather than as originators of movies. For filmmakers, the appeal of independent production was both greater creative freedom and potentially much greater financial reward. In 1948 Hitchcock and producer Sidney Bernstein formed Transatlantic Pictures, intending to alternate production of films between Hollywood and Britain. From this partnership came *Rope* (1948), an exercise in extreme long-take shooting, and the less-memorable *Under Capricorn* (1949). *Rope* has since become one of the director's most praised works but neither movie pleased critics or audiences at the time, ending the venture. Nor did this result please Hitchcock who always measured his professional success in part by the response of wide audiences. Regardless, the precedent established, he struck multi-picture deals with Warner Bros., Paramount, and other studios through the 1950s which, on the heels of solid box office returns, made him a powerful independent producer-director with near-complete control of his work.

*Rope* also first paired Hitchcock with actor James Stewart, en route to becoming one of the biggest postwar stars. In 1948 Stewart signed an important deal with Universal-International through his agent, MCA head Lew Wasserman, in which the star took no up-front salary in exchange for net profit participation of up to 50 percent in his movies. Wasserman was also Hitchcock's agent, and his four collaborations with Stewart yielded two of the director's most enduring movies, the suspenseful *Rear Window* (1954), and what has become for many critics the most powerful work of both careers, *Vertigo* (1958).<sup>2</sup> Artistic success was underpinned by firm mastery of a dynamic industry structure.

Hitchcock sampled other trends as well. When Hollywood turned to making movies in Europe to exploit postwar economic and regulatory conditions there, he responded with *To Catch a Thief* (1955), taking Cary Grant and Grace Kelly to the French Riviera to produce a sexually charged thriller. As the domestic movie audience declined, the industry's experiment with 3D technology to draw patrons back led Hitchcock to star Kelly in *Dial M for Murder* (1954), a drawing room murder story against the grain of more spectacular 3D projects. Barred from direct ownership of television stations or networks, the studios became major suppliers of prime time episodic series by the late 1950s. Leveraging the clever

cultivation of publicity that had already made him a celebrity when few directors were well known, Hitchcock undertook one of his most lucrative and visible efforts via the CBS anthology series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, which aired from 1955 to 1964. His humorous on-camera introductions highlighted one of the most recognizable programs of the time. After the somber *Vertigo*, a deeply felt project that met a disappointing commercial reception, he returned to a proven form, the romantic espionage thriller *North by Northwest*, starring Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint. With its suave, witty hero, deadly villain, and complex set pieces, climaxing with the leads hanging off the giant faces on Mount Rushmore, it was virtually the model for the James Bond spy adventures that began with *Dr. No* (1962). Still, it is important to reiterate that Hitchcock led none of these trends or innovations. Instead he marked them and responded in his own way, grasping not only the changing contours of the film industry but shifting socio-cultural dynamics as well.

The balance of this chapter considers three major currents that shaped the style and themes of postwar Hollywood movies: (1) a broad consensus about basic aspects of American social and political life, and its shattering in the late 1960s under pressures unleashed by the Vietnam War, effects that contextualize narrative shifts apparent in many subsequent movies; (2) rearrangements of the film industry after the break-up of the studio system in 1948, which affected how movies were made and shown; and (3) closely tied to these changes, the simultaneous shrinking and fragmentation of the movie audience into three fairly distinct segments marked by the rise of drive-ins and art house exhibition. The crash of the postwar ideological consensus was not synonymous with the increasingly divided audiences and exhibition circumstances in the 1960s but, even so, there are suggestive analogies between these phenomena. Finally, we consider how Hitchcock navigated these rapids in *Psycho* and *The Birds*, now perhaps his best-known movies.

## "The Vital Center" ... Cannot Hold

Writing in *America in Our Time* (1976) about the growing cultural and ideological split in American society in the 1960s, British journalist Godfrey Hodgson argued:

The schism went deeper than mere political disagreement. It was as if, from 1967 on, two different tribes of Americans experienced the same outward events but experienced them as two quite different realities. A writer in *The Atlantic* put the point well after the October 1967 demonstrations at the Pentagon. Accounts of that happening in the conventional press and in the underground press ... simply didn't intersect at any point ... "Each wrote with enough half truth to feel justified in excluding the other."<sup>3</sup>

But it wasn't always this way. Hodgson and others have described the twenty years from the end of World War II through the mid-1960s as the era of "consensus politics" in American life, especially the period between the end of the Korean War and Lyndon Johnson's 1964 landslide. Hodgson understands this as a generalization, pointing to enduring social conflicts, especially the simmering Civil Rights struggle. While the 1950s may be remembered for "the man in the gray flannel suit," symbol of white-collar corporate striving for men, and for idealizing the roles of suburban homemaker and mother for women, the postwar years were also the time of existentialism and the Beats, Rosa Parks and rock 'n' roll, *The Feminine Mystique* and the Pill. Moreover, a period of unprecedented affluence was suffused with fears of the atomic bomb and international communism. After 1947, Hollywood's response to congressional investigations was to blacklist anyone in the industry known to have, or even vaguely suspected of having, sympathy with communism or any left-wing causes, a practice that persisted until Kennedy's election in 1960. The result was that larger political tensions were often apparent in movies only as subtext or by implication. Neither the times nor the movies produced in them were simple, though, seen from a deeply conflicted and anxious America in the early 1970s, the fifties seemed virtually placid. Still, prevailing social and economic conditions had encouraged consensus thinking.

Hodgson contends that the postwar intellectual climate became prone to consensus theories through the conjunction of two major forces: the booming economy, particularly while America's international competitors lay physically devastated by the war; and the rise of the nuclear-armed international communist bloc that the Truman and Eisenhower administrations had pledged to oppose through the global containment policy of measured military and political response to any perceived threats or encroachments. The "liberal consensus," as Hodgson terms it, was characterized foremost by the belief that "The American free-enterprise system is different from the old capitalism. It is democratic. It creates abundance. It has a revolutionary potential for social justice." Moreover, "Thus there is a natural harmony of interests in society. American society is getting more equal. It is in the process of abolishing, may even have abolished social class. Capitalists are being superseded by managers. The workers are becoming members of the middle class."<sup>4</sup> Without social classes, there would be no class conflict, the basis of all Marxist thought and theory. A corollary emphasized that social problems, like problems of industrial production, were solvable through rational application of social science expertise, modern management techniques, and ongoing research in science and technology. Government, private enterprise, and the academy would join forces for victory in the Cold War just as they had in World War II.

