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Abstract of the Dissertation

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This dissertation examines the definition of the monstrous child in horror cinema and media. Spanning from 1955 to 2009 and beyond, the question of what counts as a monstrous child illuminates a perennial cinematic preoccupation with monstrosity and the relation between the normal and the pathological. Films like *The Night of the Hunter* (Charles Laughton, 1955), *The Bad Seed* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1956), *Village of the Damned* (Wolf Rilla, 1960), *The Innocents* (Jack Clayton, 1961), *Don't Look Now* (Nicolas Roeg, 1973), *Profondo rosso*/*Deep Red* (Dario Argento, 1975), *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976), *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978), *Child's Play* (Tom Holland, 1988), and *Orphan* (Jaume Collet-Serra, 2009) explore the normative and pathological specificity of childhood across a range of historical, religious, and economic awakenings and crises, from the work of Jonathan Edwards and Henry James to Alfred Hitchcock and Brian De Palma. Ultimately the monstrous child is not a force of evil, but a rebellious and motivated figure at odds with a range of social and cultural norms found in the classic and modern American and European horror film. Specifically, the cultural function of the figure of the child in horror films works against norms of good and evil it is often linked to. By extension, the monstrous child and its function vary according to different historical periods and major historical events during the years 1955-2009 and beyond. These include: the Great Depression, World War II, Britain's age of affluence, Italy's Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*, the Cold War, 9/11, and the financial meltdown of 2008. In short, the monstrous child is a rebel with a cause, a figure that assumes a vital dimension of modern consciousness. To that end, I propose that a theoretical and historical analysis of the monstrous child in horror cinema and media during the twentieth and twenty-first century should be approached via three concepts: innocence, criminality, and anxiety. Focusing on the child in horror, I expand the theoretical scope of my dissertation to include: film and media studies, genre and popular culture, gender and sexuality, and psychoanalysis.

For Carol Ann Lefemine (1951-2016).

And as always, for Claire and Atticus, who are the best that a husband and father could hope for.

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Introduction

What is a Monstrous Child?

> For is not a 'child' a being that will alter by degrees, not quite before our eyes, yet in our presence, the Master of the castle mused, and is not a 'child' an early version, or mockery, of ourselves? – an image of our despoiled innocence and our blasted hopes? Most intolerably, is a 'child' not *one who will replace us*?
>
> Joyce Carol Oates[1]

A young girl is playing outside. It has been raining and Christine's (Sharon Williams) red mackintosh clashes with the muted earth tones of grass, moss, and trees. A piano piece ("Suite No. 1"), composed and performed by Pino Donaggio, plays offscreen. The suite retains an innocent quality befitting a little girl learning to play the piano. Shortly after Christine is introduced in *Don't Look Now* (Nicolas Roeg, 1973) she falls into a pond and drowns. Her mother and father, Laura (Julie Christie) and John Baxter (Donald Sutherland), are busy at work inside and oblivious to the tragedy unfolding outdoors. John's belated attempt to save Christine is both unsuccessful and painstakingly rendered by Roeg, Donaggio, Anthony Richmond (cinematography), and Graeme Clifford (editing). The use of color, music, slow motion, and parallel editing magnify the horror of Christine's death, raising the question of how Laura and John will cope with the loss of their daughter for the remainder of the picture. In the opening sequence of *Don't Look Now*, the representation of vulnerability and the irreversible loss of the figure of the child is palpable.

[1] Oates, Joyce Carol. *The Accursed*. Ecco, 2013, p. 611. Introduction endnotes may be found on pp. 199-203.

In Mark Sanderson's view the opening of *Don't Look Now* "is a textbook example of compression and encapsulation, giving the unwitting viewer virtually the whole ensuing film in a nutshell."[1] The same holds true for this dissertation. Christine, in life and in death, is the epitome of the monstrous child – a figure that alternates, like Donaggio's "Suite No. 1," between certainty and anxiety, innocence and criminality. A defenseless child at first glance, the figure of Christine returns as a childish monster and homicidal maniac by film's end.[2] Indeed, the figure of Christine and the picture (and song) of the child(ish) monster are mutually dependent. The depiction of pastoral innocence, the ambiguity of play, the intersection of fear and fairy tale, the appearance and disappearance of children, and the anxiety of parenthood are constitutive of the child figure that I am fascinated by.

Over the course of the dissertation I have found myself returning to the works of Donaggio, as well as horror films that are frequently compared to *Don't Look Now*.[3] The overlap is uncanny (*unheimlich*), leading me back "to what is known of old and long familiar."[4] I find it provocative and unsettling that the majority of my research pertaining to the child in horror returns to Christine in *Don't Look Now*, a figure that is perceived as both dead and returned from the dead.[5] In short, Christine is the motivating force behind my decision to focus on a theoretical intervention about the definition of the monstrous child in the horror film. Christine has helped me to answer a question that I have grappled with from the start of this dissertation: What does the monstrous child represent, and how does this change over time in the context of different historical moments?

Ultimately the monstrous child is neither a hapless victim nor a metaphysical force of evil, but a rebellious and motivated figure at odds with a range of social and cultural norms found in the classic (1931-1960) and modern (1961-1984) American and European horror film.[6] The cultural function of the figure of the child in horror films works against norms of good and evil it

is often linked to. As a result, the figure of the child illuminates a perennial cinematic preoccupation with the connection between the normal and the pathological.[7] Taking the same line of argument further, the monstrous child emerges as a dominant figure in horror film during the years 1955-2009 as a result of the morally ambiguous distinction between the victim and killer. The children in this dissertation complicate the distinction between good and evil by way of the performance of childhood and monstrosity, in addition the conceptual arrangement of innocence and criminality. The figure of the child is monstrous inasmuch as the norms of good and evil, and the progress from childhood to maturity, are challenged and overturned.

Like Christine and the motion picture of childhood, the conception of the normative and the disturbed are mutually dependent. By extension, the figure of the monstrous child and its function vary according to different historical periods and major historical events during the twentieth and twenty-first century. These include: the Great Depression, World War II, Britain's age of affluence, Italy's Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*, the Cold War, 9/11, and the financial meltdown of 2008. In each of the above-mentioned historical periods and events the child assumes a vital dimension of modern consciousness by rebelling against a variety of sociocultural norms. These norms include: the figure of the priceless child in need of protection from adult society, patriarchy and the nuclear family, the depiction of Christianity as a positive presence, and the mythology of a golden age of socioeconomic prosperity that is conducive to youth culture. In the case of *Don't Look Now*, Christine is defined as monstrous when her doppelgänger rebels against the patriarchal male order and murders John Baxter at the conclusion of the film.

The definition of the monstrous child in horror cinema and media is based upon the conflation of innocence and criminality, and the anxiety that this paradox engenders. The lack of distinction between the concepts of innocence, criminality, and anxiety informs a range of

perceptions I develop about definitions of good and bad inclinations in child figures. These concepts – and the social and cultural norms that they reinforce – not only illuminate what counts as a monstrous child, they also demonstrate how the child is formed and reformed by a practice of looking that endeavors to comprehend, enforce, and manipulate the distinction between the normal and the pathological in the horror film.

For example, in *The Innocents* Miss Giddens (Deborah Kerr) is tormented by her desire to save the children from the ostensibly nefarious ghosts of Peter Quint (Peter Wyngarde) and Miss Jessel (Clytie Jessop), even if the preservation of normality requires that the child is driven to madness and death. Throughout this dissertation a number of filmmakers are "in on the joke," so to speak. Depending upon the film in question, various types of anxiety that are pervasive at the historical moment, for example the sexuality of children in *The Innocents* and its source text *The Turn of the Screw* (Henry James, 1898), are either unconsciously channeled or consciously exploited for shock effect. In *Don't Look Now*, the death and apparent resurrection of Christine underscores the ambiguous distinction between the outward appearance of the innocent child and the criminal that lurks within. Under scrutiny, Christine is revealed to be an adult killer instead of a child victim. Consequently, one of the challenges of this dissertation is the ability to tell the difference between the spectacular child as a site of media fascination, and moral panic in the culture generally.

Taking the same line of argument further, I analyze the cultural function of the figure of the child as morally ambiguous. In the following chapters I propose that the image of youth and horror in the twentieth and twenty-first century should be approached via three concepts: innocence (chapter 1), criminality (chapter 2), and anxiety (chapter 3). Each concept provides a unique perspective of the child in horror cinema and media during the years 1955-2009 and

beyond. Regarding a conceptual framework, the figure of the child is determined by imagery and association, in addition to a practice of looking that is influenced by gothic horror and scientific imagery. For example, the practice of gothic and Victorian looking in *Don't Look Now* and *The Innocents* differs from the pseudo-scientific gaze that is practiced in *Village of the Damned* and *The Bad Seed*. Leaving aside the national cinemas of Japan, Spain, and Sweden, which are known for the representation of monstrous children, I focus on horror films from the United States, Britain, and Italy because of the distinctive way in which the films that I have selected illuminate the figure of the child and the ambiguous relationship between innocence, criminality, and anxiety.[8]

It is my assessment that the normative and pathological ambiguity of Christine Baxter in *Don't Look Now* epitomizes the monstrous child as a figure that is foundational to the horror film. Yet "the child" as a category of analysis is misleading. In nearly all of the films in this dissertation the "boundaries that define the differences between child and adult" are ambivalent and contradictory.[9] Accordingly, I embrace the work of Gaylyn Studlar and the idea that juvenation, or the medium of youthfulness, is a process linked to gender, genre, and "the taboo aspects of children's display."[10] Christine, followed by the children in chapters 1 through 3, represents the ambiguous relationship between innocence and experience, in addition to that between the normal and the pathological. As a result, the monstrous child is a primary example of Studlar's argument that images of the young as a category of appeal and anxiety are determined less by age than by the *communication* of youthfulness.

The performance of the innocent child in *The Night of the Hunter* (Charles Laughton, 1955), *Village of the Damned* (Wolf Rilla, 1960), and *The Innocents*; the criminal child in *Profondo rosso*/*Deep Red* (Dario Argento, 1975), *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978), and *Child's Play* (Tom Holland, 1988); and the relationship between anxiety and childhood in *The Bad Seed*

(Mervyn LeRoy, 1956), *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976), and *Orphan* (Jaume Collet-Serra, 2009) represent what Studlar considers "a preoccupation with the boundaries of age and with the young."[11] As a stage of life and moral classification the monstrous child in horror cinema and media is defined across a range of historical, religious, and economic awakenings and crises, from the work of Jonathan Edwards and Henry James to Alfred Hitchcock and Brian De Palma.

Regarding the horror film in particular, the extant literature provides a comprehensive summary of representations of children as monsters [Wood, 1979; Twitchell, 1985; Dixon, 1986; Petley, 1999; Renner, 2013; Lennard, 2014; Benshoff, 2015; Scahill, 2015]. To varying degrees and from contrasting points of view, the above-mentioned scholars argue that the cultural function of the child in horror is the personification of human iniquity, a terrible and monstrous figure possessed by demonic or supernatural forces. Indeed, Wood and others provide ample evidence that the monstrous child is a paragon of cruelty and degeneration in the classic and modern American and European horror film.

However, a typology of childhood and monstrosity tends to overlook the importance of the child in the horror film regarding cultural and historical context. Rather than a summary of representations of children as monsters, I propose a theoretical intervention about how the monstrous child is defined in the horror film via the concepts of innocence, criminality, and anxiety. In *Don't Look Now*, the conceptual ambiguity of Christine, in particular the complication of the normal and the pathological, is as terrifying as the carnage and viscera distributed by the terrible (Wood), savage (Twitchell), demonic (Dixon), monstrous (Petley), evil (Renner), villainous (Lennard), extraterrestrial (Benshoff), and revolting (Scahill) kid.

As a result, the monstrous child assumes a vital dimension of modern consciousness by rebelling against – or disturbing the difference between – the normal and the pathological in the

horror, science fiction, and social commentary film.[12] The question of who or what is evil fails to capture my imagination in the same way as the question of how the child is capable of opening the horror genre to more expansive analyses within cinema and media studies. By focusing on the monstrous child we can see the politics of the horror film beyond Wood's designations of progressive and reactionary, in addition to the argument that the 1960s and 70s represent the horror genre's political apex.[13]

For example, it is generally agreed that horror media and childhood are well acquainted. The child, in addition to the adult monster more frequently associated with horror, is a staple commodity of the genre beginning with Marilyn Harris' performance of girlhood in *Frankenstein* (Little Maria; James Whale, 1931). Like Christine in *Don't Look Now*, Little Maria, compared to the hideous progeny of Henry Frankenstein (Colin Clive), is not abject. She is not a child zombie, Satan, or monster that viewers have come to expect after the modern family horror cycle (1968-1976).[14] Indeed, many of the children that I write about are neither constructed from dead body parts nor do they feed upon the living or suffer from demonic possession. The picture of childhood that I am concerned with is for the most part outwardly perfect – the embodiment of normality and innocence. In many of the films that I analyze the child is represented by the overwhelmingly romantic notion of innocence – the perfect camouflage to blot out the monster that lurks within. Subsequently the moral ambiguity of the figure of the child is frequently defined in terms of the braided, rather than discrete, identities of killer and victim.

The loss of Christine in *Don't Look Now*, compared to Little Maria's accidental death by drowning, is not a tale of victimization.[15] Ordinarily, and in the horror film especially, if the child is not a killer then s/he is a victim. The division between innocence and criminality, according to Twitchell and Wood, may at times be ambiguous, but rarely if ever is the intersection of childhood

and morality called into question. If s/he is good then s/he is imperiled, if s/he is bad then s/he is disciplined. This is not the case in *Don't Look Now*. After Christine's death, the Baxters run away to Venice, where John is overseeing the restoration of a church dedicated to Saint Nicholas. Rumor has it that a killer is at large, and John and Laura quarrel over the appropriate way to mourn for their daughter. John, being more pragmatic than his wife, is frustrated by Laura's interest in the possibility that Christine, in spirit, is alive and well. Hence the moral ambiguity of Christine is represented through parental anxiety and the inability to embrace the figure of the child as living or dead. Neither good nor bad, Christine is ultimately a rebellious figure that stands in opposition to patriarchy and the male order.

Atypically the gothic conventions of *Don't Look Now* (a killer loose in the wintertime streets of Venice, "the disturbing return of pasts upon presents") are affiliated with John instead of Laura.[16] Dating back to the 1790s and the works of Anne Radcliffe, images of violence, excessive passion, and criminal threats to accepted domestic structures are associated with the heroine and the family. In *Don't Look Now* it is the *patriarch* that is imperiled. Over time John becomes transfixed by a mysterious figure dressed in a red overcoat identical to the mackintosh that Christine wore at the beginning of the film. Regarding the intersection of fear and fairy tale, the color of Christine's overcoat alludes to the story of Little Red Riding Hood and the ambiguous distinction between the familial and the uncanny. As a result of Christine's overcoat, John is tricked into believing that his daughter has returned from the dead. At the conclusion of the film, John notices the girl in red once more. Assuming that she is fleeing an attacker, he chases after her and corners her in a ruined palazzo. To John's surprise, the girl turns out to be an aged female dwarf who proceeds to hack him to death.

Figuratively speaking, the image and *after*image of Christine is derived from John and Laura's shared anxiety or uncertainty. In the words of Ernst Jentsch, the Baxters are confused as to "'whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate.'"[17] From beyond the grave a childish adult that is defined by criminality assumes the form of a departed child that is defined by innocence; the moral ambiguity of the child is defined by the braided identities of killer and victim. In *Don't Look Now* the barrier between life and death, good and bad, juvenility and maturity is obscured, leading one to question the perception of childhood and morality. "Children, after all," writes Terry Eagleton, "are only semi-socialised creatures who can be expected to behave pretty savagely from time to time. If Freud is to be credited, they have a weaker superego or moral sense than their elders."[18]

Yet the monster in *Don't Look Now*, strictly speaking, is neither evil nor a child. The image of Christine and her double are superimposed upon one another, resulting in a scenario by which the familial (*heimlich*) cherub, according to Freud, "develops in the direction of ambivalence, until finally it coincides with its opposite," namely, the uncanny (*unheimlich*) changeling.[19] Thus my work extends the findings of Freud beyond Eagleton's interpretation that "we are ready to believe all kinds of sinister things about children because they . . . resemble us in some ways but not in others."[20] In the case of *Don't Look Now*, the failure to imagine the child within a gothic and Victorian practice of looking hinges upon the expectation that a developmental continuity exists between childhood and adulthood. Consequently the brutality of John's death is commensurate with the realization that Christine has grown into a woman who is capable of overthrowing, albeit extremely, what Jacques Lacan refers to as *le Nom du Père*, or the Name of the Father.[21]

The child is defined as monstrous because she is a future replacement of, and imperfectly resembles, the adult and the bourgeois ideology of the nuclear family. In her book, *The Queer*

Child, or Growing Up Sideways in the Twentieth Century (2009), Kathryn Bond Stockton maintains that "it's a mistake to take innocence straight."[22] Regarding the concept of the innocent child, Stockton's observation that "one does not 'grow up' from innocence to the adult position of protecting it" is apropos of the relationship between John and Christine Baxter, in addition to most of the parent-child narratives that I discuss.[23] The graceful or "dark and beautiful" rendering of the female child and monstrous little woman in *Don't Look Now* is emblematic of a notion for sideways growth, Stockton observes, in which "the child who by reigning cultural definitions can't 'grow up' grows to the side of cultural ideals."[24] In the case of *Don't Look Now*, the communication of youthfulness and the figure of the child complicates the distinction between the normal and the pathological, in addition to the child victim and adult killer.[25]

The child, Joyce Carol Oates reminds us, is a being that alters "by degrees, not quite before our eyes, yet in our presence."[26] Intimate and yet withdrawn from knowledge, Christine Baxter, "most intolerably, is . . . *one who will replace*" Oates' Master of the castle, or the dominant ideology of bourgeois patriarchal norms including monogamy, heterosexuality, and the nuclear family.[27] Moreover, Christine is a gesture of death and mortality (memento mori), a testament to her parents' "despoiled innocence and . . . blasted hopes," in which John and Laura's failure to save their daughter is compounded by their inability to discipline or reform Christine after she has figuratively returned from the grave.[28] Regarding the definition of the monstrous child, Christine is a reminder that we have not yet developed a set of concepts that adequately embraces the child monster beyond the restricted dichotomy of the norms of good and evil.

Before I turn to the chapter outline of my dissertation I want to address three points that are integral to how I define the monstrous child. First, this is not an evaluation of the child-star film or child actor. While I refer to the child-star era (1921-1941) and actors like Shirley Temple

in passing, I am interested in the representation of the child, not, as Daniel Thomas Cook points out, "a sentient being with a unique biography."[29] Rather than a discreet individual, the monstrous child is a figure that is represented in the horror film via three concepts (innocence, criminality, and anxiety) that serve to complicate, rather than clarify or reinforce, the moral distinction between good and evil.

Second, the time period that I have chosen (1955-2009) intersects with a range of cultural and historical developments in the United States, Britain, and Italy. As I mentioned earlier, these include: the Great Depression, World War II, Britain's age of affluence, Italy's Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*, the Cold War, 9/11, and the financial meltdown of 2008. It may be surprising that I venture beyond my principal time period to include the early twentieth century. However, at each historical juncture listed above the definition of the child alters profoundly, fluctuating between the familial (*heimlich*) and the uncanny (*unheimlich*). In the case of *Don't Look Now*, the social conditions that gave rise to the figure of Christine are linked to the mythology – or the illusion – of a golden age of affluence and socioeconomic prosperity that is conducive to youth culture.[30]

In order to comprehend the child after 1955 it is imperative that the principles and anxieties underlying the films I discuss are explained in detail. Ultimately, a definition of the monstrous child is a historical endeavor with regard to horror cinema and media. One of the overarching claims of this dissertation is that the conceptual imbrication of innocence and criminality culminates in a feeling of anxiety that is either unconsciously channeled or consciously exploited for shock effect at a particular historical moment during the years 1955-2009. In terms of a mathematical equation, innocence + criminality = anxiety. By extension, the figure of the child is perceived as dreadfully pleasurable in connection with a monstrous cultural imaginary, or the

mediated comprehension that the norms of good and evil, in addition to the ideological and historical contingencies of the horror film, are explicable only by reference to one another.

Third, I use both the gender-specific (she, he) and gender-neutral (s/he, it) pronoun when referring to the monstrous child. In my opinion, "the child" (the term itself stubbornly gender-neutral and chronologically indeterminate) is a figure that is typically misrepresented or dehumanized in horror narratives.[31] The utility of genre, both in terms of childhood and horror, is a primary concern, especially with regard to the implantation and preservation of female and male stereotypes in classical and modern Hollywood cinema [Kaplan, 2012].[32] That said, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the horror film in relation to gender and sexuality [Creed, 2007 (1993); Clover, 1992; Williams, 1983]. For example, I examine the intersection of feminist theory and criticism and the construction of gender and genre in chapter 3. The horror film in relation to gender and sexuality relates to my concerns about the figure of the female child monster in films like *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* in particular.

In order to interrogate the monstrous child I propose that s/he is a discursive construct with a history, a form that has been molded and remolded over the twentieth century and beyond in film, literature, television, and comic books. Consequently the child is never a singular or universal figure. Like Christine's doppelgänger in *Don't Look Now* s/he is a poltergeist, a problem child that scholars have sought to comprehend and envision. Yet over time the child, Cook writes, "has gained something of a set of identifiable characteristics, boundaries, and social and commercial locations."[33] The figure of the child monster, and its relation to social and cultural norms, is a curious phenomenon that requires further attention, especially regarding the question of *why* horror shifts from one phase or modality to another over time.

In chapter 1 I examine the figure of the child as a gothic, atomic, and apocalyptic

subjectivity in *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter*. In particular I focus upon the representation of childhood innocence and monstrosity during the transition from classic to modern horror phases (1955-1961). Building upon Viviana Zelizer's designation of the priceless child in need of protection from adult society, I argue that the social value of children after World War II is no longer measured in terms of economic payoff or spiritual welfare, as was the case during the nineteenth and eighteenth century.[34] The postwar era's greatest appeal, as Steven Mintz points out, "is that it seems a much more innocent and child-friendly time: a time of open spaces, of brand-new neighborhoods, Good Humor ice cream trucks, 25-cent movies, and amusement parks."[35] In short, the passage from World War II to the Cold War is implicated in the change in conception of the child as a result of unprecedented social and economic prosperity, the rise of the middle-class family, and anxieties surrounding the distinction between the normal and the pathological. Responding to the fears of communist infiltration and nuclear warfare in particular, the figure of the child in the horror film during the years 1955-1961 is defined as a monstrous harbinger of political and social decay in Britain and the United States.

Taking the same line of argument further, films like *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter* challenge the fantasy of a golden age of British and American history by exposing the relentless evocation of childhood terror and rebellion. The performance of innocence is complicated by the political and military tensions of the Cold War and the fact that children, as Marah Gubar points out, are "socially saturated beings, profoundly shaped by the culture, manners, and morals of their time."[36]

Furthermore, the children in this chapter are involved in a life-or-death struggle with a parent or guardian who has vowed to protect them. As a result, the films that I examine are defined by the ambiguities of love and hate. On the one hand, the child is a sentimental or nostalgic figure,

Stockton observes, a form that is representative of "the act of adults looking back. It is a ghostly, unreachable fancy" that is the object of impassioned and misguided feelings.[37] On the other hand, the child is perceived as monstrous, and yet at the same time irreproachable, when s/he fights back against the adult world, wreaking havoc upon the norms and cherished beliefs of the nuclear family. By complicating the distinction between innocence and criminality, and the correlation between outward appearance and intrinsic nature, the figure of the child in *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter* is defined as monstrous by the adults who have sworn to uphold the status quo.

Chapter 2 concentrates on the media interface between the golden age of horror comics (1948-1955), the Italian *giallo* film (1964-1975), and the early and late American slasher film cycles (1978-1988).[38] As with many of the texts in this dissertation, I focus on the opening moments of *Profondo rosso*, *Halloween*, and *Child's Play* in an effort to view the emerging figure of the monstrous child and the transition from the *giallo* to slasher format. While only a fleeting image in *Profondo rosso*, the figure of the childish monster eventually takes center stage in *Child's Play*, completing a story of formation that is consistent with the early *giallo* cycle. Accordingly, I expand upon the question of childhood innocence by investigating the intermedial history of boyhood and criminality in the United States and Italy between 1954 and 1988.

Regarding the figure of boy and the concept of criminality in particular, I analyze the cultural and historical conditions of Italy (*Profondo rosso*), the American suburb (*Halloween*), and metropolis (*Child's Play*) as sites of economic and sociopolitical crisis. Contrary to the age of affluence and the fabled golden age of childhood that followed World War II, the 1970s and 80s in Italy and the United States are defined by the intersection of youth culture and cultural conflict. Subsequently, the threat of "terrorism, economic crisis, political immobilism, ideological

saturation, and cultural disorientation" accounts for the alleged increase in criminal childhood activity that emerged in the horror film.[39] Like the figure of the postwar juvenile delinquent, the male child in horror films of the 1970s and 80s rebels against the command to "paper the cracks" of cultural anxieties during the Reagan Era and the socially and politically turbulent period between 1968 and 1982 that is known in Italy as the Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*.[40]

Lastly, chapter 3 interrogates the representation of the monstrous little woman or baby bitch in *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan*. In this chapter I analyze the performance of girlhood and anxiety in Cold War Hollywood cinema, the American horror film after 9/11, and the financial meltdown of 2008. Spanning these very distinct cultural and historical moments, I focus on the relationship between the female child monster and the myth of the All-American Mom as a site of generational conflict. I argue that the cinematic questioning of childhood innocence and the figure of the middle-class American mother during the Cold War and post 9/11 contribute to an age of anxiety that is pertinent to changes in the child image found in the horror and social commentary film. By extension, the performance of anxiety as a cultural condition during the Cold War and post-9/11 helps to reinforce my central argument that cultural and historical context are fundamental to the definition of the monstrous child in horror cinema and media.

Furthermore, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the image of the female child in horror cinema during the period in question (1955-2009). Celebrating the multifarious image of the evil girl-child or monstrous-feminine, I revisit the "Scary Women" symposium (UCLA, 1994) and the lasting influence of second-wave feminism upon horror and media studies, including the works of Barbara Creed, Carol Clover, and Linda Williams. Along the same lines, films like *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* support the case that a feminist critique of media and gender is foundational to the child image and the performance of girlhood in Hollywood cinema

during the Cold War period and post-9/11. In addition to feelings that are commonly associated with the horror film (nausea, repulsion, disgust), anxiety most forcefully demonstrates the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism and the desire to comprehend or master the female child monster. By extension, *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* are fundamental to my analysis of the performance of girlhood and anxiety, in particular the media fascination with the spectacular girl and willful female subject.

Chapter 1

Pictures of Innocence:
Horror Cinema, Media, and Childhood

> Innocence is a tricky subject: its appeal is not always so clean as a whistle.
>
> Grahame Greene[2]

James Twitchell, in the conclusion to his book *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror* (1985), asks a deceptively straightforward question: What will emerge from the classic horror film archetype? Who, Twitchell asks, are the monsters that will capture the cultural imaginary after Dracula, Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll, and Mr. Wolfman? "I would like to pay some attention to a rather curious phenomenon of the last twenty years," Twitchell writes, pointing out that "children and childlike forms have become the compact vehicles for traditional acts of horror."[41]

This, according to Twitchell, is a "'downsizing' of the monster product," a sly reference on Twitchell's part to the impact of the gasoline crises of 1973 and 1979 on the U.S. auto industry, in which the muscle, steel, and horsepower of Detroit is overrun by smaller, supposedly more efficient foreign cars and trucks made by Datsun, Honda, and Toyota. Born from the anxiety of late capitalism, in which the decline of American industrial fortitude is embodied in the figure of the monstrous child, Twitchell's "modern bestiary" includes "the pint-sized vampire, nasty darling, mini-zombie, telekinetic teen, demonette [*sic*], and a nursery full of baby cannibals."[42]

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[2] Greene, Grahame. *The Grahame Greene Film Reader: Reviews, Essays, Interviews, and Film Stories*. Applause, 1993, p. 58. Chapter 1 endnotes may be found on pp. 203-211.

Twitchell's anatomy of modern horror proposes a shift in genre studies toward a renewed political and historical engagement with cinema. Regarding the time period that he establishes for the child as a vehicle for horror (1960-1985), Twitchell is preoccupied with the diminution of the classic horror film archetype as an indicator of social and moral decay.[43] Bemoaning the commercialization of horror film – "our children eat 'Count Chocula' and 'Frankenberry' for breakfast" – Twitchell is intent upon reclaiming an authentic and progressive monster that was once the embodiment of a fabled golden age of horror filmmaking before it was "trapped in the mire" of horror mythology.[44] "For very often," he writes, "when horror narratives do not work properly, we can see how minor shifts in sequence, victims, and imagery can produce major changes in our response."[45]

Typically the difference between the classic and modern horror film is understood "in terms of formal change: otherworldly threats become frighteningly human monsters whose carnage is depicted through graphic violence."[46] Yet as Adam Lowenstein points out in his book, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (2005), a strictly formalist interpretation of the classic and modern horror film tends to overlook the political and historical dimensions of horror. In an effort to position the horror genre as a genealogy or taxonomy of monsters and graphic acts of violence the question of *why* horror shifts from one phase or modality to another is disregarded by scholars [Clarens, 1967; Huss and Ross, 1972; Prawer, 1980].[47] Twitchell, to a lesser extent than Robin Wood, deviates from the pioneering work of Clarens and others, who between the late 1960s and early 80s are more concerned with a descriptive history of horror film and literature.[48]

For example, the gothic and scientific worlds of *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931) and *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931) differ from *Peeping Tom* (Michael Powell, 1960) and *Psycho*

(Alfred Hitchcock, 1960) in terms of formal change. Clearly the vampire and thing-without-a-name are replaced by the frighteningly human monster and the more elaborately staged act of violence. Yet what truly distinguishes *Peeping Tom* and *Psycho* from the Universal horrors of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* are the childhood traumas of Mark Lewis (Karlheinz Böhm) and Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins).[49] Lewis and Bates, like Christine in *Don't Look Now*, are defined by a formative personal experience rather than a supernatural or mythological etiology.

As a result, the monstrous children and childish monsters in the above-mentioned films complicate the developmental progression from childhood to adulthood, while at the same time illuminating how the figure of the child changes over time in the context of different historical moments. As Randy Loren Rasmussen points out, the Promethean science of Frankenstein's Monster during the Great Depression differs from the modern horror film archetype after World War II in terms of the danger posed to familiar British and American locales by monsters that emerge from foreign and exotic lands.[50] Further examples of this trend include *Village of the Damned* and *The Night of the Hunter*, films that I examine in this chapter by way of the Cold War alien incursion narrative and southern gothic, respectively.

In what follows, I examine the relationship between the figure of the child and the concept of innocence in the horror film. The child as a gothic, atomic, and apocalyptic subjectivity in *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter*, not unlike *Peeping Tom* and *Psycho*, is monstrous as a result of moral ambiguity and the braided identities of killer and victim within a particular cultural and historical context. In each film in this chapter, the monstrous child represents the conceptual uncertainty of innocence at a time (1955-1961) when unprecedented socioeconomic prosperity and the rise of the middle-class family constituted a paradoxical golden age of childhood and horror filmmaking.[51]

In this chapter I have selected *The Innocents* (Jack Clayton, 1961), *Village of the Damned* (Wolf Rilla, 1960), and *The Night of the Hunter* (Charles Laughton, 1955) as case studies because they tend to challenge, rather than glorify, the fantasy or symbolic order of a golden age of childhood and horror. Specifically, the above-mentioned films are concerned with the relentless evocation of childhood terror and rebellion, in addition to the reality that economic prosperity is seldom available to the working class and disadvantaged characters who endeavor to comprehend or frame the monstrous child and the distinction between the normal and the pathological.

In films like *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter* the child is a socially saturated figure that is shaped by the political economy, as much as the dominant ideology, of the postwar era. Contrary to Twitchell, the desire to reclaim an authentic and progressive monster featured in the horror films made by Universal Studios during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s disregards the fact that "the mire" of horror mythology is precisely what defines the relationship between the figure of the child and the transition from classic to modern phases. It is the ecosystem and sociopolitical economy of horror movies that illuminates the monstrous child, not the sentimental and nostalgic dream of a golden age of British and American dominance.

This is a point that is vital to the cultural function of the child in horror cinema and media. Regarding the films in this chapter, the figure of the child is involved in a life-or-death struggle with a parent or guardian who has vowed to protect and to serve the concept of innocence from adult society. As a result, the ambiguities of love and hate affect the perception of childhood and morality by subsuming the figure of the child under the concept of innocence in one of two ways. On the one hand, the child is viewed by the adult as a sentimental or nostalgic figure that is representative of "the act of adults looking back. It is a ghostly, unreachable fancy" that is the object of impassioned and misguided feelings.[52] On the other hand, the child is perceived as

monstrous, and yet at the same time irreproachable, when s/he fights back against the adult world, wreaking havoc upon the norms and cherished beliefs of the nuclear family and the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism. As I mentioned before, the concepts of innocence and criminality are represented in terms of the correlation between outward appearance and intrinsic nature. The figure of the child in this chapter is defined as monstrous as a result of the ambiguous distinction between the facade of blamelessness and the criminal that lurks within. The normal and the pathological, rooted in the metaphysical categories of good and evil, are explicable only by reference to one another.

In terms of film selection and arrangement the movies in this chapter – and in this dissertation – are intentionally unorthodox. Rather than focus on the greatest hits of the classic (*Dracula* and *Frankenstein*) and modern (*Psycho* and *Peeping Tom*) horror film in sequential order I opt for a less conventional filmography in order to examine how the figure of the child is capable of opening the horror genre to more expansive analyses within cinema and media studies. In this chapter, I begin with *The Innocents* and move backward in time and against the grain of gothic horror's aesthetic and textual continuities of excess, obscurity, and the uncanny. Instead of a movie like *Psycho*, which juxtaposes the gothic home and seedy roadside motel, I look at *Village of the Damned*, a picture that is as much a product of science fiction as horror. With *The Night of the Hunter* I depart from the conventions of the American horror film almost entirely.

There are two reasons why I deviate from a more traditional critique. First, most histories of the horror genre tend to over-compartmentalize, relying on periodization and development at the expense of cultural and historical context. For example, a book like Wheeler Winston Dixon's *A History of Horror* (2010) neatly divides the genre into a time of origins (1896-1929), classics (1930-1948), rebirth (1949-1970), new blood (1970-1990), and the future (1990-present). As a

result, Dixon's interpretation of genre, for example his list of "50 Classic Horror Films," presupposes that historical trends and genre conventions that exist outside of the horror film are superfluous, a notion that I interrogate throughout this dissertation.