In stark contrast to the years of depression and wartime sacrifice from 1930 to 1945, postwar America enjoyed high employment, an explosion of new

homebuilding in suburbia, and a thriving consumer economy symbolized and then driven by commercial television. "No man who owns his own house and lot can be a communist. He has too much to do," proclaimed developer William J. Levitt, visionary of Levittown, the massive suburban community erected on Long Island in 1947. Put simply, consensus theory held that, in the face of American abundance, liberals and conservatives now had and would continue to have less to disagree about. Another term for the liberal consensus was "pluralism," which suggested tolerance for diverse opinions and methods. Thus vigorous political competition would continue but within an arena of key points of agreement. Hodgson suggests that historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., later a special assistant to President Kennedy, had helped articulate this argument and given it a resonant name in his 1949 book *The Vital Center*. He also cites the influence of political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset, whose 1960 book *Political Man* contained a chapter titled "The End of Ideology"; and of Lipset's friend, the sociologist and journalist Daniel Bell, who published a similar book also called *The End of Ideology* that same year. Hodgson concludes that such writers were "Confident to the verge of complacency about the perfectibility of American society [and] anxious to the point of paranoia about the threat of communism – those were the two faces of the consensus mood."<sup>5</sup>

Centrists also agreed about the nature of their enemies: those they labeled "extremists," groups outside the moderate circle, fascist but mainly communist totalitarians abroad; and, domestically, forces that threatened or resisted business as usual. The latter might include segregationists as well as Freedom Riders, juvenile delinquents as much as Beatniks, rugged individualists and bohemian enclaves alike. That is, despite pluralism's connotations of pragmatism and tolerance for a range of ideas rather than adherence to a single dogma – the latter exactly what its theorists meant by "ideology" – the notion was in its own right fairly circumscribed and frequently intolerant. Small wonder that the vision of American sociopolitical life reflected in the consensus model (and manifested in Levittown) would soon be rejected as banal conformity. Before that happened, though, this was the stuff not only of political rhetoric but also of the implicit tension underlying dramatic conflicts in many postwar movies.

In *Seeing Is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties*, Peter Biskind applies Hodgson's argument to analyze ideological relations between individuals, groups, and social institutions encoded in a variety of postwar movies. He first dissects the negotiation of consensus among a group of jurors in *12 Angry Men* (1957), which Biskind sees as a model of the American political process in the 1950s. Liberal Henry Fonda, four conservatives led by outspoken Lee J. Cobb, and seven fence sitters are empanelled to decide the fate of an ethnic youth (briefly glimpsed, he might be Latino) accused of murdering his father. Fonda is not so much committed to the boy as

he is to the idea of due process; alone he coolly persuades the other jurors against the arguments of the conservatives who just want to hang the kid and go home. The boy is acquitted because Fonda gradually entices the right-wingers into a coalition of the center. Biskind contends this was the goal of postwar centrism, the containment of extremism left and right, using rationality, persuasion, and sometimes the legitimate exercise of force to maintain the status quo. Analogous to an election, the prize for the dramatic competition between liberal and conservative characters was leadership of the coalition.<sup>6</sup>

Biskind acknowledges the complexity of postwar movies, arguing that while many, perhaps most, fell into the centrist position he describes, there were also some “radical” films, those that attack the center, its assumptions, and solutions either from the left (e.g., *Force of Evil* [1948], *The Day the Earth Stood Still* [1951], *High Noon* [1952], *All That Heaven Allows* [1955]) or from the right (e.g., *The Fountainhead* [1949], *The Big Heat* [1953], *The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell* [1955], *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* [1956]). After Gary Cooper’s marshal defeats the outlaw gang in *High Noon*, he throws down his badge before the cowardly citizens who refused to help him and leaves town – a clear rejection of the status quo and the self-congratulatory finales of most centrist movies. Notably, over time both *High Noon* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* have been alternately interpreted as left- or right-wing statements. In Biskind’s terms this is because each ultimately refuses affirmative solutions to social crises. Though he seldom addresses issues of cinematic style, Biskind’s ideological analysis of movies made by and for the postwar consensus culture offers a revealing contrast to those produced in the divisive Vietnam era.

Yet matters of form are always consequential. A particular feature of Hollywood in the 1960s is how filmmakers, from youthful directors to the venerable Alfred Hitchcock, became open to formal innovations and stylistic alternatives from outside – from foreign art cinemas, especially the French New Wave, direct cinema documentary, cheap drive-in movies, and even from Hollywood’s postwar nemesis, television. Many movies adopted techniques that grew increasingly self-conscious or sometimes simply flashy – jagged editing, experiments with hand-held shooting and zoom lenses, disjointed soundtracks and non-traditional music, split screens, slow motion, and freeze frames.

Equally important was the conspicuous revision of familiar genre plots – the ironic manipulation or inversion of established conventions or active frustration of audience expectations. Then, too, censorship greatly relaxed in the late 1960s, a function of larger social developments that further affected film form and content. Combined, these factors helped movies within virtually every Hollywood genre take on both energy and significance in this time. Initially, however, all these changes were functions of postwar structural shifts within Hollywood and international film industries in response to a complicated, often unstable market for making and selling movies of all types.

## Postwar Film Production and Exhibition

In the first instance, movies emerge from a particular industrial context. Following thirty years of relative stability, the vertically integrated studio system began to come apart after 1946, the year of the greatest attendance records the industry had ever seen. The Supreme Court's decision in *U.S. vs. Paramount Pictures, et al.* in 1948 had agreed with the government's anti-trust case brought on behalf of independent producers and exhibitors that the five largest Hollywood studios were monopolies that used their first-run theater chains to dominate the domestic market and suppress competition. As a result, the studios had to divest from theater ownership and stop strong-arm tactics like block booking in which independent theaters were obligated to take multiple movies from a studio in order to get the most potentially profitable releases. Hereafter every individual movie would have to compete in the marketplace on its own merits, without the cushion of a guaranteed release in the studio's theater chains or any others, and with its costs no longer amortized as part of a carefully regulated annual output of several dozen similarly guaranteed films. The studios would still originate some but not all movies in-house; their principal function would now be to finance and distribute movies in collaboration with independent producers, bringing together the script, cast, technical personnel, and facilities for each project on a one-time basis.<sup>7</sup> Hollywood still wielded considerable clout but its grip weakened for the first time in two generations.

Simultaneously, a variety of social changes converged to send Americans to the movies less and less. The arrival of television has been offered as a major cause for the decline in movie attendance and it became a contributing factor. Yet the drop in moviegoing commenced after 1946 while the surge in TV sales did not begin until after 1952, when the Federal Communications Commission ended a four-year freeze on the issuance of new television station licenses, which had been enacted to establish technical standards for the new medium.<sup>8</sup> The first of the more important factors was the explosion of suburbs spurred by a burgeoning economy and government incentives including the G.I. Bill, which paid for education and gave low-cost home loans to millions of veterans. First-run movie theaters were located in city centers; as more and more people migrated to suburbs, fewer attended those now faraway theaters. Second, the postwar "baby boom" – the millions of children who would both fight and protest the Vietnam War, innovate, and rally to new cinematic trends as they attained college age in the mid-1960s – put greater demands on family budgets and leisure time. In any case, the relentless drop in attendance had long-term consequences. The number of people going to movies went down every single year from 1946 through 1971.

Increasingly pressed, Hollywood sought to reinvigorate attendance with technical innovations – an increase in color production thanks to new and

cheaper color film stocks; the introduction of wide-screen formats like CinemaScope, VistaVision, and Cinerama; the short-lived stab at 3D exhibition; and early stereophonic sound – all intended to distinguish the theatrical motion picture from the tiny, often fuzzy TV image. Such investments in technology showed a serious effort. Yet in 1950, when Hollywood adopted the promotional slogan “Movies are better than ever,” the boast sounded virtually frantic as attendance kept falling.

Better or not, postwar movies certainly got bigger. To accentuate their technical advancements, the studios turned to colossal films with biblical and ancient world epics (e.g., *The Robe* [1953], *Land of the Pharaohs* [1955], *The Ten Commandments* [1956]), the genre perhaps most identified with the period. Yet the strategy to make big-scale movies with multiple stars, extravagant sets, and lavish production values spread to other genres including the musical (*Oklahoma!* [1955], *Carousel* [1956], *South Pacific* [1958]); westerns (*The Big Country* [1958], *Cimarron* [1960], *How the West Was Won* [1962]); war films (*Battle Cry* [1955], *The Bridge on the River Kwai* [1957], *The Longest Day* [1962]); and historical dramas (*The Alamo* [1960], *El Cid* [1961], *Lawrence of Arabia* [1962]). Many of these were initially presented in road show engagements, that is, exclusively shown in one theater in selected cities with higher than average ticket prices and reserved seating to evoke the experience of live theater or other high-culture attractions. Most ran for about three hours, with a pretentious overture before the opening credits and an intermission. While some of these elephantine movies became hits and justified their huge costs, many did not because the audience for epics and more temperate first-run features alike became increasingly unreliable. They might turn out for a gripping, well-mounted spectacle like MGM's *Ben-Hur* (1959), the top money-earner of that year, but if that were one of only a few movies the average filmgoer saw annually, Hollywood was still losing. The studios kept making epics through the 1960s but interest and energy would shift to the small, “personal” film identified with the art cinema and the New Hollywood.

Hollywood's great production capacity and control of the domestic market had allowed the studios to reap substantial profits abroad for decades but this too became more complicated after World War II. In Western Europe, the nations of the war-ravaged continent were struggling to rebuild and quickly moved to staunch the outward flow of their much-needed cash. Led by Britain, France, and Italy, European governments enacted currency exchange laws restricting the American studios either to banking profits in Europe; using the money to buy local goods for US sale (i.e., foreign movies); or using the locally generated profits to produce films there. Hollywood responded in two ways, both of which created opportunities for American and European filmmakers to intermingle. First, they took productions abroad, where American stars and directors would make films with mostly foreign crews and use native suppliers for production needs. This came to be known in the

trade press as “runaway production.” *Roman Holiday* (1953), *Gigi* (1958), *Ben-Hur*, *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), and many other movies were shot in Europe to answer this situation.<sup>9</sup>

A second strategy was more ingenious (or cynical). Since European governments also sought to stimulate national production via state subsidies, they established strict but fairly arbitrary requirements for what defined a “French” or a “British” film based on the origins of a script, the ownership of production entities involved, the number of national workers employed, and so on.<sup>10</sup> But a European producer could still partner with Hollywood and meet those stipulations. Thus a movie might be a thoroughly French project in terms of script, director, and cast but be underwritten by Columbia or Paramount in exchange for US distribution rights. This practice was dubbed “runaway investment.” After 1958, for example, horror movies from Britain’s Hammer Film Productions (e.g., *The Mummy* [1959], *Curse of the Werewolf* [1961], *Dracula*, *Prince of Darkness* [1966]) were partly funded by Universal, Warner Bros., or other Hollywood studios that distributed them domestically.<sup>11</sup> While small American producers like AIP made profitable gothic horror in the 1960s, the major studios got part of this market by outsourcing production to Hammer and other British companies.

These shifts in the production system alongside dwindling attendance had significant consequences for American exhibitors. Confronting a declining market, the studios made fewer movies each year. Theaters now struggled to get enough new movies to draw audiences in the first place. One bright spot in the exhibition business, however, was the steady increase in theaters adopting an art house policy and programming foreign films with English subtitles. Roberto Rossellini’s *Rome: Open City* (*Roma: Citta Aperta*, 1945), the founding work of Italian Neorealism, helped start the trend with an acclaimed and commercially successful US run in the first half of 1946. Beginning in New York City, such theaters began to multiply as the format proved viable. By 1952 there were some 470 art houses in the country, growing to 500 in 1966, and peaking at 1,000 in 1970, the total including film societies that regularly screened foreign films. Even more telling, by 1952, some 1,500 theaters were running foreign films in at least part of their regular schedules. Films from abroad found increasing audiences through the 1960s.<sup>12</sup>

*Rome: Open City* and others demonstrated that some Americans would regularly attend movies that were stylistically and thematically more demanding than the typical Hollywood product. Art houses thrived in major cities as well as in college towns with a large public university. For these more cosmopolitan viewers, engaging with the latest foreign films became a sophisticated cultural experience on a par with visiting museums or attending symphony concerts. Patrons sought out more formally complex films from Europe and Japan but were also drawn by stories that seemed more “realistic” than formulaic Hollywood genres and that dealt with themes of contemporary life.

Sophisticated treatment of adult sexuality was high on the list. Roger Vadim's ... *And God Created Woman* (*Et Dieu ... créa la femme*, 1956) was the highest-grossing foreign film in the United States to that time, though its style is conventional.<sup>13</sup> Its chief attraction was the sensual beauty of Brigitte Bardot, who is nude or near nude in several scenes. This element should not be underestimated in the success of the art house. Censorship was loosening in the 1950s not only because declining business gave the studios less incentive to continue the self-imposed strictures of the 1930s, but also because the Supreme Court had ruled in 1952 that movies were entitled to First Amendment protection. Notably, Rossellini's *The Miracle* (*Il Miracolo*, 1948) provided the test case that finally reversed a decision to the opposite from 1915.<sup>14</sup> The success of foreign films was a major factor in opening up the content of all movies shown in the United States in the 1960s.