Contrary to Dixon, the figure of the child in this chapter emerges from a particular historical moment during the 1950s that is characterized by postwar victory, prosperity, anticlimax, and fear.[53] According to David Thompson, a "curdled humanism" is celebrated in movies like *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944) and *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950), in which the economic and industrial bedrock of America (insurance and Hollywood) is taken to task.[54] In the aftermath of World War II, *The Best Years of Our Lives* (William Wyler, 1946) kindled "a new respect for painful realities," a spirit that, according to Thompson, "encouraged Wilder to make *Double Indemnity*" and suggested "that the old unity of the audience no longer existed."[55] "There were many who still wanted fun, fantasy, happy endings, and a couple of hours of escape," Thompson writes.[56] "But the atom bomb's shock waves passed through us, along with the truth about concentration camps and the witchcraft called the Red Menace. Was war really over?"[57]

Thompson brings to light a point that is vital to the cultural function of the child, specifically the fear that American prosperity after World War II is entwined with an unpleasant or criminal part of society that is opposed to the ideology of postwar victory. Instead of the science fiction horror films of the 1950s, for example *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (Jack Arnold, 1954) and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956), the figure of the child and the concept of innocence emerge from a monstrous cultural imaginary or inner America that is pathologically disordered and beyond sympathy. In this chapter, the atomic age monster, complete with tentacles, green skin, and bulbous eyes, plays a minor role in a history of horror.[58] Instead, it is the

performance of youth and rebellion that illuminates the transformation of the otherworldly threat into a frighteningly human monster.

For example, Thompson, as well as Thomas Doherty (2002 [1988]), link the modern horror film to the juvenilization of American movies in the 1950s and the fact "that rock and roll signaled a teenage audience, ready for a new level of violence, splashy, gaudy, and lip smacking."[59] Channeled through Elvis Presley (*Love Me Tender*; Robert Webb, 1957), James Dean (*Rebel Without a Cause*; Nicholas Ray, 1955), and the music to *Blackboard Jungle* ("Rock Around the Clock," Bill Haley and the Comets; Richard Brooks, 1955), the figure of Norman Bates in Hitchcock's *Psycho* represented both the emergence of modern horror and the cultural capital of the postwar American and British adolescent.[60] Driven by propriety and popular taste, the conflicting "desire for teenage dollars and dread of teenage violence," Doherty argues, factored heavily in the representation of youth onscreen, especially the teenpic cycles (juvenile delinquency, horror, and clean teenpic) that followed shortly after *Rock Around the Clock* (Fred E. Sears, 1956).

Unlike the supernatural monsters in *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (Gene Fowler Jr., 1957) and *Dracula* (Terence Fisher, 1958), the figure of the monstrous child is more closely associated with the rock 'n' roll or dangerous teen featured in *Rebel Without a Cause* (James Dean), *The Wild One* (Marlon Brando; László Benedek, 1954), and *Blackboard Jungle* (Sidney Poitier). The morally ambiguous youth portrayed in domestic drag racing, motorcycle, social commentary, and horror exploitation films throughout the 1950s and early 60s, unlike the foreign and exotic monsters showcased in the 30s and 40s, is connected to a narrative of generational conflict and the juxtaposition of societal order and individual havoc.[61]

Deliberately avoiding a history of horror that centers upon mythological and literary antecedents, the films in this chapter demonstrate how the child is capable of opening the horror genre to more expansive analyses within cinema and media studies. In films like *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter* the cultural function of the figure of the child – not unlike the dangerous teen or juvenile delinquent – is opposed to the illusion of a golden age of affluence and socioeconomic prosperity that is conducive to youth culture. Rather than a chronicle of postwar victory or modern progress, I argue that there is more to be learned from a chronicle of the child as a morally ambiguous figure when it comes to defining the horror genre. The monstrous child is a curious phenomenon that requires further attention, especially regarding the question of *why* horror shifts from one phase or modality to another.

Accordingly, I move from a traditional gothic horror film – released at a time when *Psycho* and *Peeping Tom* were fast at work deconstructing the mythos of the imperiled heroine and ill-fated child – to a science fiction thriller and a movie that shares more in common with the humanism of James Agee and Walker Evans than Twitchell's bygone era of horror antiquity. Building upon Lowenstein and Stockton, I argue that horror criticism stands to benefit from the shock effect of the monstrous child as a notion for sideways growth, moral ambiguity, and historical imagination.

Let me be clear: The argument that the figure of the child and the concept of innocence are fundamental to the southern/gothic and science fiction horror film is conspicuous to the point of distraction, which is precisely my point. Each film in this chapter, rather than prove that horror is not science fiction and science fiction is not fairy tale, share a common anxiety that every movie in this dissertation adheres to: It is a false assumption that innocence and its opposite, whether it be evil, impurity, or criminality, exist as separate identities – paths that can be chosen or avoided

according to discernment and tutelage. The monstrous child is a horror show of dread and pleasure because the concept innocence is entwined with what it is opposed to. It *depends* upon what it claims to dispossess or presuppose. The normal and the pathological are not opposed to one another, they are the foundation upon which the concept of anxiety is embodied in the figure of the child.

The Innocents **(Jack Clayton, 1961)**

The Innocents, based on Henry James's novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), is a ghost story in which the dead are framed by the living. It is also one of the most provocative horror films to deal with the fascination with childhood as "an object of simultaneous adulation and obsessive anxiety."[62] The premise of the movie is deceptively unassuming. A young governess named Miss Giddens (Deborah Kerr) is put in charge of two orphaned children, eight-year-old Flora (Pamela Franklin) and her ten-year-old brother Miles (Martin Stephens), who live in a country estate named Bly House on the outskirts of London. Before long, Miss Giddens concludes that the valet and ex-governess of Bly, both deceased, inhabit the bodies of the children in order to continue their sordid relations. Much of the debate surrounding the film, as well as the novella, is focused upon whether Miss Giddens is the only character who sees the ghosts of Peter Quint (Peter Wyngarde) and Miss Jessel (Clytie Jessop), the former governess of Bly and Quint's lover.[63] Is Miss Giddens able to commune with the spirit world and how does this affect her ability to govern Flora and Miles?

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to the monstrous child and the concept of innocence include the themes of hysteria, paranoia, and gender and sexuality. In addition, I analyze the questions of patriarchal capitalism and the male order in relation to Miss Giddens and other staff, as well as the cultural function of the figure of the child and how s/he

works against norms of good and evil. As mentioned previously, Miss Giddens is tormented by her desire to save the children from the ghosts of Quint and Miss Jessel, even if the preservation of normality requires that the children are driven to madness and death. Following my analysis of the film, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the moral ambiguity of the figure of the child in *The Innocents* regarding the above-mentioned themes and questions [Creed, 1994; Kincaid, 1998; Sedgwick, 1991; Felman, 1999 (1977); Twitchell, 1985; Wood, 2003 (1986); Hanson, 2003].

The topic of Miss Giddens's mental and emotional torment raises a point that is fundamental to *The Innocents*. In terms of the figure of the child, the hauntingly erotic practice of looking at children by characters in this film underscores a feeling of anxiety that is caused by the connection, rather than division, between the normal and the pathological. That is to say, even though Miss Giddens imagines that she is opposed to the ignoble actions and motives that define the relationship between Quint and Miss Jessel and Miles and Flora, she is ultimately complicit in the curiosities and perverse delights that have been exchanged between the children and the former governess and valet of Bly House. Although Miss Giddens refuses to admit it, the action of arousing moral distaste and contempt involves the erotic nonetheless.

Subsequently, Miss Giddens's ability to govern Flora and Miles is inextricably linked not only to hysteria, paranoia, and the capacity to envision the ghosts that haunt the children of Bly, it is also connected to the ambiguities of love and hate, their affect on the perception of morality, and the conflation of the concept of innocence with the figure of the child. As a result, the children of Bly are viewed by Miss Giddens as sentimental or nostalgic figures that are representative of "the act of adults looking back"; Flora and Miles, perhaps as much as Quint and Miss Jessel, are

subsumed under "a ghostly, unreachable fancy" that is the object of Miss Giddens's impassioned and misguided feelings.[64]

The essential narrative ambiguity of *The Innocents*, which Richard Locke identifies as the "most original and enduring aesthetic effect" of *The Turn of the Screw*, is typically diagnosed as a case of female hysteria.[65] Miss Giddens, a country parson's twenty-year-old daughter suddenly thrown into a role of maternal authority, blames Quint and Miss Jessel for her crimes and horrendous miscalculations. It is not the *current* governess who is unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, argues Miss Giddens, it is her *predecessor* and her predecessor's *lover* who have corrupted the innocents. Failing to exorcise the demons that dwell within the children, Flora is rushed from Bly in a fit of madness and Miles dies in Miss Giddens's arms at the conclusion of the film.

One example of the above-mentioned diagnosis is Edmund Wilson's essay "The Ambiguity of Henry James" (1934). According to Wilson, "there is never any evidence that anybody but the governess sees the ghosts."[66] Wilson, looking at *The Turn of the Screw* through the lens of Freudian psychoanalysis, claims that Miss Giddens is not only a victim of hysteria, she is also a contact point through which fear and madness are spread to the children and the housekeeper Mrs. Grose (played by Megs Jenkins in *The Innocents*). The characterization of Miss Giddens, for Wilson, is "a solid and unmistakable picture of the poor country parson's daughter, with her English middle-class class-consciousness, her inability to admit to herself her sexual impulses and the relentless English 'authority' which enables her to put over on inferiors even purposes which are totally mistaken and not at all to the other people's best interests."[67]

The Turn of the Screw and Clayton's adaptation, in other words, is a study in morbid psychology, a prognosis that the American poet and critic Allen Tate supports. According to Tate,

"James knew substantially all that Freud knew before Freud came on the scene."[68] Having said that, Wilson's decidedly misogynistic interpretation of *The Turn of the Screw* bears a striking resemblance to the morbid psychology of Miss Giddens.[69] Although he may refuse to admit it, Wilson, like Miss Giddens, falls into a deceptively unassuming hermeneutic trap: What does the monstrous child represent in *The Innocents*, and how is s/he, like the ghosts of Bly, framed by a gothic and Victorian practice of looking?

Roughly forty minutes into the picture, one scene in particular illuminates the intersection of Quint and Miss Jessel's nefarious intercourse and Miss Giddens's inability to acknowledge her sexual impulses. During a game of hide and seek Miss Giddens discovers a picture of a man in the attic – only later will she discover that the portrait is of Quint. While hiding behind a curtain in the parlor Miss Giddens notices that something is approaching her from outside. A figure advances toward the window and Miss Giddens recoils in horror. Looking back at her through the window is a man with "dark curling hair and the hardest, coldest eyes," the very same man in the picture that Miss Giddens stumbled upon only a few moments before.[70] "I saw him," Miss Giddens exclaims to the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, "don't tell me I didn't because I did!"

However, days before the game of hide and seek is interrupted by Quint – or rather, before Miss Giddens sees the portrait of Quint in the attic which allows her to put a face to the malevolent spirit that she believes is haunting Bly – she observes the silhouette of what she thinks to be a man standing between the battlements of a tower. According to Ivan Butler, this is one of the most striking scenes in *The Innocents*, a virtuosic display of the technological and aesthetic, in addition to dramatic and narrative, capabilities of the horror film. Walking through the garden and immersed in the sounds of summer, Miss Giddens "comes upon a broken, leering statue. A black insect creeps obscenely out of its mouth. Suddenly every sound has ceased, except the loathsome

buzzing of – what, a bluebottle, perhaps? Then she looks up at the tower. A moment later, with the breaking of the spell, the summer sounds return."[71]

In addition to sound, Miss Giddens's troubled perception and frustrated desire regarding the (dis)appearance of the figure of Quint is communicated through the use of light and space – a technique that is also employed in D.W. Griffith's film *Broken Blossoms* (1919). Butler writes of a sequence "in which Miss Giddens walks through the darkened house with a candle. Nothing is seen, except one brief, ambiguous shadow, but she is accompanied and surrounded by little chuckles and whisperings which gradually grow in intensity to a cacophony of mocking voices."[72] Representing the sounds of nefarious intercourse, Butler observes that "the sequence finishes with a shot from directly above the distracted girl as she whirls round in panic trying to locate the source of the evil din. The shot oddly recalls *Broken Blossoms* where Lillian Gish is shut in the closet, and it conveys much the same sense of claustrophobic terror. Miss Giddens is enclosed by walls of sound."[73]

The hauntingly erotic practice of looking that Miss Giddens stumbles upon in the above-mentioned scenes underscores the representation of pathology and sexual transgression by way of gothic horror and the desire to govern or master the figure of the child that is believed to be imperiled by monstrosity. Rather than a study in morbid psychology, the panic and disorientation that Miss Giddens experiences in *The Innocents* is characteristic of the perception of moral ambiguity regarding the concept of innocence and the figure of the child. Flora and Miles are identified as monstrous by Miss Giddens as a result of the ambiguous distinction between outward appearance (innocence) and intrinsic nature (criminality).

After the game of hide and seek, Miss Giddens is convinced that the ghost of Peter Quint, a revenant framed both within a photograph and a parlor window, has not only returned from the

dead but is a menace to the children. Furthermore, Miss Giddens's attraction to and revulsion at the sight of Quint – glaring through the window at her more like a peeping Tom than a child molester – arouses both her curiosity and a perverse delight that is revealed when Mrs. Grose enters the parlor. Stepping outside the parlor to investigate, Miss Giddens turns back to the house and stands at the window in the same place as Quint. Glaring through the window, it is now the reflection of Mrs. Grose that is shocked by the sight of *Miss Giddens*, whose face, the housekeeper observes, "is white as milk."

Framing herself in the position of the ghost that she alone has witnessed, Miss Giddens believes that she has illuminated the boundaries between the living and the dead. The blending of presence and absence, coupled with Miss Giddens's conflicted feelings of certainty and anxiety, underscores the essential narrative ambiguity of *The Innocents*. Regarding the ambiguity of play in particular, Miss Giddens's game of hide and seek with Flora, Miles, and Quint is represented by Clayton as a scene in which the familial (*heimlich*) "develops in the direction of ambivalence until finally it coincides with its opposite," the uncanny (*unheimlich*).[74] In each of the examples listed above, it is debatable whether Miss Giddens is horrified or tantalized by the figure of Quint. The moment that Miss Giddens believes that Bly House is haunted is the point at which her desire to protect the children is confused with a desire to stalk and expel the ghosts that have taken possession of Flora and Miles, regardless of danger and collateral damage.

Accordingly, *The Innocents* adheres to both the classic (ghosts) and modern (female hysteria) horror film by means of spiritual paranoia, gender, and the figure of the child. "Because *The Innocents* portrays a case in which both a brother and sister are possessed," writes Barbara Creed, "it is worth considering in some detail in order to determine whether or not gender influences the filmic representation of possession."[75] Indeed, Miss Giddens's relationship with

Flora and Miles is defined by the ambiguity of innocence and a state of custodial anxiety that is both unconsciously channeled and consciously exploited by the newly appointed governess. Ultimately the question of Miss Giddens's communion with the spirit world takes priority over the need to govern Flora and Miles; in order to frame the dead it must appear that the children have suffered and perished as a result of their complicity with Quint and Miss Jessel.

In her reading of *The Innocents*, Creed observes that Miss Giddens' relationship with Flora and Miles is complicated by the themes of hysteria, gender, and sexual obsession. "While brother and sister both become channels for her repressed desires," Creed writes, "Miles is the one with whom she is sexually obsessed."[76] Creed argues that Miles, contrary to his sister, treats Miss Giddens like a lover. As a result, "Miles' death is portrayed largely as a consequence of Miss Giddens' own hysteria, while Flora's collapse is associated more with the girl's own propensity for cruelty and corruption."[77]

In other words, Creed distinguishes between Miles and Flora in terms of the figure of the child and the gendered associations in relation to erotic innocence and moral ambiguity. I agree with Creed that "Miles is not sinister in the manner of his sister. He is 'knowing', even adult, like a lover in relation to Miss Giddens, but he is not cruel, nor is he depicted as in direct 'communication' with the spirit world."[78] Flora, on the other hand, "is more prone to sinister deeds and hysterical convulsions and she is also stronger – perhaps because of her alliance with the spirit world. Flora survives the ordeal while her brother perishes, apparently destroyed by an excess of feminine hysteria."[79]

The spirit world, and the gray zone between sexual awakening and obsession, is a dominant motif in *The Innocents*. The image of the psychic girl-child arouses a feeling of anxiety in Miss Giddens that is countered by Miles's unprincipled and erotic innocence. Ultimately, the figures of

the child and the governess in *The Innocents* are locked in a ferocious moral struggle that is more concerned with the preservation of the concept of innocence than the child itself. As I mentioned earlier, Miss Giddens is tormented by her desire to save the children from the ghosts of Quint and Miss Jessel, even if the preservation of normality requires that the child is driven to madness and death.

This point pertains to the theme of gender and sexuality, as well as the question of patriarchal capitalism and the male order in relation to Miss Giddens and the figure of the child. In his book, *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting* (1998), James Kincaid observes that Miss Giddens, like "our Victorian ancestors, has managed to make her concept of the erotic depend on the child, just as the Victorian concept of the erotic was based on their notions of sexual attraction."[80] In contrast to the sentimental notion of childhood as an inviolable period of life that is beyond reproach, Miss Giddens assumes a stereotypically puritanical outlook. Flora and Miles appear to be not only not innocent, they are also deviant and must be closely observed and attended to by a parent or guardian (or country parson's daughter) who, unencumbered by sentiment and affection, epitomizes the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism – a position of power and cruelty that is embodied in Flora and Miles's affluent yet apathetic uncle (Michael Redgrave).

For example, at the start of the film Miss Giddens's interview with the children's wealthy bachelor uncle is unaffected by the applicant's lack of experience. So long as she helps to preserve his freedom to travel and socialize, Miss Giddens is the ideal candidate to govern the children of Bly House. Charmed by his good looks and casual demeanor, Miss Giddens prematurely accepts the job that she has been offered, thereby aligning herself with the uncle and the privilege and cruelty that he embodies. Credited as "The Uncle," Redgrave's performance as the patriarch of Bly is a looming figure suffused with the erotics of male dominance. In this respect the Uncle and

Quint, for Miss Giddens, share much in common.

As Grahame Greene points out, the appeal of innocence is a tricky subject.[81] For Miss Giddens, the concept of innocence, as much as the figure of the child, is haunted by the anxiety that morality is fundamentally incapable of telling the difference between the norms of good and evil. As a result, the figure of the child in *The Innocents* is emptied of meaning by the adult who is responsible for protecting the priceless child from the horrors of adult society. Regarding the concept of innocence in particular, the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism affects what happens to the children inasmuch as Miss Giddens and her employer (the master of Bly House) are seduced and repulsed by "the child's exquisite 'vacancy' in its guise as spotless, pointing out that innocence and purity are purely 'negative inversions' of adult attributes."[82] The child, like Oates's Master of the castle, poses a threat to the bourgeois values of adult society; the figure of the child is represented as a monster who endangers the male order.[83] Thus, Miss Giddens is employed by the Uncle to govern and repress the children by any means necessary. In the case of *The Innocents*, the figure of the child is coded as rebellious and libidinous by the anxieties of patriarchal capitalism.

The monstrous child in *The Innocents* works against norms of good and evil to the extent that Miss Giddens's acceptance of the role of the father in the symbolic order is determined by the legislative and prohibitive function of the Uncle, who is as much the object of Miss Giddens's affection as Quint or Miles. Even before she is fully aware of the sordid relations between Quint and Miss Jessel and Miles and Flora, Miss Giddens has surrendered herself to a practice of looking that is concerned with the concept of innocence at the expense of the figure of the child. The norms of good and evil appear to spin wildly out of control because the adult perception of childhood in *The Innocents* has forsaken the pursuit of reason in favor of the spectacular child as a site of moral

panic.

Flora and Miles are pathologized by the adult gaze in *The Innocents* and sequestered to what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick refers to as "the position of the haunting abject."[84] Monsters by proxy, the children are the only living indication that Bly House is haunted, and therefore suffer under the brutality of Miss Giddens, who refuses to validate Flora and Miles as feminine and masculine, respectively.[85] By extension, the monstrous children in this chapter are cared for by adult women who are removed from or compromised in their efforts to contribute to a process of parental and custodial validation in relation to the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism. Miss Giddens, Anthea Zellaby (Barbara Shelley), and Willa Harper (Shelley Winters) are characterized as overinvolved, overprotective, or, conversely, incompetent and malignant, while Quint, Gordon Zellaby (George Sanders), and Reverend Harry Powell (Robert Mitchum) are portrayed as distant, unforgiving taskmasters who withhold the secure identification of gender from the boys and girls they are expected to father.

Correspondingly, Miss Giddens's understanding of the figure of the child is compromised by the ambiguity of evil and morality. According to Shoshana Felman, Miss Giddens "becomes steadily more convinced that the ghosts have come back to pursue their nefarious intercourse with the children, to take possession of their souls and to corrupt them radically."[86] Miss Giddens's task, in Felman's view, is to "*save* the children from the ghosts, to engage in a ferocious moral struggle against 'evil,' a struggle whose strategy consists in an attempt to catch the children in the very act of communing with the spirits, and thereby to force them to admit that communion, to confess their knowledge of the ghosts and their infernal complicity with them."[87]

In Felman's view the structuring antinomy of love and hate drives Miss Giddens to destroy, rather than save, the children. After pushing Flora to the point of a nervous breakdown, Miss

Giddens's undivided attention is set upon the exorcism of Miles. Tracking the boy with an intensity befitting a huntress rather than a pedagogue, the governess' moral struggle against evil, specifically her desire to force Miles to admit his communion with Quint, ends in the boy's sudden collapse and death. At the end of the film Miss Giddens holds Miles in her arms and kisses him on the mouth, echoing an earlier moment in the film when Miles kisses Miss Giddens and rattles her prudish understanding of childhood sexuality. The religious connotation of this image – a preacher's daughter tenderly kissing a dead child after being scandalized by his affections – represents a morbidly depraved pietà.

This is especially relevant with regard to the cultural function of the figure of the child in horror film. It is important to bear in mind that one of the cornerstones of Twitchell's analysis of the monster product is the categorization of the child in antithetical terms, specifically the propensity and incapacity for evil.[88] The monstrous child is labeled by Twitchell as the "infant monster . . . a fascinating cultural development in part because it is such an inversion of the Victorian victim."[89] In Twitchell's view, the sentimental notion "that youth is *active* goodness, has been transposed . . . into the Puritanical extreme of child as active evil. The key explicators here are not theologians, but psychologists, especially the Freudians, who have found in the 'Darling of a pigmy size' a raging inferno of sexual energies directing libidinous forces with the ferocity of a snarling beast."[90]

According to Twitchell, the monstrous child first appears in *The Turn of the Screw*, is adapted for the screen in *The Innocents*, and is also featured in *The Bad Seed* and *Village of the Damned*. As a direct result of these films "the idea that the youngster's body could be the husk for demonic forces" is the overarching thematic and aesthetic focus of "*The Exorcist*, *The Devil Within Her*, *Fear No Evil*, *The Haunting of Julie*, *Possession*, *The Omen* (I, II, and III), *To the Devil* . . .

A Daughter, all of which have *Rosemary's Baby* as the immediate incubating text."[91]

In his book, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* (2003 [1986]), Robin Wood complicates Twitchell's argument when he writes that "one needs to distinguish carefully between the child*like* and the child*ish* (just as one needs to distinguish the true innocence of childhood from the sentimental, sanitized, desexualized version of bourgeois ideology)."[92] According to Wood, "the Romantic concept of the child (Blake, Wordsworth) as symbol of new growth and regeneration (of ourselves, of civilization)" differs from "the regressive Victorian sentimentalization of children as identification figures for 'childish adults'" to the extent that "the use of the infantile" is manipulated in order to provide an "escape from an adult world perceived as irredeemably corrupt, or at least bewilderingly problematic."[93]

Building upon Twitchell and Wood, I argue that the figure of the child in *The Innocents* is ultimately prevented from challenging the norms of good and evil as a result of the practice of gothic and Victorian looking that sentimentalizes the figure of the child as an identification figure for childish adults, namely Miss Giddens. Twitchell's argument, which focuses upon the child and the braided identities of the killer and victim, fails to take into account that, as Wood notes, the true innocence of childhood is irreversibly determined by a perceptual and moral framework that is irredeemably corrupt and bewilderingly problematic. The child's most horrifying attribute is the embodiment of innocence and the illumination of bourgeois ideology, even more so than the metaphysical category of evil.

Regrettably, Twitchell's otherwise compelling analysis of *The Innocents* is curbed by his reluctance to take up the question of the figure of the child as a gothic subjectivity.[94] Twitchell's interpretation of the monstrous child is further illustrated by Ellis Hanson, who points out that Flora and Miles conflate the typically repressed female (victim) and demonic male (killer)

positions of gothic horror. According to Hanson, Miles and Flora "mark a most distinguished beginning to the tradition of the sexual child as gothic conundrum."[95] The gothic or "modern sexual child," writes Hanson, is a taboo figure that is closeted between the publication of *The Turn of the Screw* and its cinematic release in 1961. "In the cinema," Hanson writes, "we have to wait until the late 1950s and early 1960s for the species to make a significant appearance: *The Innocents* (1961), Jack Clayton's film adaptation of . . . James's novella, was one of a spate of virtually unprecedented films about kids who are perversely sexy, devious, and knowing – among them, *The Bad Seed* (1956), *Village of the Damned* (1960), and *Lolita* (1962)."[96]

Hanson's cultural history of the gothic child illuminates the transition from classic to modern horror phases, in addition to my argument that the child changes over time in the context of different historical moments. By combining Hanson's interpretation of *The Innocents* with Twitchell and Wood, the figure of the child as a gothic subjectivity is revealed. Indeed, Flora and Miles represent a cultural and historical labyrinth into which Miss Giddens and Edmund Wilson voluntarily enter and become hopelessly lost. Dependent upon a hallucinatory practice of looking, the investigation of the gothic child and its befuddled governess is burdened by the desire to distinguish between the seducer and the seduced, not to mention the living and the dead. "The sexual child is a gothic labyrinth," Hanson concludes, "and it is easy to make of innocence our own minotaur."[97]

Based upon Hanson's intervention, and counter to the more than 500 works of criticism that accompany *The Innocents* and its source text, the question of Miss Giddens' parental acuity is best left unanswered.[98] The unavoidable need to pathologize Miss Giddens is one of many, and perhaps one of the most obvious, interpretive pitfalls that exist in *The Innocents*. Why she destroys Flora and Miles is beside the point. What *is* the point is the structural ambiguity of the picture,

specifically Miss Giddens's sensational and sensual bewilderment, and how the perception of love and hate is linked to the figure of the child and the concept of innocence. Motive aside, critics such as Henry Harland are correct to surmise that the enigmas of *The Innocents* are to be appreciated not as steppingstones that lead to a final truth or narrative closure.[99] Rather, it is the nature of the puzzle itself that is to be appreciated and conserved.

That said, is there a way out of the interpretive maze of *The Innocents* and the cultural function of the figure of the child? The key to surviving within the labyrinth is to remember that the concept of innocence is the minotaur.[100] It is neither Flora and Miles, nor Quint and Miss Jessel, who are to blame for the horrors that surround Miss Giddens. Escape from Bly House is impossible, but it is far better to know what monsters lurk around the corner. Innocence, which for the Victorians is elevated to such a degree that the difference between tenderness and brutality is an erotic gray zone, blossoms in the cracks between the norms of good and evil. Accordingly, Miss Giddens is violently pulled between the antipodes of eroticism and repression until the concept of innocence takes priority over the figure of the child. As I have pointed out, Miss Giddens is tormented by her desire to save the children from the ghosts of Quint and Miss Jessel, even if the preservation of normality requires that the child is driven to madness and death. Her wanton disregard for the safety and well-being of Flora and Miles is therefore the only logical course of action. Failing to see the monster – or the patriarchal order – for what it is, Miss Giddens destroys the children of Bly in the name of innocence itself.

Village of the Damned (Wolf Rilla, 1960)

Village of the Damned, adapted from John Wyndham's novel *The Midwich Cuckoos* (1957), diverges from *The Innocents* and the conventions of the gothic horror film, giving support

instead to the anxieties of science fiction (sf) and alien incursion narratives popularized in the 1950s (nuclear warfare, communism, the space race).[101] However, both films share a common concern with the moral ambiguity of childhood and the articulation of the concept of innocence. Similar to Flora and Miles in *The Innocents*, the figure of the child in *Village of the Damned* is the embodiment of pastoral innocence, childhood rebellion, and the uncertainty of socioeconomic prosperity.

Unlike the gothic children in *The Innocents*, the cultural function of the children in *Village of the Damned* are framed by the atomic age. As opposed to Flora and Miles, who are precocious and vulnerable and ultimately trapped within a gothic world of excess and transgression, the Children of Midwich strike back at their biological and adoptive parents with a ferocity that is conflated with the detonation of a nuclear bomb.[102] Accordingly, *Village of the Damned* is a horror film for the atomic age inasmuch as the figure of the child is regarded as a weapon or vessel through which the doctrinal and sociopolitical forces of good and evil are personified.[103] Rather than the gothic and Victorian practice of looking associated with Miss Giddens, the figure of the child in *Village of the Damned* is observed through the lens of scientific rationalism and the varying cultural and political tensions of the Cold War Era and Britain's age of affluence.[104] Ultimately, the figure of the atomic child in *Village of the Damned* represents the postwar body politic as a site of vulnerability and corruption. Nevertheless, *Village of the Damned*, like *The Innocents*, yields to a moral panic that fundamentally equates the practice of childrearing with capital punishment. In the name of innocence, the monstrous Children of Midwich are sentenced to death at the conclusion of the film by their father and teacher, Gordon Zellaby.

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to the atomic child and the concepts of monstrosity and innocence include the themes of class conflict, the gendered arrangements of

work and care, and the practice of scientific looking. In addition, I analyze the figure of the child in terms of the moral panic concept and the social value of the priceless child in need of protection from adult society after World War II. By extension, the concept of biomedical personhood and the braiding of scientific, cultural, and psychoanalytic narratives surrounding the child contribute to an atmosphere of parental anxiety and the crisis of masculinity.

Contrary to the child figures in *The Innocents*, the Children of Midwich work against norms of good and evil by refusing to be subsumed under the concept of innocence and the expectations of parental and custodial authority. *Village of the Damned* challenges the fantasy of a postwar golden age of childhood by exposing the relentless evocation of childhood rebellion and the concomitant threats of nuclear apocalypse and communist expansion. Throughout my analysis of *Village of the Damned*, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the above-mentioned themes and questions [Lowenstein, 2005; Sturken and Cartwright, 2009; Skal, 1993].

In *Village of the Damned*, the Children of Midwich are socially saturated beings that are shaped by the culture and morals of the Cold War Era and the politics of atomic anxiety in British and American popular culture after World War II. The figure of the child in *Village* is perceived as monstrous, and yet at the same time irreproachable when s/he fights back against the adult world, wreaking havoc upon the status quo and the norms and cherished beliefs of the nuclear family (security, fidelity, prosperity, sobriety). By complicating the distinction between innocence and criminality, and the correlation between outward appearance and intrinsic nature, the figure of the child in *Village of the Damned* is defined as monstrous by the adults who have sworn to uphold the status quo. Regarding the figure of the monstrous child in *Village*, the performance of childhood and innocence offers a unique and unexplored framework pertaining to the transition

from classic to modern horror phases and the transformation of the otherworldly threat into a frighteningly human monster.

At 11:00 a.m., the Village of Midwich unexpectedly falls asleep. Without warning, all human and animal life within the village experiences a sudden and temporary loss of consciousness. Any attempt to enter Midwich by land or air is impossible; the borders of the village now exist as a virtual brick wall. "What can it be," Major Alan Bernard (Michael Gwynn) wonders, "to put a man out like a light?"[105] Suddenly, at 2:50 p.m., Midwich wakes up. The authorities provide little explanation. According to Maj. Bernard, the cause of the Midwich Time-Out, as it has come to be known, "was static, odorless, invisible. It didn't register on radar. It was non-metallic. It showed nothing on our Geiger counters. . . . There are no signs of physical, biological, or psychological changes." Major Bernard's assessment, which looks at the Midwich Time-Out as a military and scientific phenomenon, is for the most part correct, with the exception that all of the childbearing women of the village are now pregnant.

At 10:55 a.m., at the manor house of Professor Gordon and Anthea Zellaby (Barbara Shelley), a shepherd guides his flock across an open field. The camera pans right, focusing upon a tractor cultivating the land. Moving indoors, the image dissolves to a spacious and comfortable office. Walking from screen right to screen left, Professor Zellaby stops to pet his dog, which is resting in front of the fireplace. The juxtaposition of the shepherd, tractor, and scholar reinforces the association between culture and untitled nobility. Gordon picks up the phone at his desk and asks the operator to connect him with Maj. Bernard's Whitehall number. However, midway through his conversation with his brother-in-law Zellaby passes out. The camera cuts to the telephone receiver as it dangles idly beside the desk. Gordon's dog, like its owner, slumbers next to the fire.

The opening sequence of *Village of the Damned* portrays the daily activities of Midwich shortly before it is assaulted by Maj. Bernard's non-registering occurrence. For the cultured and working-class men and women of the village, a romantic evocation of pastoral tranquility is rudely interrupted. In his novel, Wyndham maintains that Midwich is "almost notoriously, a place where things did not happen. . . . Indeed, had there been posts at the entrances to the village bearing a red triangle and below them a notice: MIDWICH DO NOT DISTURB they would have seemed not inappropriate."[106] In short order a village that outwardly lies beyond the purview of history finds itself at the center of a geopolitical struggle between the normal and the pathological.

In addition, the opening sequence of *Village of the Damned* illuminates the connections between large historical developments, specifically the Cold War and British age of affluence, and the figure of the child. The conception of the child monster in *Village* points to Lowenstein's observation that Britain's "transition from a wartime and early postwar 'age of austerity' (1939-1951) to an 'age of affluence' (1951-1964)" ultimately failed to overcome the traditional hierarchies of privilege and class and gender discrimination.[107] As a result, *Village of the Damned* challenges the mythology of a golden age of British and American history that is innocent and child-friendly by way of the representation of the looming threats of nuclear warfare and the spread of communism abroad.

Referring to Richard Hoggart's sociological study of British mass culture, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), Lowenstein observes that by the early 1960s postwar British society was alarmed by "an emergent mass culture" that threatened to create "a 'faceless' and 'classless' mass society that was in many ways 'less healthy' than the one it was replacing."[108] Despite the economic opportunities of the age of affluence, including increased national production and average earnings, traditional hierarchies of privilege persisted, leading to fears that the breakdown in class

distinctions would result in the failure to maintain the power structures "that allowed the middle class and upper class to differentiate themselves from the working class."[109] The "us and them" ethos of the British age of affluence pertained to anxieties regarding a new social and economic landscape, in addition to the legacy of the Second World War and the rise of communism as a political and military ideology.

As a result, *Village of the Damned* differs from *The Innocents* to the extent that the cultural function of the monstrous child in *Village* is more explicitly linked to "its allegorical significance at a flashpoint in British social history – an era characterized by interlaced struggles over class definition and the national legacy of World War II."[110] Contrary to *The Innocents*, which is more concerned with the figure of the child and the aesthetic and textual continuities of the gothic horror film (excess, obscurity, the uncanny), *Village of the Damned* focuses on the child and the embodiment of atomic anxiety and class-consciousness.

After regaining consciousness Professor Zellaby and Maj. Bernard pay a visit to Alan's commanding officer General Leighton (John Phillips). Regarding the invisible force that has invaded their community, Zellaby and company are worried that the press will find out about the Midwich Time-Out and needlessly alarm or embolden the nations of the world. At war with an enemy that does not exist, and oblivious to the reality that the female population of Midwich has been impregnated by an alien incursion, *Village* is steeped in the mythology of the Cold War Era: The serenity of Midwich is disturbed by a singular event, an apocalyptic attack which, like the atomic bombs detonated over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, exposes the limitations of the human imagination. By extension, the Children of Midwich, even before they are born, are typecast by their panic-stricken elders as a youth subculture that is menacing and

deviant. Instead of the atom bomb or the Soviet Union, it is the figure of the juvenile delinquent that threatens to obliterate the Free World.