The drive-in theater was the second growth area for exhibition after the war. The concept appeared as a novelty in the mid-1930s but proved viable with the postwar expansion of suburbs and automobiles. From a handful in 1945, drive-ins sprouted in cities and towns across the country, cresting at over 4,000 theaters in 1958. The total fell thereafter, but stayed above 3,000 through the 1970s, ensuring a steady market for the business. By the early 1960s, "drive-ins accommodated one out of every five movie viewers."<sup>15</sup> Hollywood's production cutback stimulated the rise of small producers like AIP, Allied Artists, and Crown International Pictures that went into business largely to supply drive-ins and neighborhood theaters with low-budget genre movies. Typically featuring two or three movies on each bill, drive-ins programmed a mix of studio releases and exploitation pictures made by the independents. The prolific AIP filled outdoor screens with beach party romps, gothic horror, rock 'n' roll comedies, and biker gang exposes inspired by California's Hell's Angels. The company also served as a training ground for more than a dozen major directors, actors, and other talents who would lead the New Hollywood of the 1970s.

Still wedded to big-budget star vehicles and epic dramas, the major studios were slow to realize that young people, roughly aged 16–24, were becoming the most consistent moviegoers by the mid-1950s. The drive-in audience skewed heavily to teenagers on a date or with a group of friends, and to young parents for whom the long outdoor program promised low-cost entertainment for the family. Though drive-ins were dubbed "passion pits" in recognition that dating teenagers might not closely watch every movie, they also included playground equipment below the screen for the children who went with their parents. Unlike the art house or conventional "hard-top" theater, the drive-in experience was not about being entertained or engaged by the movie exclusively, which meant that its customers cared less about stars and production values and were more open to sensational fare.

Premiered in a California drive-in, AIP's *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* reportedly returned \$2 million on a small investment. The black and white horror tale

starring then unknown Michael Landon as a troubled, then shaggy, high school student was a pure exploitation movie as AIP co-founder Samuel Z. Arkoff understood the term: “We didn’t have big stars, we didn’t have best-selling books, we didn’t have big plays. So what did we have? We had titles, and we had artwork. And that’s what we sold.”<sup>16</sup> “Exploitation” meant advertising, promotion, and hype, foremost of shocking elements that a movie might or might not even try to deliver. Though skillfully made, *I Was a Teenage Werewolf’s* unforgettable title named its target audience while evoking sleazy tabloid confessional stories. Often pegged on sex and violence, the exploitation feature also helped loosen restrictions on content and had a rougher but often more dynamic style than “frank” major studio releases such as Warner Bros.’s *Baby Doll* (1956).

Movies in the studio era aimed for a mass audience. Certainly some genres or stars tended to attract more women than men, kids than adults, or small-town versus urban viewers. Yet Old Hollywood’s rulers considered themselves purveyors of mass entertainment, widely accessible to most anyone. By 1960, the American movie audience had split into three fairly distinct segments served by the studios and new producer-distributors in separate venues offering movies with sharply different stylistic agendas: *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*, ... *And God Created Woman*, and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (Oscar for Best Picture) were all substantial hits in 1957, though it is likely that few individual patrons saw all three. Moreover, with content standards mirroring the 1930s Hollywood Production Code, television increasingly commanded most of what had been the feature film’s mass audience.<sup>17</sup> By the late 1960s, though, in a quest for both customers and “relevance,” many Hollywood features were, alternately, affecting the art cinema’s commitment to formal innovation and thematic ambiguity that contradicted genre formulae, or attempting to seize the crass vigor of exploitation movies – and sometimes both at once. Set against startling social changes that some hoped and others feared were revolutionary, filmmakers responded with creative bursts that yielded some of the most exciting, occasionally maddening, movies in decades.

To observe these social, industrial, and formal transitions as the 1960s begin, consider *Psycho* and *The Birds*, movies whose cultural roots lay in the 1950s but whose stylistic daring and ambiguous implications looked ahead to an era of change. Hitchcock not only revised conventions of the horror genre in *Psycho* but derailed basic assumptions about traditional Hollywood narrative style itself. Appearing within months of the terrifying Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, *The Birds* offered a vivid yet elusive metaphor for doomsday. Its emotionally loaded tale confounded notions about even something as basic as a movie’s genre framework; and further undercut Hollywood convention with art cinema devices that valued an anxious tone over satisfying closure. Both movies painted a dark portrait of the traditional family by blending domestic melodrama with intense violence, and manipulating gender ideology in pessimistic critiques of supposed social stability.

## New Looks at Mothers, Genres, and Style

It is increasingly evident that *Psycho* is the key Hollywood movie of the 1960s, the one that set new formal and thematic precedents that would filter throughout American cinema in the next twenty years. Few individual works ever attain such distinction but Hitchcock's expert thriller did so foremost on the strength of its popular appeal. *North by Northwest* had been a big hit but Hitchcock topped himself a year later with a movie budgeted at only a quarter of its predecessor but which grossed more than twice as much. The director's long success with slick star vehicles inspired a conscious effort to do virtually the opposite – make an exploitation-style movie in the vein of AIP and Hammer.<sup>18</sup> *Psycho* would be a mid-budget movie shot in black and white and produced on a short schedule with the crew of his television series, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. He even retained the show's cinematographer, John L. Russell, over his regular director of photography, Robert Burks, an indication that he sought a particular, decidedly flatter and off-hand, look for this movie – not the lush frame for a sophisticated romance starring Cary Grant or James Stewart but one closer to William Castle's gimmicky *The House on Haunted Hill* with Vincent Price. Hitchcock's grasp of the exploitation aesthetic made sex and violence the movie's selling points, both depicted to a degree rare at the tawdry margins of drive-in quickies in 1960, much less in a major studio release by an acclaimed director. Presaging the New Hollywood to come, *Psycho* flaunted its deviations from conventions of genre and narrative as well as content.