After the Children are born, Gen. Leighton informs a gathering, "Midwich is not the only colony." Leighton is referring to the fact that the Children are distinguished by their uniformly blond hair and fluorescent-looking gold eyes. Additionally, the Children have grown and adapted at an inhumanly rapid pace. They cluster together as a collective, learn from one another's experiences telepathically, and shun the adults and children of the village, whose minds they can read and control. The Children of Midwich are strangers to, and at the same time emblematic of, the bourgeois values endorsed by *Village*, especially the notion that the priceless child is vulnerable to communism as a cultural and political epidemic in which the victim is reduced to a robotic state of soulless apathy.

Like many of the children in this dissertation, the Midwich Cuckoos embody the concept of innocence (grace, beauty, otherworldliness) to a degree that is alarming and disconcerting to adults when combined with evil. The denizens of Midwich are burdened with an especially troublesome moral dilemma: Regardless of the damage they do to other people, the Midwich Children are seen as vulnerable and in need of adult supervision. The figure of the child in *Village of the Damned* is coded as monstrous and yet beyond reproach. Unless the Children of Midwich are saved from the threat of communism they will exact a wave of political, moral, and somatic annihilation that is openly at variance with the concept of innocence and the social value of the priceless child in need of protection from adult society. Paradoxically, the containment of communist expansion requires that the Children of Midwich are given the freedom of action to invade the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of the village.

This is a predicament that bears a striking resemblance to the moral ambiguities of *The Innocents*. In both films, it is curious how the figure of the adult surrenders to childish behavioral patterns that are more concerned with the ambiguity of play (hide and seek, the space race, the domino theory) than addressing the well-being of the child. Likewise, both *Village of the Damned* and *The Innocents* consciously exploit the allegorical significance of Midwich and Bly House by juxtaposing the image of pastoral innocence with the cultural and political tensions of the Cold War Era for shock effect. As I mentioned earlier, Robin Wood's interpretation of the infantile as a potentially regressive and sentimental concept also applies to *Village of the Damned*, insofar as the figure of the child and the concept of innocence are irreversibly determined by an adult world that is irredeemably corrupt and bewilderingly problematic.

"What we are dealing with is a mass mind," Gordon proclaims. "An entirely new development. Like a colony of ants and bees. These children all want to dress alike, and what one learns, they all learn. . . . They are one mind to the twelfth power." Like the Puritans before him, Gordon characterizes, or more specifically pathologizes, the Children by way of a deficiency or animality that is located inside the body, somewhere between the metaphysical and the biological.[111] One might argue that Gordon frames or typecasts the Children as a youth subculture that rebels against the conventions of adult society: Kids today! They all want to dress alike! Yet Zellaby is ultimately torn between the care and condemnation of the Midwich Cuckoos. Like Miss Giddens in *The Innocents*, Gordon is fascinated by the moral ambiguity of the figure of the child. At once monstrous and irreproachable, Gordon believes that he can reform the Children and maintain the patriarchal values that are embodied in the nuclear family and his monstrous son David (Martin Stephens, who also stars as Miles in *The Innocents*).

Except for Zellaby, the people of Midwich, as a microcosm for the British Commonwealth and Allied powers, respond to the Children as a threat, a contagion that has descended upon their way of life. Apropos of the Red Scare it is the communist world that is least concerned with a humanitarian resolution. "There were two Time-Outs similar to the one at Midwich," says Leighton. "One at Irkutsk, here on the borders of Outer Mongolia. A grim affair. The men killed the children. And their mothers. The second, in the mountains of the Northwest. All the children survived. Our reports, though limited, indicate that they are receiving education on the highest level."

Later, Maj. Bernard updates Gordon, Anthea, and Doctor Willers (Laurence Naismith) on the communist village. According to Maj. Bernard, "the Russian army group in the Western Urals is equipped with a new type of gun. It can project a shell up to sixty miles. An atomic shell." Underscoring the relationship between the monstrous child and the threat of atomic warfare, Maj. Bernard comments that the Russian army has fired an atomic shell "on the village of Raminsk, where their children live. And the village of Raminsk no longer exists. They gave no warning, couldn't evacuate the villagers without the children learning what was to happen. They'd developed more quickly than ours. They'd begun to take control."

Ultimately *Village of the Damned* is a science fiction horror film that focuses upon the postwar body politic as a site of vulnerability and corruption. The fear of what lies beyond the sleepy village of Midwich pales in comparison to what is growing within the *womb* of Midwich and the pastoral locale that is synonymous with a more innocent and child-friendly time during the postwar economic boom.[112] Correspondingly, the anxiety that affects Midwich is embodied primarily in the figure of the child regarding class and gender. For example, Anthea, after realizing that she is pregnant, argues with Gordon about the biological status of their child. "Every night I

lie awake and worry," Anthea declares. "What kind of life is growing inside me? What sort of brain it has? Where it comes from? Where does it come from!" Abruptly Anthea confesses, "I'm afraid."

The following scene begins with a car driving up to a working-class terraced house. A woman exits the car and enters through the front door, making sure to avoid her husband. In the foreground are a bottle of alcohol and a pack of cigarettes. Not a word is exchanged between the husband and wife, in stark contrast to the preceding scene, in which Gordon and Anthea are coded as more affluent and more than capable of expressing their feelings of uncertainty and fear. The following scene takes place at a pub, where the laboring-class men of Midwich, apart from their wives, drink in silence. The camera slowly tracks in to a close-up of one of the men sitting at the bar. "I hope that none of them lives," he says, looking directly at the camera.

The class distinction between Gordon, who waits impatiently outside Anthea's bedroom as she gives birth, and the men at the bar, who quietly drink among themselves, emphasizes the way in which parental anxiety and the fear of childbirth is perceived by the privileged and disadvantaged male. Among the working-class in particular, the submissive attitude of the female population of the village is opposed to a muted and violent disavowal exhibited by the opposite sex. Instead of turning to their wives for support, the men of Midwich turn to homosociality and the bottle. In short, *Village of the Damned* offers a scathing critique of the British age of affluence and the belief that socioeconomic prosperity is conducive to youth culture. If there is anything that is notorious about the Village of Midwich, it is that the political climate of the Cold War is profoundly indifferent to social equality and the value of human life, especially when deemed pathological or antinormative.

This is a point that is especially salient with regard to the gendered arrangements of work and care and the practice of scientific looking. Clearly Maj. Bernard's report that no physical, biological, or psychological changes have occurred among the villagers is incorrect. The patriarchal structure of Midwich – represented by the military, academic, and family man – is rendered powerless and impotent. The male-dominated institutions of the village are unable to mobilize against a force that is radically ambiguous, both in terms of conception and the outward appearance of innocence. Similar to the atomic bomb and Red Scare, the Children of Midwich represent a moral crisis that threatens the very foundation of British and American hegemony.

The crisis of masculinity in *Village of the Damned* is intensified after the Children of Midwich are born. Anthea's questions pertaining to the interiority of motherhood and childhood – questions that, according to Gordon, are trivial and irrational – are no closer to being answered post-conception. Thus the Midwich Cuckoos embody the ambiguity of innocence with regard to visibility and the male order. The figure of the child in *Village* illuminates how the arrangements of work and care are patronizing and sexist as a result of the male gaze and the practice of scientific looking. The Children of Midwich and their mothers are devalued, rather than improved upon, by the mass media of the twentieth century, including the X-ray and birth control pill. Threatened by the Children they have (not exactly) brought into the world, the men of Midwich resort to a system of rational bureaucratic management in order to shore up the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism.[113]

For example, one of the most entertaining scenes in the film takes place inside the office of Doctor Willers. Standing with his back to the camera, Zellaby waits impatiently to look at a fetal X-ray of Anthea. "It's one of the most perfectly formed embryos I've ever seen," Willers informs the expectant father. Zellaby leans toward his pediatrician and replies, "Yes, but is it . . .

normal?" "It's more than normal," replies Willers, the camera moving in to a close-up of the befuddled doctor, "it's a seven-month embryo after only five months." The camera pans left to a close-up of the X-ray and the now discernible image of a child's skeleton.

According to Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright the fetal image is "an icon of one's imagined future family."[114] Yet the emotional bonds that are formed in this scene exist between Gordon, his pediatrician, and a fetus of unknown origins. Despite his good manners and social status, Gordon denies Anthea the opportunity to share in the scientific gaze.[115] Consequently *Village of the Damned* extends across the horror and science fiction genres by way of the child image, biomedical personhood, and reproductive technology. The X-ray standing between Doctor Willers and Gordon is of a human vertebrae, pelvis, and sacrum, but in truth the diagnostic or fetal image in *Village* embodies the politics of atomic anxiety and the normality of Anthea's unexpected pregnancy. Gordon's disregard for Anthea's reproductive rights, in addition to his naive fascination with the morality of juvenescence, are channeled through and laundered by his paternal interest in the gendered arrangements of work and care, specifically Anthea's physical fitness and changing appetites. After learning that she is pregnant, Gordon insists that Anthea sit down, put up her feet, and enjoy a healthy meal of "cheese, pickles, and half a dozen anchovies." Yum!

Consequently, Gordon's enforcement of gender norms in *Village* illuminates the relationship between the practice of scientific looking and the figure of the monstrous child in terms of biomedical personhood and the moral ambiguity of the normal and the pathological. The X-ray image as a chronicle of progress and the patriarchal order is offset by the fetal image of the Midwich Child as a chronicle of degeneration and monstrosity. The social value of the priceless child in *Village of the Damned* is defined not by vulnerability or the need for protection from adult society. On the contrary, the figure of the child in *Village* embodies the concepts of innocence and

*in*vulnerability to a degree that is alarming and disconcerting to Dr. Willers. A seven-month embryo after only five months, the Midwich Cuckoo is framed by the question of normality and the male-dominated practice of scientific looking.

Anthea's fetal X-ray introduces a moral dilemma regarding the figure of the Child and the gendered arrangements of work and care. Although he may refuse to admit it, Gordon believes that his work as a father is complimented by Anthea's responsibility to care for their child regardless of what interests she may have outside of the home. In doing so, Gordon, not unlike Miss Giddens in *The Innocents*, falls into a deceptively unassuming hermeneutic trap: What does the monstrous child represent in *Village of the Damned*, and how is s/he framed by a scientific practice of looking? More specifically, if the monstrous Child in *Village of the Damned* is coded as invulnerable by the male-dominated practice of scientific looking, then is it not also immune to the dominant ideology that privileges Gordon as the symbolic father?

The concept of biomedical personhood and the braiding of scientific, cultural, and psychoanalytic narratives surrounding the child image are informed by the hubristic male gaze peering into new realms beyond the capabilities of the unaided human eye. In the previously mentioned scene, Anthea's body is diagnosed by what Sturken and Cartwright refer to as "the concept of images" and the male gaze "seeing into the mysteries of the body." [116] By the same token, the image of the morally ambiguous child is coded as otherworldly by a technological practice that is more concerned with policing the boundaries of normality and the concept of innocence than admitting the child or its mother into the familial and institutional practices that perpetuate the male order.

Anthea is objectified for the purposes of modeling the ingenuity and precision of medical science, along with modeling the cinematic apparatus, thereby confusing the line between cultural

and clinical meaning. The cultural function of the figure of the child in *Village of the Damned* works against norms of good and evil in terms of the medical gaze and Cold War anxieties pertaining to nuclear apocalypse and the overthrow of patriarchal capitalism by foreign powers that share little in common with the norms and cherished beliefs of the British middle- and upper-class.

Ultimately the mass media of the twentieth century in *Village of the Damned de*values, rather than improves upon, the figure of the child by arguing that the Midwich Children are perfectly rebellious – an atomic subjectivity that is invulnerable, as well as resistant, to the dominant ideology of the Cold War and British age of affluence. Based upon Sturken and Cartwright's argument that "narratives about fetal personhood are constructed despite what is known to be true about fetal life and development," the practice of scientific looking in *Village of the Damned* advances the ghoulish and anti-heteronormative possibility that conception and apocalypse are one and the same.[117]

The politics of gender and scientific looking regarding the monstrous child are discussed in a number of critical texts devoted to *Village of the Damned*. In his book, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (1993), David Skal writes that the fears and anxieties underlying the success and influence of *Village* are linked to the approval of the birth-control pill in May of 1960, in particular Enovid, manufactured by G.D. Searle and Company of Chicago.[86] The approval of the combined oral contraceptive pill (COCP) – referred to as the birth-control pill or simply "the Pill" in Britain and America – destabilized the values of the Cold War nuclear family by providing women with the freedom to engage in sexual intercourse while reducing the risk of pregnancy.[118] By the same token, the Pill also reinforced the notion that male-dominated science prevented women from participating in the discourse surrounding the figure of the female body and the

struggle for social equality. That said, the fear of alien incursion and artificial insemination in *Village of the Damned* consciously exploits anxieties pertaining to communist infiltration and the social and political repercussions of birth control for shock effect.

By framing the atomic child as a destructive force of global transformation, *Village of the Damned* rode a wave of social change within British and American culture, scoring big at the box office and carving out a niche within the imaginary landscape of the science fiction and horror film. According to Skal, "the film cost only $300,000 to make and earned $5 million in theatrical rentals, indicating a resonance between its outlandish story and a theme already in the public mind – namely, the creeping sense that women's reproductive functions could be hijacked by futuristic male science."[88]

Arguably, the practice of scientific looking in *Village of the Damned* takes Skal's argument one step further by exploiting the dreadful pleasure that obstetrical screening and birth control contribute to the biological superiority of the child, even if said immunity to the status quo leads to open rebellion and incursion into the norms and cherished beliefs of the nuclear family. The shocking representation of the Midwich Children is indicative of the politics of atomic anxiety and the communication of youthfulness as a site of moral panic in British and American popular culture after World War II. Similar to *The Innocents*, the figure of the child in *Village* is indicative of the transformation of the otherworldly threat into a frighteningly human monster.

Village of the Damned, like *The Innocents*, focuses upon the adult who is terrified by children. Yet the Midwich Cuckoos, compared to Flora and Miles in *The Innocents*, actually intend to conquer the world. When the villagers of Midwich respond to this danger, the fantasy of a golden age of childhood is shattered, revealing that the body politic is at war with itself over the issue of social equality more so than the spread of communism or the threat of nuclear apocalypse. By

extension, the figure of the child in *Village of the Damned* is an atomic subjectivity that incites a moral panic that is all too often associated with monsters and political ideologies that emerge from foreign and exotic lands. They may be space invaders, but more importantly the Midwich Children are horrifying because they are native-born British citizens.

In the end, Gordon Zellaby's compassion toward the Children of Midwich, including his son, is replaced by an excess of male hysteria. As a result of his inability to communicate with the atomic child, the gentleman and scholar reinvents himself as a suicide bomber. "All right, I'm responsible. I've never denied it!" Zellaby shouts. "I was over-optimistic. . . . What beats me is that I failed to reach the children. . . . If only I could get inside the children's minds and read their thoughts, since, quite obviously, they can read ours. . . . It's as though their minds were surrounded by . . . a brick wall. If only I could break through it!" The irony of Gordon's lecture is that instead of breaking through the developmental and cognitive brick wall that stands between himself and the Children, he fabricates a mental obstruction (in the form of a brick wall) to conceal the fact that he has decided to kill the Children and himself with a time bomb that he has hidden inside his briefcase.

Shortly after the Children break through the cognitive barrier that Gordon has constructed, they are destroyed along with the symbolic father. Like Miss Giddens in *The Innocents*, Zellaby's failure as a teacher is mirrored by his refusal to understand the children he has sworn to protect. As a result, he murders the children of Midwich in the name of innocence, thereby underscoring the similarity between the science fiction and gothic horror film regarding the monstrous child and the morally ambiguous concept of innocence during the Cold War and British age of affluence. Like *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned* examines the outward appearance of the monstrous child via the concept of innocence and the social and moral complexities that complicate the

boundaries between the normal and the pathological. Instead of the hideous representation of the child as a figural and developmental abnormality (tentacles, green skin, bulbous eyes), it is the embodiment of innocence that illuminates the adult as a morbidly depraved authority figure. In *Village of the Damned*, the figure of the monstrous child is a site of moral panic and Cold War paranoia.

The Night of the Hunter (Charles Laughton, 1955)

In an ice-cream parlor in Cresap's Landing, West Virginia, Harry Powell (Robert Mitchum) preaches about the story of life. "Would you like me to tell you the little story of right hand left hand . . . the story of good and evil?" Preacher asks.[119] Holding out his hands, tattooed with the letters H-A-T-E and L-O-V-E, Preacher begins his sermon:

> H-A-T-E! It was with this left hand that old brother Cain struck the blow that laid his brother low! L-O-V-E! You see these fingers, dear hearts? These fingers has veins that run straight to the soul of man! The right hand, friends! The hand of Love! Now watch and I'll show you the Story of Life. The fingers of these hands, dear hearts! – They're always a-warrin' and a-tuggin', one agin' t'other. Now watch 'em! Old brother Left Hand. Left Hand Hate's a-fightin' and it looks like Love's a goner. But wait a minute! Wait a minute! Hot dog! Love's a-winnin! Yessirree! It's Love that won. And Old Left Hand Hate is down for the count!

Nine-year-old John Harper (Billy Chapin) and his four-year-old sister Pearl (Sally Jane Bruce) are transfixed by the tattooed letters on Powell's hands. During Preacher's impromptu sermon the adults in the room share a look of wonderment. Willa Harper (Shelley Winters), John and Pearl's recently widowed mother, is so enchanted by Powell's performance that she accepts his untimely proposal of marriage, a decision that results in her being murdered by Preacher and dumped in the Ohio River. Icey Spoon (Evelyn Varden) and her husband Walt (Don Beddoe) are equally oblivious to Preacher's disregard for the story of life and the triumph of love over hate.