Robert Bloch based his 1959 novel, *Psycho*, on Wisconsin farmer Ed Gein who had murdered several women, robbed graves, and transformed body parts into bizarre fetishes kept in his farmhouse along with the carefully preserved bedroom – though not the actual corpse – of his late mother. Bloch's Norman Bates was closer to Gein himself, a paunchy, balding fortyish man obsessed with peeping on female guests in his rundown motel. Early on, Hitchcock had two ingenious ideas about the characters and story structure. First, he decided to cast a major star as Marion Crane and use her impulsive theft from her employer to commence the kind of psychological crime story with which he was identified – then abruptly kill her after building audience sympathy for her plight. Second, instead of making Norman a figure that was an obvious threat from the start, as screenwriter Joseph Stefano had considered him, Hitchcock proposed that the handsome, boyish Anthony Perkins, then twenty-seven, play the role.<sup>19</sup> The realist crime thriller gives way to the look and feel of gothic horror on the stormy night Marion pulls into the desolate motel, with the dark Victorian house looming on a hill above, making viewers uncertain of even what genre they were watching. Further, Hitchcock would dispatch Marion in the most shocking scene of his career. The shower murder was *Psycho*'s pivotal scene, which violently changed protagonists, genres, and narrative motivations

all at once. These decisions would contort the familiar Hollywood narrative style and confound audience expectations.

Since the end of the war, Hitchcock had drawn increasingly complex effects from casting stars against type (notably his work with James Stewart); the strategy culminated in *Psycho*. One of the last stars to be methodically groomed by the old studio system, Janet Leigh moved easily between comedy, drama, and adventure roles in the 1950s. With wide-set eyes and a voluptuous figure, she personified a mid-century ideal of feminine glamour while projecting strength and a whimsical intelligence, qualities Hitchcock would exploit to great effect. Anthony Perkins had his first starring role in *Fear Strikes Out* (1957), the biography of baseball player Jimmy Piersall, who suffered a mental breakdown but recovered and bravely returned to the major leagues. Pertinent to *Psycho*, it underscored the role of Piersall's domineering father in the son's collapse. Audiences would be inclined to sympathize with Perkins as Norman and thus be less prone, even unwilling, to suspect him of a terrible secret. Moreover, as Hitchcock scholar Bill Krohn observes, "Usually described as a film centered first on Marion, then on Norman, *Psycho* actually keeps shifting its center, first to Norman as he clean up after his mother, then to the detective Arbogast ... then to [Marion's sister] Lila, who is presented as Norman's next victim."<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Hitchcock went so far as to call the entire first act "a red herring," the first of a series of audacious managements of audience response.

Though constraints were loosening, *Psycho's* opening sequence, with aerial views of a city culminating with movement into a hotel room window to find Janet Leigh in a bra and half-slip, kissing and lounging on the bed with her bare-chested lover, stretched the limits of Hollywood standards (Figure 1.1). Our view of the couple's afternoon tryst is titillating and intrusive, our response to Marion entwined with guilt from the start. Casting the audience as voyeur sets up a parallel with Norman later spying on Marion disrobing in the motel room just before her murder. Moreover, Hitchcock places a mirror in nearly every scene, venerable decor of horror and psychological suspense that connotes doubling, duplicity, alter egos – so that, for example, the resemblance between Sam (John Gavin) and Norman as they face off across the motel desk is underscored by their reflection in a mirror. The visual and thematic complexity of the opening establishes interrelated motifs (besides voyeurism and mirrors, eating/consumption, broken families, furtive sex, economic distress) that align spectator support with Marion's desires.

The scene began with an erotic charge but turns sad with the revelation that the couple cannot marry because of Sam's virtual working poverty in service of family ties that no longer exist: alimony to an ex-wife living "on the other side of the world" and the business failures of a dead father. "I sweat to pay my father's debts and he's in his grave," he says bitterly, another parallel with Norman, caught in the psychotic grip of his dead mother – not in her grave, though she should be. Marion begs to share the hardship if they can be together,



**Figure 1.1** Alfred Hitchcock pushed the limits of screen content in 1960 in the depiction of Marion (Janet Leigh) and Sam’s (John Gavin) afternoon tryst in *Psycho*.

but Sam, whom we are meant to regard sympathetically, is too much in thrall to traditional masculine ideals to even consider taking a wife he cannot properly support, which in the dominant social practice of the time means without her having to work outside the home. The effect of Sam’s stubbornness makes it seem that the couple is sneaking around in an affair when both are single.

After detailing Marion’s rash theft of \$40,000 from her boss, specifically from Cassidy, the middle-aged client whose arrogance makes it that much easier after he crudely “charms” her with a wad of cash shoved under her nose, Hitchcock encourages empathy with betrayal and theft as she takes flight. Throughout, the director deploys strong, even exaggerated cinematic effects, as when the boss spots her driving after she supposedly went home with a headache, and Bernard Herrmann’s tense, pulsating opening title theme returns to energize her panicked escape; or when Marion clumsily lies to the highway policeman, his threat to protagonist and spectator alike accentuated by looming close-ups of his face and dark glasses thrusting into the car window. *Psycho*’s first act, “red herring” though it may be in the larger design, is as smoothly constructed and engaging as any more typical expositions in the director’s résumé.

While the vicious stabbing of Marion in the shower rightly became *Psycho*’s indelible scene, the long one that precedes it, Marion and Norman’s

conversation while she eats dinner in the parlor, truly separates this movie from mere exploitation fare through its superb blend of writing, directing, and performance. Unseen but entirely present throughout is a third character, the murderous ghost of a traumatic past, one that in true gothic fashion erupts to haunt and hunt in the present. *Psycho* began with daring sexuality and turns on bloody violence, but the parlor scene allows Norman to reveal himself, and thereby conveys the sense that listening to the story of his miserable, constricted life moves Marion to fix the mess she has made of hers. In fact, it does, which only compounds the irony of her murder.

After introducing the shadowy room with its weird decor, Hitchcock seated his characters in a medium long shot on opposite sides of the wide frame: Norman on the right, a chest covered with stuffed birds and phallic candlesticks behind him; Marion on the left, leaning forward to eat a sandwich; behind her, more birds and the feminine shapes of oval portraits. As their dialog commences (“You eat like a bird”/“You’d know, of course”), Hitchcock conveys their physical and thus emotional distance by isolating each in a medium close-up, the effect of separation subtly increased by framing Norman to the far right of his shot, Marion to the far left of hers. In fact, they will never be seen together again in the same shot. Forty shots alternate just these two compositions until, as Marion offers, “If anyone ever talked to me the way I heard, the way she spoke to you ...,” Hitchcock reframes to a startling shot of Norman in profile from a low angle that takes in the shadows and stuffed birds behind him on the walls, along with paintings of classical rape scenes. Chief among the former is an owl with outspread wings behind Norman’s head (Figure 1.2). As a figure of his madness, the predatory owl recalls a similarly ominous counterpart in Goya’s etching *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* (ca. 1798), hovering just behind the writer slumped at his desk. “Sometimes ... I feel I’d like to go up there and curse her, and leave her forever,” the son begins firmly, but the angle, darkness, and looming birds depict Mother’s iron grip. Marion’s fumbling “Wouldn’t it be better, if you put her someplace?” sparks barely controlled aggression. In a closer frontal view, Norman arcs forward, tensed, thrusting toward Marion’s space, where a new angle from slightly above now suggests her startled recoil. It almost happened here.