Their unsuspecting reverence for Preacher is matched by their bloodlust after Powell's criminality is litigated at the conclusion of the film.

The dramatic impact of *The Night of the Hunter* is founded upon the certainty that Preacher's reputed evangelical passion is surpassed only by his criminality. Serving time in Moundsville Penitentiary for auto theft, Powell shares a cell with Ben Harper (Peter Graves), John and Pearl's father, who shot and killed two men in a stick-up at a bank. Sentenced to death by hanging, the $10,000 that Harper has stolen to support his family has not been recovered by the police, and Preacher repeatedly fails to discover where the money is hidden before Ben is executed. After being released from prison Powell travels to Cresap's Landing in search of the money that Ben, before he was arrested, entrusted to John. What John suspects about Preacher in the ice-cream parlor but does not completely fathom is that Powell, along with preaching and stealing cars, has a history of killing rich widows. What Preacher does not realize is that the $10,000 he is searching for is hidden inside of Pearl's rag doll, Miz Jenny.

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to the monstrous child include the themes of apocalyptic belief, economic austerity, and the depiction of pastoral innocence.[120] In addition, I analyze the cultural function of the figure of the criminal in the southern gothic horror film and how s/he works against norms of good and evil. Specifically, the figure of the apocalyptic child in *The Night of the Hunter* is envisioned by a practice of looking that is linked to the historical significance of the Great Depression and Cold War Era. Taking the same line of argument further, I demonstrate that the child in *The Night of the Hunter* is portrayed by the criminal as an apocalyptic or monstrous figure that functions as an alibi for Harry Powell and the brutality of the American Dream. The child is framed by Preacher as a figurative monster that promises the complete destruction of the world, thereby distracting the residents of Cresap's Landing from

Powell's ulterior motive. The concept of criminality is superimposed upon the child regardless of the fact that John and Pearl are innocent of the crimes that have been committed in their name. After my preliminary analysis of the film, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the above-mentioned themes and questions [Couchman, 2009; Skal, 1993; Williams, 2014 (1996); Sharrett, 1983; Sragow, 2010].

Powell's relationship with the figure of the child and the concept of innocence illuminates the intersection of fear and fairy tale, as well as the location of Charles Laughton's 1955 directorial debut within the horror genre. The perception of morality and the conflation of innocence and criminality with the figure of the child in *The Night of the Hunter* borrows from the practices of looking that are represented in *The Innocents* (gothic and Victorian) and *Village of the Damned* (scientific). The child in *The Night of the Hunter* is viewed by the adult as a sentimental or nostalgic figure inasmuch as Preacher's impassioned and misguided feelings toward John and Pearl are framed by the motivation to *mis*interpret the child as criminal and monstrous. In this way, the innocent child is framed by the criminal adult in order to disguise the fact that Preacher, not the Harper children, intends to wreak havoc upon the status quo and the norms and cherished beliefs of the nuclear family.

This raises a point that is vital to *The Night of the Hunter*. In terms of the definition of the monstrous child, John and Pearl Harper are framed by Harry Powell as morally ambiguous: Preacher exchanges identities with the children by assuming the mantle of innocence and "converting" the children to a life of crime. In order to claim the $10,000 that is hidden inside of Pearl's rag doll Miz Jenny, Powell insinuates himself into the Harper family as a surrogate for the husband and father that Willa and her children have lost. Not unlike the afterimage of Christine in *Don't Look Now*, the disappearance of the role of the father in the symbolic order in *The Night of*

the Hunter is succeeded by an imposter who is bent upon the destruction of the nuclear family and the working-class values that it embodies; from beyond the gallows of Moundsville Penitentiary, a childish adult that is defined by criminality assumes the form of a departed father that is defined by innocence.[121]

However, *The Night of the Hunter* differs from *Don't Look Now*, as well as *The Innocents* and *Village of the Damned*, by focusing on the relentless evocation of childhood terror. For example, Ben Harper's act of criminality is driven by the desperation to provide for his family, thereby complicating the perception of good and bad inclinations within the cultural and historical context of the Great Depression. Conversely, Preacher's depiction of the loving father, like his interpretation of the story of life, serves to camouflage his hatred for the social value of the priceless child in need of protection from adult society. Preacher's attack upon the Harper children is represented both in terms of the fire and brimstone rhetoric of colonial American literature and the nihilistic tendencies of the serial killer popularized in the American slasher film cycle. In terms of influence on the horror film, Mitchum's performance as Preacher is very much wrapped-up with *Cape Fear* (J. Lee Thompson, 1962).[122] Correspondingly, the point of view in *The Night of the Hunter* belongs to Pearl and John Harper, making Laughton's film the only one in this dissertation that is truly concerned with the question of childhood participation and agency in the horror film.

It is hard to imagine a more frightening story than one in which the precariousness of life is viewed through the lens of the child who believes in the wrath of God. This, unfortunately for John and Pearl, is a detail that Powell is fully aware of. Preacher, an itinerant evangelist travelling the countryside of Depression-era America, approaches the art of rhetoric in the manner of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). A Calvinist evangelical known for his impassioned hortatory and moralistic texts, Edwards's sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741), a classic of

early-American literature, is indebted to the Puritan jeremiad and serves as a template for Preacher's story of life.[123] According to Edwards:

> The God that holds you over the Pit of Hell, much as one holds a Spider or some loathsome Insect, over the Fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his Wrath towards you burns like Fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the Fire; he is of purer Eyes than to bear to have you in his Sight; you are ten thousand Times as abominable in his Eyes as the most hateful, venomous Serpent is in ours. . . . O Sinner! Consider the fearful Danger you are in: 'Tis a great furnace of Wrath, a wide and bottomless Pit, full of the Fire of Wrath, that you are held over in the Hand of that God, whose Wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the Damned in Hell: You hang by a slender Thread, with the Flames of divine Wrath flashing about it, and ready every Moment to singe it, and burn it asunder.[124]

Subsequently, Powell's apocalyptic belief, in which the forces of good and evil are locked in eternal conflict, is closely associated with the fiery oratory of colonial America's most gifted clergyman. Edwards functions as a type of father figure for both Preacher and Miss Giddens in *The Innocents*. On the one hand, Preacher and Miss Giddens share a common bond with regard to the question of spirituality and the ability to administer to the figure of the child. Both Powell and Miss Giddens are more concerned with the concept of innocence than the well-being of the children they are accountable for. As an unintended result, the false prophet and country parson's daughter take it upon themselves to frame the child as corrupt. Instead of protecting the child from the horrors of adult society, Powell and Miss Giddens perpetuate the sordid relations they have sworn to oppose.

On the other hand, *The Night of the Hunter* differs from *The Innocents* insofar as the cultural context of the apocalyptic or monstrous child in *Night* is more explicitly linked to the experience of economic austerity and the allegorical significance of the legacy of World War II and the Great Depression. Contrary to *The Innocents* and *Village of the Damned*, which are more

concerned with the aesthetic and textual continuities of gothic horror and science fiction, *The Night of the Hunter* focuses on the child as the embodiment of apocalyptic belief and economic hardship, in which the American Dream as a land of pastoral innocence is besieged by the figure of the criminal and the conspiracies of Harry Powell. Compared to Miss Giddens and Gordon Zellaby, Preacher's transformation of the innocent child into a frighteningly human monster is driven by greed and the illusion of religious conviction.

Thus Jeffrey Couchman is only partially correct when he observes that Preacher, like Edwards, "submits to the will of a wrathful God."[125] Edwards may function as a type of father figure for Preacher, but Powell's belief in God is entirely fabricated for the purpose of shock effect. Indeed, one of the reasons that Preacher is so quickly accepted into the community of Cresap's Landing is that his impassioned hortatory – and criminal deception – is ideally suited to the austere conditions of Depression-era West Virginia. Searching for deliverance from the horrors of economic austerity, the people of Cresap's Landing, with the exception of John Harper, are ready to believe almost anything that will improve their quality of life – even the bogus apocalyptic belief of Harry Powell.[126] As a result, the figure of the child in *The Night of the Hunter* is juxtaposed with the portrayal of Depression-era hardship and Preacher's passion for self-aggrandizement.

According to Preacher, "the religion the Almighty and me worked out betwixt us" is founded upon the belief that "Salvation is a last-minute business executed not with Peace but with a Sword." His switchblade knife close at hand, Preacher imagines that he is a soldier of God. "You always send me money to go forth to preach your *Word*," Powell declares. Preacher's fiduciary duty to God, however, is no more charitable than his denominational conscience. In a time of economic austerity and social and moral decay, Reverend Powell depends upon God to provide him with "a widow with a little wad of bills hidden away in the sugar-bowl." Driving a stolen

Essex touring car, Preacher talks to himself, "What's it to be, Lord, another widow? Has it been six? Twelve? . . . I disremember."

If the dramatic imagination of *The Night of the Hunter* is propelled by Mitchum's embodiment of criminality, then the collective fears and anxieties of Cold War America – the conflict between norms of good and evil, the struggle for survival in a time of apocalyptic belief and communist expansion – are illuminated by the performance of childhood, the ambiguity of play, and the concept of innocence. For example, in the opening scene of the film a children's game of hide and seek is interrupted by the discovery of one of Preacher's most recent victims. Not unlike Christine in the opening of *Don't Look Now*, the figure of the child is amused and threatened by the natural world. "What's wrong?" a boy asks as we pan, dolly in fast, and tilt down into a close-up of a woman's stockinged legs. One of her shoes has come loose; the image is reminiscent of the death pose of the Wicked Witch of the East in *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939).

In this case, however, the figure of the innocent child is exposed to the cruelty of adulthood and the hardships of the Great Depression, rather than a Technicolor wonderland of song and dance. According to James Agee, who adapted Grubb's novel for the screen a decade after he and Walker Evans published the nonfiction Depression masterpiece *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), Preacher's victim is framed as "a skeletal leg in a rotted fume of stocking and a high-heeled shoe. We hold a moment, then pull up and away over the converging heads of several children. A child whimpers."[127]

Unlike *The Wizard of Oz*, there is nothing entertaining or inspiring about death and destruction. The stockinged leg in *The Night of the Hunter* does not disappear to make way for a yellow brick road and the gift of self-determination. There are no ruby slippers in *The Night of the*

Hunter, only rag dolls and blood money. "That cursed bloody gold," Preacher raves, will not lead to a city of emerald but to an apocalyptic tabernacle upon a hill. Hence the concept of criminality in *The Night of the Hunter* is represented from the point of view of the child and the moral ambiguity of play. Similar to *The Innocents*, the point at which the familial crosses over into the uncanny is designated by the transformation of funny games into waking nightmares.[128]

As a result, the figure of the criminal works against norms of good and evil by proposing that the answer to the Great Depression is not only the word of God as criminal deception, it is also the wanton disregard for the value of the priceless child in need of protection from the horrors of adult society. Before jumping into his stolen Essex touring car, Powell, by implication, entangles the child in his sordid relations with the widows of West Virginia. The figure of the child in *The Night of the Hunter* is framed by the brutality of the American Dream. In addition, the cultural function of the child in the above-mentioned scene is determined by a practice of looking that is linked to the historical significance of the Great Depression and Cold War Era. In *The Night of the Hunter* the horrors of the adult world are considered from a child's point of view, in particular John Harper. Laughton, Agee, and cinematographer Stanley Cortez imagine the depths and limitations of childhood perception and the imperiled youngster against the backdrop of what David Skal describes as the brutality of the American Dream or "American abyss."

According to Skal, "the massive shared hardship of the Depression galvanized motion pictures as a dominant form of cultural expression," opening a window of opportunity for films like *Dracula* (1931) and *Frankenstein* (1931).[129] By the 1950s, the aftershocks of the Depression were no less palpable, and resonated with the paranoia and cultural conservatism of the Cold War Era. If the Universal horror films during the 1930s functioned as a kind of deliverance from the wreckage of the Jazz Age, then *The Night of the Hunter* boldly explored the sociopolitical fallout

from the Great Depression as a mode of historical allegory and response to the fears and anxieties of the Cold War.

Taking the same line of argument further, the figure of the child in *The Night of the Hunter* is framed by a practice of looking that is linked to the historical significance of the Great Depression and Cold War Era. The dramatic impact of Laughton's film is expressed in terms of the connection between the child and the allegorical significance of the Great Depression in relation to the Cold War as a flashpoint in American social history. Similar to *Village of the Damned*, *The Night of the Hunter* seeks to engage with an "era characterized by interlaced struggles over . . . the national legacy of World War II."[130] The Cold War threat of nuclear warfare and communist expansion may be absent in *The Night of the Hunter*, but the belief in apocalypticism and the propensity to buy into "an atmosphere of fevered, misguided religion" is most certainly a reality for the people of Cresap's Landing.[131]

Arguably Laughton and Agee, as well as Preacher, are "in on the joke," so to speak. In addition to the moral ambiguity of Preacher's evangelical passion and criminal intent, *The Night of the Hunter* is structured around the conflation of anxieties that were pervasive at the historical moment (Cold War) with a seemingly unrelated set of concerns (Great Depression) that are in fact analogous. Exploiting the gospel of Jeremiah, Reverend Harry Powell is not only a monster of the American heartland, he is also a criminal that illuminates the place of fear and anxiety within Cold War American culture and the aftermath of the Great Depression.

The cultural and historical conditions of *The Night of the Hunter* illuminate how various types of anxiety that are pervasive at the historical moment are unconsciously channeled and consciously exploited by the director and character for shock effect. Consequently, one of the challenges of analyzing *The Night of the Hunter*, more so than the other films in this dissertation,

is the ability to tell the difference between the spectacular child as a site of media fascination, and moral panic in the culture generally. Ultimately, the cultural and historical function of the figure of the criminal, and Preacher's "conversion" of John and Pearl to a life of crime, illuminates *The Night of the Hunter* and its location within the horror genre.

Like the child that whimpers at the sight of death, as well as the game of hide and seek that is a conduit for moral ambiguity, John is ultimately threatened by the ambiguity of play and Preacher's quest for the $10,000 hidden inside Pearl's rag doll. After his father entrusts him to guard the money, John is thrust into an expressionistic world that is warped by sin and salvation. From the pulpit of the American abyss emerges Preacher, a villainous holy man who is convinced that the transcendent values of love and hate must be imposed upon the intransigent, willful, and obstinate child in order to shape a righteous and godly society. For all intents and purposes the spirit of Jonathan Edwards is alive in Cresap's Landing. Yet, in the end, Preacher underestimates the complexity and strength of the figure of the child. Not unlike Miss Giddens and Gordon Zellaby, Harry Powell falls into a deceptively unassuming trap. Yet again, a deceptively simple question is raised: What does the monstrous child represent in *The Night of the Hunter*, and how is s/he, like the threat of religious apocalypse and economic austerity, framed by a practice of looking that is defined criminality and the southern gothic?

It is hard to imagine a figure in postwar Hollywood cinema that is more suited to gothic horror than Harry Powell. According to Couchman, Preacher is a twentieth century version of the villainous holy man of gothic literature. Comparable to Ambrosio in Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), Schedoni in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1796), and the eponymous ne'er-do-well of Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), Preacher is a Mephistophelean force of evil – a hunter of innocent women and children who spreads "an atmosphere of fevered, misguided

religion."[132] As mentioned previously, the function of the figure of the criminal in *The Night of the Hunter* works against norms of good and evil by illuminating the brutality of the American Dream. That is to say, Preacher's understanding of economic austerity – rob and kill in the name of God – bears a striking resemblance to the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism, in that the working class and disadvantaged are preyed upon by the institutions and master narratives that claim to defend those who are most in need.

By extension, Powell prefigures the serial killer popularized in the slasher film cycle. In addition to Jonathan Edwards and the horror of religious fundamentalism, Preacher is based upon the real-life character of Harry Powers, known nationally as "the Bluebeard of Quiet Dell," West Virginia's most famous mass murderer.[133] Arguably, *The Night of the Hunter* is distinguished by the arrangement of gothic horror with true crime, a non-fiction media genre that includes *In Cold Blood* (Truman Capote, 1966; Richard Brooks, 1967), *Helter Skelter* (Vincent Bugliosi, 1974; Tom Gries, 1976), and *The Executioner's Song* (Norman Mailer, 1979; Lawrence Schiller, 1982).[134]

Most importantly, the location of *The Night of the Hunter* within the horror genre is determined by the figure of the apocalyptic or monstrous child. Regarding Tony Williams's analysis of the apocalyptic dimension influencing contemporary horror films like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974) and *The Brood* (David Cronenberg, 1979), *The Night of the Hunter* exemplifies "a particular apocalyptic vision" that involves the family and the performance of religious fundamentalism as contributing factors.[135] In his book, *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film* (2014 [1996]), Williams, citing Christopher Sharrett, argues that "the American culture exhibits a particular strain in the political, religious, and cultural spheres throughout its entire history."[136] In particular, Williams and Sharrett argue

that "as a Puritan 'City on the Hill,' the young Republic felt a sense of mission as a chosen people extending from the Frontier into world affairs. Full of self-appointed missionary status, American society blinded itself to its negative side with ideologic idealized innocence, a feeling lasting into the mid-twentieth century."[137]

In other words, *The Night of the Hunter* predicts the American horror film in the 1970s and 80s by "revealing a fatality and nihilism also present in biblical apocalyptic literature."[138] Preacher's status as a false prophet gives new meaning to Williams's and Sharrett's interpretation of "the decline of belief in myths and instituitions as a religiously inspired (but secularized) sense of living in the 'last days.'"[139] Powell subverts the American Dream of political equality insofar as the $10,000 that might raise the Harper family out of the abyss of the Great Depression is subsumed under a denominational conscience that is criminal and "lacks belief in any enduring value systems."[140]

Accordingly, the figure of the monstrous child in *The Night of the Hunter* is determined by apocalyptic belief, economic austerity, and what Sharrett refers to as apocalypticism's refusal to provide "clarity and a revelation of history's purpose."[141] The figure of Harry Powell, or the criminal in southern gothic horror, is "concerned with showing civilization at a dead end, but more importantly with expressing the worthlessness of any totalizing system of belief."[142] Nevertheless, it is the figure of the innocent child that stands in the way of Preacher's apocalyptic tabernacle upon a hill. The final enduring value system of *The Night of the Hunter* is embodied in the figure of the child as a reminder of the promise of sociopolitical rejuvenation. It is from the point of view of the child that the brutality and cruelty of Preacher, and the revivalist congregation that he establishes in Cresap's Landing, is portrayed. Yet it is also the figure of the child in *The Night of*

the Hunter who is aligned with the concept of pastoral innocence and the possibilities of the American Dream.

The depiction of pastoral innocence in *The Night of the Hunter* is one of the most acclaimed aspects of the film. Widely acknowledged as the most impressive scene in the movie overall, John and Pearl's journey along the Ohio River is described by Michael Sragow as a rite of passage into "a gorgeous natural universe."[143] John and Pearl, after discovering that Powell has murdered their mother, run away from home in search of deliverance from their stepfather and would-be executioner. Free of the specter of religious fundamentalism, the children are liberated from the yoke of criminality and Preacher's conspiracies. Unlike Christine in the opening of *Don't Look Now*, as well as the children's game of hide and seek at the beginning of *The Night of the Hunter*, John and Pearl's relationship with the Ohio River is defined by peace and tranquility. Surrounded by a diverse collection of wildlife and the open country, Sragow writes that "Laughton and Agee use verbal and visual means to capture Grubb's depiction of the children as 'fallen angels, or woodland elves suddenly banished from the Court of the Gods of Moonlight and of faery meadows. They blew along like brown leaves on the wind.'"[144]

The relationship between the figure of the child and the concept of pastoral innocence is not only communictated by means of visual performance. Like Pino Donaggio's piano piece "Suite No. 1" in *Don't Look Now*, the use of music in *The Night of the Hunter* is a critical detail regarding John and Pearl's journey along the Ohio River. Sragow notes that Pearl offers a "haunting, makeshift song," in which she sings, "'Once upon a time, there was a pretty fly, and he had a wife, this pretty fly, and one day she flew away, and then one night his pretty fly children flew away, too, into the sky, into the moon.'"[145] According to Sragow, Pearl's voice "bonds with the luminous imagery and wraps the skiff in an audiovisual cocoon. But when you see rabbits and a huge frog

quivering in close-up as the skiff drifts by, the compositions emphasize their distance from Pearl and John. These kids are in this world, not of it."[146] The figure of the child, both in terms of innocence and the flight from criminality, is pictured within a landscape of fear and anxiety, as well as hope and beauty.

Ultimately it is the representation of childhood and innocence that most forcefully illuminates the cultural and historical context of Laughton's film. In *The Night of the Hunter* Pearl and John are inserted into a savage and angular world depicted in the style of German expressionist film, a stylistic approach that is ideally suited to postwar American culture and the Hollywood crime drama extending from the early 1940s to the late 50s. Preacher, a grotesque inversion of fatherhood, hunts John, a victim of circumstance. The moral spectrum of good and evil is fractured beyond repair, and in order to survive with their lives – and financial interests – intact both John and Preacher participate in a most dangerous game of hide and seek. The thesis of Laughton's film is that love and hate, or, for that matter, good and evil, are moral and representational equivalents. The definition of childhood depends upon the horrifying circumstances in which the sublimity of innocence is lost.

In his essay, "Holy Terror" (2010), Terrence Rafferty observes that *The Night of the Hunter* "is among the greatest horror movies ever made, and perhaps, of that select company, the most irreducibly American in spirit."[147] The relationship between the figure of the child and adult in *The Night of the Hunter* is especially profound when viewed through the morally ambiguous lens of innocence and criminality. What John and Pearl experience at the hands of Preacher is reminiscent of a Puritan childhood, an expressionist nightmare of piety, severity, and criminal indulgence. Shortly after arriving at Cresap's Landing, Preacher discovers that John and Pearl know where the money is hidden, and proceeds to destroy the Harper family from within by marrying, converting,

and murdering Willa. With the children all to himself, Preacher ruthlessly interrogates John and Pearl and transforms a narrative of Puritan dread and anxiety into a monstrous allegory of Depression-era social and moral decay. The children in *The Night of the Hunter* are monstrous insofar as Preacher's apocalyptic revival is based upon the persecution of the priceless child in need of protection from adult society. In his pursuit of the common good Powell conceals his criminal identity by framing the innocent child as a sinner in the hands of an angry God.

Chapter 2

Pictures of Criminality:
Horror Cinema, Media, and Boyhood

> When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
>
> 1 Corinthians 13:9-12[3]

> Nearly 2,000 years after St. Paul of Tarsus wrote his poetic epistles to the people of Corinth, we still equate our capacity for selfless love with the putting away of childish things. That is to say, the time comes for each of us to grow up and pack up our toys.
>
> David Hajdu[148]

A young boy is playing outside. A vampire emerges from the forest and approaches his victim "like a gliding snake."[149] The boy is "paralyzed with fear." The vampire, who looks and behaves more like a zombie, draws "nearer . . . claws out-stretched . . . an unearthly smile on its inhuman face." The boy screams. He runs home and informs his parents, "I saw . . . the vampire! He snarled and growled at me! I saw him! Look . . . he scratched me!" The boy's father replies, "You've been seeing too much television, young man! Your imagination is getting out of hand!"

The following morning a murder is reported and the police suspect that a vampire is the culprit. The boy's father is flabbergasted. "That's the most fantastic thing I've ever heard!" he exclaims. That night a search party roams the forest, torches and guns at the ready. One townsman declares that Jed Smith believes silver bullets are the only things that will kill a vampire. The beast

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[3] Greven, Philip. *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America*. Knopf, 1977, p. vii. Chapter 2 endnotes may be found on pp. 211-222.

is spotted and the mob runs after it with guns blazing. The men catch "up to the wounded creature and" rain "blow after blow upon it. Sinking, gasping, panting . . . it" claws "at them . . . to the last!" Standing over the corpse, "a sickening, cloying lump of a horrible phenomenon," the men are amazed, "their eyes blazing with awe . . . and fear."

The following morning another victim is discovered and paranoia sets in among the townspeople. The boy's mother, Joan, discovers a pair of gloves covered in dried blood and a book about vampirism on her husband's desk. She suspects that her husband, Steve, is a vampire. Steve, who does not possess Joan's flair for deductive reasoning, suspects that his wife is a vampire based upon her sharp nails and overly red mouth. "It couldn't be . . ? ! ! Lord, tell me it couldn't . . !" he thinks. That night the vampire strikes again. Fearing for the safety of their son, Joan and Steve lock the door to Bobby's room. Afterward, they set out to investigate a crypt, "a breeding place for the vampire."

Time passes and the vampire murders continue. Late one night, Steve discovers that Joan is not in bed. The bedroom window is open; the curtains flutter in the wind. Steve revisits the crypt and finds Joan. She is "aiming a gun at his heart . . . spewing venomous words . . ." They argue and accuse each other of being the killer. Suddenly they hear a noise. Looking over their shoulders in terror they see Bobby. "I'm . . . the . . . vampire!" Bobby proclaims. The closing narration informs the reader that Bobby is "the one person no one had bothered to suspect – the one person scratched and changed into a beast that very first night – the one person who had been tagged and now was – it!"

"Tag . . . You're It," written by Howard Nostrand with artwork by Nostrand and Sid Check, was published in the July 1954 issue of *Tomb of Terror* (Harvey, 1952-1954) and marked the beginning of the end of the golden age of horror comics in the United States. Running for sixteen

issues between the summers of 1952 and 1954, *Tomb of Terror*, like most American postwar crime and horror comics, perished in the wake of the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency hearings (April-June 1954) and the implementation of the Comics Code Authority (CCA). As David Hajdu points out in his book, *The Ten-Cent Plague: The Great Comic-Book Scare and How It Changed America* (2008), many of the artists who worked for these publications suddenly found themselves unemployed, never to return to work in the comics industry.[150]

According to William Gaines (1922-1992), publisher and co-editor of Entertaining (or EC) Comics and *Mad* magazine (1952-Present), the CCA clauses that forbade the words "crime," "horror," and "terror" in comic book titles were a premeditated attack on his best-selling publications, including *Crime SuspenStories* (1950-1955), *Vault of Horror* (1950-1955), and *Tales from the Crypt* (1950-1955). In addition to the ban on "crime" and "horror" comic titles, the CCA prohibited the inclusion of classic horror archetypes such as the vampire, werewolf, and zombie. As stated by the Code for Editorial Matter, General Standards Part B5, "scenes dealing with, or instruments associated with walking dead, torture, vampires and vampirism, ghouls, cannibalism and werewolfism [*sic*] are prohibited."[151]

Consequently, the figure of the monstrous child in "Tag . . . You're It" – a vampire that behaves like a zombie and can be killed like a werewolf with a silver bullet – exhibits a striking artistic innovation that was ultimately prohibited by the Comics Magazine Association of America.[152] Similar to Christine in *Don't Look Now*, many of the themes and concepts that I explore in chapter 2 are encapsulated in "Tag . . . You're It," including the figure of the monstrous child as a gesture of death and mortality, in which the theme of parental anxiety is represented as a failure to save the child both before and after he has figuratively returned from the grave. In the

case of "Tag . . . You're It," Bobby, like Christine, illuminates the fears and anxieties of the nuclear family and the death of the child as a twisted game of hide and seek.

For example, the deep cultural impact of Cold War crime and horror comics, despite the severity of the 1954 Comics Code, affected a new wave of American horror filmmakers in the 1970s and 80s. In the television documentary *Tales from the Crypt: From Comic Books to Television* (Chip Selby, 2004), John Carpenter and George A. Romero readily acknowledge a debt to the horror comics of their youth. Romero's admiration for the artwork of Jack Davis factors heavily in Romero's use of Technicolor and widescreen composition in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978).[153] In her book, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens: Video Spectatorship from VHS to File Sharing* (2013), Caetlin Benson-Allott points out that the thematic "condemnation of both consumer culture and American racism" in *Dawn of the Dead* pays "homage to the overt visual sarcasm of 1950s horror comics, specifically Entertainment [*sic*] Comics' *Vault of Horror* and *Tales from the Crypt*, which use parody to associate gore with progressive social critique."[154]

In what follows, I examine the figure of the male child in relation to the concept of criminality in the Italian *giallo* film and early and late American slasher film cycles. I analyze why the performance of boyhood as a criminal subjectivity during the transition from the *giallo* to slasher format represents a unique and unexplored theoretical and historical framework. Similar to my analysis of "Tag . . . You're It," I focus on the emerging figure of the monstrous child in three films that epitomize the modern horror film: *Profondo rosso*/*Deep Red* (Dario Argento, 1975), *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978), and *Child's Play* (Tom Holland, 1988). While only a fleeting image in *Profondo rosso*, the child eventually takes center stage in *Child's Play*, completing a story of formation that is consistent with the figure of the boy as a criminal subjectivity in the early *giallo* cycle.

In addition to a comparative analysis of the above-mentioned films, I analyze the historical conditions of Italy (*Profondo rosso*), the American suburb (*Halloween*), and metropolis (*Child's Play*) as sites of economic and sociopolitical crisis. Contrary to the age of affluence and the fabled golden age of childhood that followed World War II, the 1970s and 80s are defined by the intersection of youth culture and cultural conflict. Subsequently, the threat of "terrorism, economic crisis, political immobilism, ideological saturation, and cultural disorientation" accounts for the alleged increase in criminal childhood activity that emerged in the horror genre.[155] Like the figure of the postwar juvenile delinquent, the male child in horror films of the 1970s and 80s rebels against the command to "paper the cracks" of cultural anxieties during the Reagan Era and the socially and politically turbulent period between 1968 and 1982 that is known in Italy as the Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*.[156]

Ultimately, what *Profondo rosso*, *Halloween*, and *Child's Play* share in common is Bobby from "Tag . . . You're It." That is to say, the emergence of boyhood and monstrosity in the Italian *giallo* and American slasher film points to a broader intermedial history of criminality and juvenescence, as well as the ambiguous distinction between the monstrous child and childish monster. Like the game of hide and seek in chapter 1, the ambiguity of play is a recurring motif in this chapter regarding the figure of the child and how he works against norms of good and evil via the communication of monstrosity and youthfulness. Thus, Bobby epitomizes the figure of the monstrous male child in *Profondo rosso*, *Halloween*, and *Child's Play* by way of "the taboo aspects of children's display," the concept of criminality, and how "images of the young as a category of appeal" change over time in the context of different historical moments.[157]

Regarding the epigraphs at the beginning of this chapter, the expectation that one must put away childish things in order to develop into a normative adult is a dominant motif in the Italian

giallo and American slasher film. This is especially true regarding the portrayal of boyhood and how it pertains to gender, sexuality, and the juxtaposition of innocence and criminality. Like the American horror comics of the 1950s, the popularity of the *giallo* format during the first half of the 1970s illuminates the public interest in the representation of crime and graphic narrative violence. Building upon this claim I explore the cultural function of the figure of the child in relation to ventriloquist affect and the pseudo-scientific notion of the born criminal as a mode of biological determinism. Regarding *Halloween* and *Child's Play*, the figure of the childish monster is especially pronounced with regard to the braided identities of killer and victim and the embodiment of moral ambiguity.

Although the connection between Cold War comic books and the Italian *giallo* and American slasher film may seem counterintuitive, no other period (1975-1988) better explains the intersection of childhood and criminality. In chapter 1, I argue that the figure of the monstrous child emerges during the 1950s from a cultural imaginary or inner America that is characterized by postwar victory, prosperity, anticlimax, and fear [Thompson, 2012; Doherty, 2002 (1988)]. Yet the cultural capital of the postwar child is only partially accounted for by the years immediately following World War II. With films like *Profondo rosso*, *Halloween*, and *Child's Play* the sense of emotional anger and brooding violence that is associated with the postwar genre and social commentary film reaches a level of intensity that shatters any sense of propriety and popular taste, replacing the rock and roll-addled juvenile delinquent and queer motel-keeper with the homicidal maniac.[158]

As a result, the rebel without a cause, and the concept of youthful disobedience, are overtaken by a new breed of monstrosity that is determined by the pseudo-scientific notion of born criminality and the Lombrosian type of delinquent.[159] The correspondence between the classic and

modern horror phases represents a unique and unexplored framework regarding the definition of the monstrous child and the ambiguous distinction between innocence and criminality. By illuminating how the social concerns of the 1950s (juvenile delinquency, communism, the atomic bomb) flow into the 70s and 80s (Vietnam, second-wave feminism, Reaganomics), the Cold War comic book, Italian *giallo*, and American slasher film are critical to understanding the monstrous child and its relation to the concept of criminality.

***Profondo rosso*/*Deep Red* (Dario Argento, 1975)**

Lodged within the opening credits of *Profondo rosso*/*Deep Red* is a deeply unsettling image of childhood. Two shadows stand against the wall of a Victorian-style drawing room. A children's lullaby is playing on a phonograph, emphasizing a late nineteenth century aesthetic of gentility and status.[160] Christmas presents, including a rocking horse, are placed beneath the tree. One of the shadows struggles in vain, screams, and is repeatedly stabbed by an unidentified assailant. The murder weapon, a kitchen knife soaked in Technicolor blood, is dropped in front of the camera. A child enters screen right. Framed below the knees, a pair of knee-high stockings and patent leather shoes complicates the determination of age and gender.

Lasting only twenty-eight seconds, one might assume that Franco Fraticelli (film editor) and Luigi Kuveiller (director of photography) have neglected their duties. After this all-too-brief musical reverie, the opening credits of the film resume and the children's lullaby is replaced by the music of Giorgio Gaslini and the Italian progressive rock band Goblin.[161] A traditional establishing shot introduces the viewer to protagonist Marcus Daly (David Hemmings). In the following scene the camera enters a parapsychology conference and focuses on Helga Ulmann (Macha Méril), "a lady with extraordinary powers of telepathy and a natural predisposition for"

victimhood that qualifies her as the first of many women with "a good face and figure [that Argento] would much prefer to watch . . . being murdered than an ugly girl or man."[162]

The premise of *Profondo rosso*, like *The Innocents*, is deceptively unassuming. The main character of the film, British jazz pianist Marcus Daly, witnesses and investigates the violent murder of Helga Ulmann. With the help of reporter Gianna Brezzi (Daria Nicolodi) Marcus discovers that Marta Ricci (Clara Calamai), the mother of Marcus's friend Carlo (Gabriele Lavia; Carlo as a child is played by Jacopo Mariani), is Ulmann's killer, as well as the assailant at the opening of the film who stabs her husband in front of Carlo.[163] By film's end Marta is decapitated by an elevator (don't ask) and Marcus is left to contemplate the aftermath while gazing into a pool of Marta's brightly colored blood.

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to the monstrous male child include the use of color in the *giallo* film, the representation of crime and graphic narrative violence, the point of view of the child as a state of moral ambiguity, and the historical significance of the concept of criminality during Italy's Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*. In addition, I analyze the questions of childhood gender and sexuality, as well as the cultural function of the figure of the child in the *giallo* film and how he works against norms of good and evil. In particular, the moral and gender ambiguity of the child in *Profondo rosso* is represented by way of the use of the point of view shot (POV) and the disruption of perception and subjectivity regarding the early process of the child's ego construction. The absence of the image of the child at the beginning of *Profondo rosso* reinforces the notion of the child-as-idea, a notion of disembodiment and sideways growth that challenges the boundaries between normality and pathology. Throughout my analysis of *Profondo rosso*, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the above-mentioned themes

and questions [McDonagh, 2010 (1991); Bondanella, 2001; Olney, 2013; Gundle, 2000; Siegel, 2010; Benshoff, 1997].