The scene’s power comes from Anthony Perkins’s subtle shifts between earnest, yearning Norman and violent, dominating Mother – the monster concealed behind her son’s smiling face. Even as the lonely young man senses the interest and compassion he is eliciting from a beautiful woman, Mother, perpetually in wait for just such moments, grows angrier, more threatening, and little by little more visible. Before beginning the famous lines about being “clamped” in “our private traps,” Norman stared off and said in a grim attempt at small talk, “The rain didn’t last long, did it?” There’s both anger and resignation in his voice. He’s Norman still but knows Mother will soon “spoil” this encounter like all the others before.



**Figure 1.2** Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins), surrounded by stuffed birds, symbols of both his madness and his murderous intentions.

The scene began with shots from Marion's point of view as she surveys the strange room. But at its conclusion, when she stands, a crow's beak aimed at her neck, she and her host apparently attaining a rapport as they exchange their true names, Marion's story is essentially ended. We see her exit from Norman's point of view, through eyes that are now really Mother's, the impression sealed when he checks her fake signature in the register, "Marion Samuels." "Mother" gives a dark smile – scheming women lie, as they always will, and now there's even greater excuse for annihilating her – a sinister enlargement of Marion's rationalization of theft after Mr. Cassidy's demeaning proposition.

"I did not set out to reconstruct an old-fashioned Universal horror-picture atmosphere," the director emphasized, meaning scares built around castles and monsters in heavy makeup.<sup>21</sup> His foray into horror would be both more intense and everyday, not supernatural but pathological, a woman showering in an ordinary motel ripped and pummeled by a knife-wielding maniac in an old lady's dress, at once venting and stifling his lust. And the form: Hitchcock's chaotic montage compounded by simple sound design – running water, curtain rings yanked back, Marion's screams, the thuds of knife into flesh, Herrmann's wailing violins – conveyed a shocking assault on her nude, vulnerable body. Such violence inflicted on a woman, much less a major female star, had virtually no precedent in American cinema.

In the coda, a psychiatrist presents a long, entirely sensible “explanation” for what we have just experienced. The lingering shudders from Lila’s (Vera Miles) furtive inspection of Mother’s room with its multiple mirrors and her impression in the bed, then Norman’s cramped quarters with its jumble of child and adult – a plush bunny lying on his rumpled sheets, Beethoven records, and implicitly, a bound volume of vintage pornography – outweigh the doctor’s windy report. Much more powerfully, the film’s motifs of consumption, voyeurism, and guilty secrets culminate in its creepy final images. From behind Norman’s eyes, Mother returns the viewer’s unnerved gaze. Then quick overlapping dissolves combine that awful grin, a skull, and the car holding Marion’s body winched from the muck – as if the toilet, grave, shower drain, and swamp alike were all disgorging solid and psychic wastes.

Despite the director’s aim to fashion a sophisticated version of the exploitation feature, it was not common to consider *Psycho* a horror landmark until the early 1970s, a fact that speaks as much to the genre’s traditionally low status as to Hitchcock’s renown.<sup>22</sup> *Psycho* indeed marked a major shift in the genre not just for its explicit violence but for its situation of the monster within the nuclear family (“A boy’s best friend is his mother”), the vital institution reflexively defended from encroaching evil heretofore. Still, Hitchcock could make such a powerful, audacious, and above all commercially successful movie because, unlike many in Hollywood, he grasped how audience tastes as well as demographics were shifting, as revealed in his response to Truffaut for why he pushed the opening scene’s sexual explicitness to the furthest limits possible for its day:

I felt the need to do a scene of that kind because the audiences are changing. The straightforward kissing scene, I feel, is looked down upon by the young people. And they would feel inclined to say, “Oh, that’s silly.” And the young people – It would get them off on a wrong note ... They themselves behave like Gavin and the girl, and I think you have to give them today, the way they behave themselves most of the time.<sup>23</sup>

Though Hitchcock’s record exemplified mainstream success, *Psycho*’s ad campaign adopted the exploitation tactics that drew youth audiences to drive-ins (where in fact it performed well, too). Like AIP, William Castle, and other showmen, Paramount’s campaign isolated the movie’s most lurid elements and badgered customers with special conditions required to experience its shocks and titillation. Posters flaunted sex and fright: cut shots pictured Janet Leigh in her brassiere and terrified Anthony Perkins with one hand clamped over his mouth, the other lifted as if to ward off an unseen attacker. This was only part of a complex pitch. In the days when many patrons drifted in and out of movies at will, ads admonished that “No one but no one will be admitted to the theater after the start of each performance of *Psycho*.” “You must see it from the

beginning,” others repeated, reinforced by plays on Hitchcock’s droll television persona with a stern Hitch pointing to his wristwatch. People waiting in line heard his recorded voice explaining the admission policy and urging them not to reveal the ending. Box offices stopped selling tickets at specific times and then changed signs to indicate when sales for the next performance would begin. Besides planting the (false) idea that something secret and central to the story appeared at the very beginning, the campaign built up *Psycho* as special, surprising, shocking, and oddly fun all at once – just as the often cynical ads for exploitation features had done for years. And Hitchcock had the trump card. A huckster approach drew crowds but the Master of Suspense delivered on, even exceeded, every promise.

When Hitchcock and some feathered friends appeared on the cover of *Life* magazine in February 1963 a caption announced “His horror film: *The Birds*,” really a mark of just how great an impact its predecessor had made. Not surprisingly, the media were already behind the curve of an artist at his creative peak. *The Birds* had some finely crafted scares all right and was filled with technically advanced visual and aural effects alongside the director’s polished construction of suspense through montage. Yet it evoked the art cinema as much as the horror film, which *Psycho* had in any case just refashioned. Once again Hitchcock juxtaposed two established genres, psychological romance and, to a less obvious extent, science fiction – and did so by reference to a style outside the studio norm. We can guess at what his screening room research contributed to *The Birds*: from Bergman fraught but largely unspoken tensions between characters; from Antonioni the unsolved mystery at the heart of *L’Avventura*. Still, it’s hard to grasp (though wonderful to imagine!) what impressions he gleaned from Godard’s brash but seemingly irrational *Breathless* – perhaps confirmation that some segments of the audience were now open to just about anything? If so, *Psycho* had contributed to that as well.

*The Birds* has two parallel plot lines, the mounting terror of the massed bird attacks and the emerging love between Melanie Daniels (Tippi Hedren) and Mitch Brenner (Rod Taylor), its progress impeded by the needy resistance of his widowed mother, Lydia (Jessica Tandy). In long established Hollywood narrative tradition the two plot lines should converge and in the process, the enigma behind the avian assaults would be solved and the lovers united. Yet neither resolves in the typical fashion. As for the film’s central metaphor, sensitive Hitchcock critics have noticed its apocalyptic undertone only to dismiss it as unworthy of analysis, yet the revolt of nature had been a staple of postwar science fiction since gigantic mutant ants crawled out of an atomic test site in *Them!* (1954).<sup>24</sup> By contrast, contemporary critics easily assumed Cold War anxiety lay beneath the torpor of Bergman’s *The Seventh Seal* (1957), which used the Black Death of the Middle Ages as an atomic allegory no more or less abstract than aggressively massing birds.<sup>25</sup> “It’s the end of the world!” the drunk in *The Tides* restaurant cheerfully repeats, an assessment with not only ample cinematic precedents but which evoked a chilling possibility only recently

averted over Soviet missiles in Cuba. Still, the birds carry multiple connotations. A symbolic link between birds and female sexuality opens the film, when a boy whistles at Melanie on the street, followed by a cut to a dark flock gathering over San Francisco. The relationship between apocalyptic and sexual themes will remain close but elusive in *The Birds*, associated but never tied in a way that advances the narrative.

The French New Wave's typical cinematic self-consciousness not only broke the most basic mode of "realism" and called attention to conventions of the medium itself, but also aimed to disengage the audience emotionally from the drama. Hitchcock's increasingly ironic cameos in his films aside, he would never go to the lengths of Truffaut and Godard in exposing the artifice of his fiction for its own sake. Yet *The Birds* strikes a balance between emotionally involving suspense and modernist distance. A film that eschewed all background music for odd (and unproven) electronic sound effects to drive action scenes took an aesthetic risk even as it conjured a disquieting mood. Hitchcock's most directly self-conscious moments occur after the large-scale bird attack on the school and town when the frightened mother in *The Tides* turns to indict Melanie. "They said when you got here, the whole thing started!" she cries, looking straight into the camera as if to acknowledge that indeed "the whole thing started" once we, the audience, arrived to watch. The incident startles with its aggressive, albeit momentary, break from traditional Hollywood style.<sup>26</sup> Yet it sets a subtle precedent for the more exceptional narrative breach of the ending, which refuses to resolve the love story or the outcome of nature's upheaval (Figure 1.3).



**Figure 1.3** Melanie trapped in a phone booth as swarms of birds attack the town of Bodega Bay in *The Birds*.

The engaging scenes between Melanie and Annie Hayworth (Suzanne Pleshette), Mitch's former lover, now a local teacher, all include birds but with shifting symbolic function. A clear-eyed if frustrated figure, Annie could be pegged as a spinster whose life is incomplete without a man, but both writing and performance forestall easy judgments. At their first meeting, she emerges from work in her garden, polite but tense once she spots the lovebirds Melanie is bringing Mitch. Annie allows that she had wanted to take a cigarette break for the past twenty minutes but "This tilling of the soil can become compulsive, you know," a self-aware line that suggests gardening is really neurotic compensation for losing Mitch, not something intrinsically pleasurable to her. After Melanie suffers the gull attack in the rowboat and meets Lydia, she returns to Annie's to rent a room for the weekend. As they start inside, off-screen cries of birds are followed by a long shot of a flock moving against the sky. "Don't they ever stop migrating?" Annie says with quiet anger, implicitly comparing the seasonal behavior of birds to the regular migration of attractive women to Mitch's door.

However, after Melanie returns from dinner with the Brenner family, Annie's warmth and understanding emerge (Figure 1.4). A sophisticated woman whose home is filled with books and modern art, Annie holds a measured view of herself and the situation. In fact, the pair's relaxed conversation as they share a drink and talk openly concludes with the thump of a single gull striking the front door and falling dead. This portends the greater violence to come but also implies that the budding friendship between two smart, sensitive women who would traditionally be treated as jealous rivals has literally blunted an assault



**Figure 1.4** Melanie (Tippi Hedren) and Annie (Suzanne Pleshette) in *The Birds*. Mutual respect and understanding between two complicated women reflected in this balanced two shot.

on assertive female independence. That the perceptive Annie will die and Melanie be left torn and traumatized by bird attacks marks the chaos of a cruel, senseless universe, not punishment of feminine presumption. These complicated women remain more compelling throughout than the affable but self-satisfied Mitch.

Moreover, the scene also finds them absolving Lydia Brenner, Annie rejecting a notion that she is simply a “clinging, possessive mother.” “With all due respect to Oedipus, I don’t think that was the case,” the teacher opines, dismissing the trope around which *Psycho* was obsessively constructed. Indeed, well before the final attack on Melanie, she and Lydia have reconciled, the mother confessing her lingering grief for her husband and tacitly accepting the outwardly glamorous but inwardly vulnerable Melanie as a worthy mate for her son. Unlike our largely conjectural impression of awful Mrs. Bates, Lydia Brenner is finally a positive figure. Little suggests that she secretly longed for her rival’s punishment to the extent that the birds in the climactic assault – another rape-like battering – symbolize the harpies of the mother’s psychic fury. Yet, since Melanie, the worldly, sexually independent woman, is in fact thrashed into infantilized catatonia at the end, some critics have argued for this more ominous connection, emanating either from repressive gender ideology or from the director’s darker instincts.

Still, the art cinema’s preference for ellipsis over closure shapes the movie’s anti-climatic end as the numbed protagonists drive slowly away from their home and the camera, stranding the audience with a vast gathering of birds – roosting, burbling, settling uneasily. Why it happened, what happens next to these characters or the world, are never revealed. What remains is a lingering sense of exhaustion, uncertainty, and fear, seldom the effects of studio entertainment.

If Hitchcock was emulating European filmmakers, it was because he regarded them not only as peers but as competitors, as evidenced by Henri-Georges Clouzot’s suspenseful *Les Diaboliques* (1955), which became a solid American hit and drew favorable comparison to Hitchcock in reviews.<sup>27</sup> Still, European cineastes had already signaled their admiration for him. Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol, Truffaut’s New Wave cohorts and colleagues at the pivotal film journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*, penned the first book-length study of Hitchcock in 1956, advancing a then bold claim that the entertainer ought to be considered an artist. Moreover, as John Russell Taylor pointed out in 1964, discussing Hitchcock alongside Godard, Bergman, Fellini, et al. as “key filmmakers of the sixties,” Alain Resnais had placed a cardboard figure of Hitchcock among the bric-a-brac within the Baroque palace that is the setting for his brooding, beautiful, and often uncanny *Last Year at Marienbad* (*L’Annee Dernière a Marienbad*, 1961), scripted by modernist writer Alain Robbe-Grillet.<sup>28</sup> The avant-garde filmmaker Chris Marker soon allowed that his enigmatic science fiction short *La Jetée* (1962) was inspired by *Vertigo*. Artistic dialog, spectator alienation, destruction of conventions, quotation and

juxtaposition of seemingly incompatible styles – these had long been hallmarks of the modernist imagination in the traditional arts but were now penetrating the popular as well as advanced cinema of the post-World War II years.

*The Birds* made money but it was sufficiently different from familiar Hollywood films that it earned much less than *Psycho* despite heavy publicity and generally favorable reviews. Hitchcock's subsequent efforts, *Marnie* (1964), *Torn Curtain* (1966), and *Topaz* (1969), all more conventionally styled, proved even less successful critically and commercially, and their failures could be taken as evidence that Hitchcock, like other studio veterans, fell hopelessly adrift in the Vietnam era. If so, his state was partly self-inflicted. *Psycho* had twisted genre conventions, flaunted style, and reveled in sex and violence; once proven, these effects would characterize many of the most popular and complex studio movies of the coming years. Yet Hitchcock would get a notable measure of vindication from the public near decade's end. When *The Birds* – frightening, foreboding, inexplicable – aired on CBS on Saturday, January 6, 1968, at the height of the Vietnam agony, perhaps not coincidentally, it attracted nearly 40 percent of all television viewers, one of the highest numbers to date in the period dominated by three broadcasting networks.<sup>29</sup> Old Hollywood could still tutor the New, and Hitchcock pointed the way.

## Notes

- 1 Robert E. Kapsis, *Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 78.
- 2 “By the early 1950s MCA had more talent under contract than any studio, and Wasserman was putting together more projects and star vehicles than any filmmaker or studio executive in Hollywood.” Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 470.
- 3 Hodgson, 363.
- 4 Hodgson, 76.
- 5 Hodgson, 75.
- 6 Biskind, *Seeing Is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), chapter 1, “Who’s In Charge Here?” 9–20.
- 7 For detailed analysis of the post-studio period see Schatz, *Genius of the System*, especially part 5, “1947–1960: Decline”; Denise Mann, *Hollywood Independents: The Postwar Talent Takeover* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
- 8 Douglas Gomery, “The Coming of Television and the ‘Lost’ Motion Picture Audience,” *Journal of Film and Video*, 38, no. 3 (1985), 5–11.
- 9 Thomas H. Guback, *The International Film Industry: Western Europe and America Since 1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), chapter 4, “European Films in the American Market,” 68–90.

- 10 From 1948, Britain's "Eady levy," a tax on movie tickets rebated to producers to fund further production was one of the most successful of these schemes. It was also quickly coopted by Hollywood studios such that "by the sixties, American[-owned] subsidiaries in Great Britain received as much as 80 percent of the Eady pool in every year." Balio, 237.
- 11 Denis Meikle, *A History of Horrors: The Rise and Fall of the House of Hammer* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996), chapter 2, "New Blood for Old," 49–106.
- 12 Douglas Gomery, *Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Presentation in the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), chapter 9, "Ethnic Theaters and Art Cinemas," 171–196; Barbara Wilinsky, *Sure Seaters: The Emergence of Art House Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), chapters 3 and 4.
- 13 Balio, 225. The Bardot movie was also partly financed by Columbia.
- 14 *The Miracle* was one of two episodes included under the title *L'Amore*.
- 15 Gomery, *Shared Pleasures*, 91.
- 16 Ray Greene, "Sam Arkoff: The Last Interview," *Cult Movies*, 36 (2002), 11.
- 17 Not only was Hollywood producing most episodic television by the late 1950s, but TV was becoming a major ancillary market for older Hollywood movies soon after.
- 18 Stephen Rebello, *Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of "Psycho"* (1990) (Berkeley, CA: Skull Press, 2012), 37–38.
- 19 Rebello, 58–59. Though Stefano, Hitchcock, and Truffaut spoke disparagingly of Bloch's novel, the fact remains that Marion Crane (Mary in the book) and her backstory, including her relationship with Sam Loomis, appear there originally. Hitchcock's key change was moving Mary/Marion's story to the beginning of the movie rather than starting with Norman.
- 20 Bill Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work* (London: Phaidon Press, 2003), 224.
- 21 Francois Truffaut with Helen G. Scott, *Hitchcock*, rev. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), 269.
- 22 Writing in 1967, Carlos Clarens argued, "Although pathological case histories lie outside the province and proper spectrum of the pure horror film – as in the case of *M* [1931] or the horrifying *Psycho* ..." *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film* (1967) (New York: Paragon Books, 1979), 145.
- 23 This statement comes from the original audio recordings of the Hitchcock–Truffaut interviews rather than the heavily edited published version (Truffaut 1984). Transcripts of the audio recordings can be found in the Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA. They are also available on the Alfred Hitchcock wiki: [https://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/Alfred\\_Hitchcock\\_and\\_Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Truffaut\\_\(Aug/1962\)](https://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/Alfred_Hitchcock_and_Fran%C3%A7ois_Truffaut_(Aug/1962)), retrieved August 3, 2017.
- 24 Donald Spoto, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock*, 2nd ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 1992), 330; Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 167.

- 25 See, for example, various critics collected in Birgitta Steene, ed., *Focus on "The Seventh Seal"* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972). Bergman encouraged this reading from the start in interviews and publicity, however (Steene, 4–5).
- 26 Thomas Schatz, *Old Hollywood/New Hollywood: Ritual, Art, and Industry* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983), 23; Camille Paglia, *The Birds* (London: BFI, 1998), 74.
- 27 Kapsis, 53–54; Rebello, 35–37.
- 28 John Russell Taylor, *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear: Some Key Filmmakers of the Sixties* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1964), 226.
- 29 Douglas Gomery, "Movies on Television," Museum of Broadcast Communications (Chicago), Encyclopedia of Television. <http://www.museum.tv/eotv/moviesontel.htm>, retrieved December 30, 2016.