The opening moments of *Profondo rosso* emphasize the absence of the figure of the child by way of the use of color and the representation of crime and graphic narrative violence. Like Romero in *Dawn of the Dead*, Argento's interest in horror is demonstrated both in terms of film aesthetics and comparative media. The use of color, specifically the four color or CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) color model in films like *Profondo rosso* and *Suspiria* (1977), is indebted to the four color process (4CP) used in comic art between the 1940s and 70s. Reference to Argento's extreme or expressionist color palette supports the argument that the twentieth century mechanical processes that enabled comics to exist and thrive (and in certain cases prematurely fail) apply to the *giallo* format and Argento in particular.[164]

Argento's foray into comic book and photonovel publishing includes *Dario Argento presenta Profondo rosso*, a monthly publication starting in 1990 that, according to Maitland McDonagh, "features Argento himself in a series of bloody adventures, as well as other EC-style horror stories, Argento-related features, *fumetti* [the Italian word for little puffs of smoke or speech balloons], versions of Hammer horror films (including *The Mummy*, *Horror of Dracula*, *Curse of the Werewolf* and *The Gorgon*), and a wealth of in-jokes and references to Argento's films."[165] Regarding *Profondo rosso* in particualr, the intersection of the *giallo* format with crime and graphic narrative violence illuminates a heritage of horror that is deeply impacted by visual culture and pulp fiction.

Likewise, the lurid use of color disrupts the opening credits of *Profondo rosso* and accentuates a scene that is both theatrical and cinematic. The living room of *Profondo rosso*, a festive three-walled box set and two-dimensional shadow play, is reminiscent of the early

twentieth-century Grand Guignol and fantasy films of Georges Méliès, specifically the juxtaposition of sensational, highly choreographed murder and elaborately constructed décor.[166] By way of theatrical and cinematic perspective – color composition and depth of field in particular – Argento, Kuveiller, and Giuseppe Bassan (production designer) offset domestic violence with interior design. Kitchen knife (foreground), lace tablecloth and phonograph (midfield), wallpaper, lampshade, and shadow play (background) delineate a crime scene and fantasy film that is affected by four-color fear.

This is a point that is especially relevant to the POV of the child as a state of moral ambiguity. Shot at an extremely low angle, the opening scene of *Profondo rosso* emphasizes subjective point of view, one of horror cinema's most timeworn cues of interpretation.[167] By extension, the opening of *Profondo rosso* complicates the distinction between innocence and criminality via the use of screen space and the perspective of the child in relation to the killer's point of view. Who is watching the shadow play murder? Why is the knife dropped at the child's feet? Who is the killer and who is the victim? In the process of answering these questions it becomes apparent that *Profondo rosso* is not a classic horror film with monsters and mad scientists. Identifying the killer is a matter of detection, a mystery to be solved and a criminal to be apprehended rather than a monster to elicit screams.

The figure of the monstrous child in relation to the *giallo* format is ambiguous both in terms of morality and film genre.[168] In many cases what is referred to as horror is in fact criminal, for example the overlap of the horror and *giallo* film. According to Peter Bondanella, the Italian horror or spaghetti nightmare film "was primarily a low budget cinema aimed at commercial distribution and was decidedly low-brow. . . . The roots of the Italian horror film," Bondanella writes, "may be traced back to . . . works by horror pioneers Ricardo Freda (1909-99), Mario Bava (1914-80), and

Lucio Fulci (1927-1996)."[169] By comparison, Ian Olney maintains that the *giallo* film is a highly stylized, "violent and erotic type of murder mystery that flourished in Italy during the 1960s and 1970s."[170] Olney writes that "the plot of the *giallo* film typically revolves around the efforts of an amateur or professional detective to solve a chain of grisly, sexually charged murders committed in an urban setting by a faceless, black-gloved killer whose methods are elaborate, whose motives are ambiguous, and whose identity is always in question."[171]

Thus *Profondo rosso*, not unlike *The Night of the Hunter*, struggles against the category of the horror film via the cultural function of the figure of the child. For example, Giorgio Bertellini observes that *Profondo rosso* "only by apparent association can be described as belonging to the horror genre. Despite his collaborations with George A. Romero (*Dawn of the Dead*, 1978; *Two Evil Eyes*, 1991) and Lamberto Bava (*Demoni* (*Demons*, 1985) and *Demoni 2* (*Demons 2*, 1987)), Argento's oeuvre gestures more toward the category of terror, like Hitchcock."[172] Bertellini is correct to hypothesize that if the horror film is defined by the encounter with the monster "then Argento's films may not fit such category. At the center of most of his cinema, in fact, there are no monsters. Instead, one finds the visual and narrative motif of the murderer, which closely ties the killer with a professional or amateur investigator."[173] According to Bertellini, *Profondo rosso* represents the culmination of Argento's early *gialli* between 1970 and 1975 and the interrelated generic structures of horror and investigative fiction.[174]

More importantly, *Profondo rosso* is distinguished by the cultural function of the figure of the child and the concept of criminality. Rather than film genre, the opening of *Profondo rosso* is concerned with the child as a morally ambiguous figure. In one of the shortest appearances in this dissertation by far, the child at the opening of *Profondo rosso* represents the polarizing dichotomy of normality and pathology, or the process by which the concept of innocence develops in the

direction of, and ultimately coincides with, the concept of criminality. The absence of the image of the child at the beginning of *Profondo rosso* challenges the notion of childhood development and normality as a "vertical movement upward (hence, 'growing up') toward full stature, marriage, work, reproduction, and the loss of childishness."[175] Regarding Carlo Ricci, the figure of the child lodged within the opening credits of *Profondo rosso* is barely portrayed. Nevertheless, I propose that Carlo is a culturally and historically significant figure regarding the early *giallo* format.

The performance of boyhood and criminality in the Italian *giallo* is indicative of the Cold War Era, in particular the socially and politically turbulent period between 1968 and 1982 that is known in Italy as the Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*.[176] After the economic miracle or *il boom*, which lasted in Italy between between the end of the Second World War and late 1960s, the intersection of youth culture and cultural conflict, according to Stephen Gundle, was defined by "terrorism, economic crisis, political immobilism, ideological saturation, and cultural disorientation."[177] Marked by a wave of political terrorism carried out by both right- and left-wing paramilitary groups, the Years of Lead began with the shooting death of the policeman Antonio Annarumma and the Piazza Fontana bombing.[178] In his book, *Between Hollywood and Moscow: The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943-1991* (2000), Gundle writes that "for Italian public opinion the 1970s became a decade to forget, almost as soon as it was over."[179]

Admittedly the vision of Rome in *Profondo rosso* steers clear of the political movements or ideologies of the Years of Lead. Be that as it may, I agree with Michael Loren Siegel that "Argento's work is neither apolitical nor ahistorical, as much as it may seem to be so on the surface."[180] Siegel is right to point out that while Argento "resolutely avoided the images of protest and state authoritarianism . . . in what counts as 'political cinema,' [*Profondo rosso*] does raise a number of explicitly political questions precisely around the state of Italian life – especially Italian

urban life – on the heels of the modernization processes of the 'miracle.'"[181]

Siegel argues that Argento mobilizes the allusions and generic motifs of *Profondo rosso* "in the direction of a historically specific critique around both domestic and urban space."[182] Argento's version of Rome is defined by Siegel as artificial and displaced, in which the crime scenes of the film, coded as domestic more so than urban, interrogate the question of "the very nature of the home in Italian urban life" in contradistinction to "the new socio-spatial structures of modern and postmodern Italian, urban life."[183] According to Siegel, the prologue to *Profondo rosso* looks at the nature of the Italian home as a sentimental or nostalgic space that, from the point of view of the child, is abruptly transformed into a highly choreographed and elaborately constructed primal scene that is suffused with crime and graphic narrative violence.

On the one hand, Argento came of age during a time when Italian youth culture was defined by music and entertainment rather than political involvement.[184] Be that as it may, Argento's lack of interest in the sociopolitical climate of Rome in *Profondo roso* fails to obscure the importance of terrorism gripping the nation at the time. Regarding the Years of Lead, the concept of domectic bliss in *Profondo rosso* is terrorized by a history of violence that defines the figure of the child and the relationship between monstrosity and sexuality.[185]

In psychoanalytic terms, the figure of the child in the opening moments of *Profondo rosso* underscores the violent breakdown in the early process of the child's ego construction and gender identity. Frequently the traumatic event in the horror film occurs when the child enters into adulthood via puberty, resulting in the formation of the killer and the embodiment of indiscriminate or righteous vengeance.[186] Films like *Halloween*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* are indicative of the aforementioned trend. However the opening scene of *Profondo rosso*, filmed from the point of view of the child, is significant in that the primal scene employs subjective POV not to emphasize

the sadistic agency of the fe/male killer (or spectator or director), but to illustrate the child's traumatic experience in witnessing the act of murder. Similar to the opening of *Don't Look Now*, the representation of vulnerability at the beginning of *Profondo rosso* is indicative of the permeable demarcation between childhood and adulthood, as well as innocence and criminality. The opening of *Profondo rosso* is a shadow play that neglects the conventions of the horror film in order to complicate the distinction between the monstrous child and childish monster.[187]

Profondo rosso is not Argento's first *giallo* to explore the topic of childhood trauma and gender identity.[188] In point of fact, Argento's early *gialli* serve as a filmic roadmap leading to Carlo's traumatic childhood and the opening scene of *Profondo rosso*. In short, Carlo witnesses Marta murder his father, a shocking as well as formative experience, and as a result his innocence and sexuality are conflated with Marta's criminal insanity.[189] The juxtaposition of the patent leather shoe, knee-high stocking, and blood-soaked kitchen knife underscore a family drama that has spun wildly out of control. The innocent child in *Profondo rosso* is visible insofar as it is stands beside and is pulled into the orbit of the concept of criminality. The shadow play murder and the figure of the child act out the Freudian scenario by which the familial (*heimlich*) "develops in the direction of ambivalence, until finally it coincides with its opposite," namely, the uncanny (*unheimlich*).[190] Marta's criminality is imposed upon Carlo to the extent that her actions are projected onto her son as a cinematic fourth wall.

The temptation to criticize Argento for his chauvinist sentiments, however justified, risks neglecting the subtleties of the prologue to *Profondo rosso*. In particular, the lack of narrative coherence, a staple of the *giallo* format, hints at a number of concerns that I address throughout this dissertation. Regarding the figure of the child in relation to gender and sexuality especially, the ambiguity of the point of view shot emphasizes the fact that, as Chris Gallant points out, "we

are never presented with a figure to whom these subjective shots may be assigned, and we are often left uncertain as to whether what we are watching is the literal representation of a character's visual field."[191] By extension, the use of the POV shot at the beginning of *Profondo rosso* illuminates the ambiguity of the figure of the child and Argento's distinctly progressive views with regard to gender and sexuality.

For example, during his investigation Marcus visits grown-up Carlo's apartment and is greeted by Carlo's transgender partner Massimo Ricci (Geraldine Hooper). Marcus and Massimo are tolerant and supportive of Carlo, who fails to share their open-mindedness: "Good old Carlo, he's not only a drunk but a faggot as well."[192] For Carlo it is apparent that alcoholism and homosexuality are comparable insofar as they are deviant tendencies. As Harry Benshoff writes, "homosexuality is a monstrous tendency . . . often filtered through the iconography of the horror film."[193] Although his integrity is undeniable, Carlo's inability to distinguish between innocence and criminality is coded as a weakness that is biologically determined and linked to a sordid family history. Carlo's transition from childhood to adulthood is arrested between the norms of good and evil, a moral and developmental gray zone that is defined by anxiety and the imbrication of the normal and the pathological. Although Carlo is handsome and successful, the figure of the childish adult in *Profondo rosso* believes that he is hideous and disgusting. Unable to work through the death of the father and the figure of the monstrous-feminine, Carlo is trapped within the conflation of outward appearance and inward essence.

The figure of the child and how it pertains to gender, genre, and sexuality in *Profondo rosso* is arguably the most Italian dimension of Argento's work. According to Bertellini, "several of Argento's stylised crime stories rely heavily on female characters (either attractive or once-beautiful women) or men with an ambiguous gender identity. Their 'different' psychological and

emotional lives are narrativised as a source of danger and anxiety."[194] Argento's gender politics in *Profondo rosso* are not straightforwardly misogynist or rigidly polarized, so much as compatible with "a range of gender fluidities and repositionings, both at the level of characters' behavior and spectatorial address."[195] In *Profondo rosso*, as well as Argento's later movies, Bertellini argues that "homosexuals, lesbians and, for the first time in Italian cinema, transgender figures, proliferate."[196] The configuration of childhood regarding gender and sexuality in *Profondo rosso* works against norms of good and evil by showing that the monstrous child is a tragic, rather than malevolent, figure.

Like the opening of *Don't Look Now*, the prologue to *Profondo rosso* "is a textbook example of compression and encapsulation, giving the unwitting viewer virtually the whole ensuing film in a nutshell."[197] Regarding the representation of crime of graphic narrative violence, the oblique sights and sounds of childhood take precedence over the gratuitous display of gore that is frequently associated with the modern horror film. Similar to *Don't Look Now* and *The Innocents*, a children's lullaby sets the stage for murder in *Profondo rosso* and, like *The Night of the Hunter*, is used throughout the film as a leitmotif for the killer.

The inability to differentiate between the act of murder and the point of view of the child results in the anxiety that lodged within the concept of innocence is the concept of criminality. Regarding the perception of morality, the figure of the child in *Profondo rosso* is emblematic of the fact that innocence *depends* upon what it claims to dispossess or presuppose. The POV of the child in *Profondo rosso* is a state of impossibility – a camera angle that is coded as inhuman and otherworldly. In what follows, I argue that this is not only a distinctive feature of *Profondo rosso* and the *giallo* format, it is also a visual and narrative technique that is re-envisioned by the early and late American slasher film cycles, in particular *Halloween* and *Child's Play*.

Halloween (John Carpenter, 1978)

The emerging figure of boyhood in relation to the concept of criminality is a vital aspect of the opening sequence of *Halloween*. It is also a continuation and repetition of the prologue to *Profondo rosso*. For the reader who is unfamiliar, *Halloween* tells the story of Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis), a virginal babysitter living in the suburban town of Haddonfield, Illinois. Laurie's more promiscuous friends are murdered by the same man stalking Laurie with a kitchen knife. Curtis, the daughter of Janet Leigh of *Psycho* fame, teams up with Dr. Loomis (Donald Pleasance) in order to vanquish the killer, who is Loomis's former patient, Michael Meyers (credited as The Shape and played by Nick Castle; Michael age twenty-three is played by Tony Moran, and Michael age six is played by Will Sandin). Myers, a lumbering paranormal serial killer adorned in a workman's jumpsuit and William Shatner mask, is represented at the start of *Halloween* as a monstrous child who stalks and murders his sister Judith, played by Sandy Johnson.

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to the figure of the child(ish) monster and the concept of criminality include the question of gender and the braided identities of the killer and victim, the use of screen space and the perspective of the child in relation to the killer's point of view, and the historical significance of the image of boyhood and suburban prosperity in horror film and comic books during the Reagan Era and after World War II. In addition, I look at the figure of the child and the transition from *giallo* to slasher format by way of the imbrication of innocence and criminality and the anxiety that this paradox engenders.

Neither a homicidal maniac nor a defenseless target exclusively, the child(ish) monster in *Halloween*, not unlike Mark Lewis and Norman Bates in *Peeping Tom* and *Psycho*, represents the braided identities of killer and victim. As a result, Michael Meyers promotes an atmosphere of moral ambiguity that is anticipated by the figure of Bobby in "Tag . . . You're It" and the "just

deserts" motif in postwar American horror comics. The monstrous child in the opening sequence of *Halloween* illuminates the conceptual uncertainty of innocence and criminality at a time (1980-1989) when the dominant ideology of the Cold War Era sought to maintain a sentimental view of the nuclear family that was timeless and inviolable. Throughout my analysis of *Halloween*, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the above-mentioned themes and questions [Gracey, 2010; Neale, 1981; Lowenstein, 2011; Wood, 2003 (1986)].

The performance of boyhood and criminality in the early American slasher film, in a similar way to the Italian *giallo*, points to a broader intermedial history of criminality and juvenescence in popular culture. Accordingly, the figure of the boy in the horror film spanning from 1975 to 1978 indicates a perennial cinematic preoccupation with the convergence of normality and pathology. Beginning with the rise and fall of Cold War comic books and extending to the transition from the *giallo* to slasher format, the figures of the monstrous child and childish monster provide a scathing critique of the nuclear family and the trappings of happy domesticity. Not unlike the historical conditions of Italy's Years of Lead in *Profondo rosso*, the American suburb in *Halloween* is a site of economic and sociopolitical crisis. In *Halloween* in particular, the monstrous child rebels against the command to "paper the cracks" of cultural anxieties during the Reagan Era (1980-1989).

According to James Gracey, Argento's films have had an overwhelming influence on the modern horror film, in particular American slasher movies. "John Carpenter found much inspiration," Gracey writes, "in the likes of *Deep Red* . . . and craftily paid homage to Argento with *Halloween* (1978), a film considered to be *the* seminal slasher film."[198] For example, Gracey emphasizes that Argento's use of widescreen in *Profondo rosso* repeatedly suggests that a killer is hidden beyond the boundaries of the camera's field of vision. Waiting in ambush for a suitable

victim, the depiction of the killer's outlook is implied, rather than exposed, promoting feelings of pleasurable fascination, excitement, and anxiety in the viewer. Carpenter by way of Argento, Gracey argues, is fascinated by "the idea of a woman alone in her house with a killer moving into the frame behind her."[199]

However, by focusing on the gender dynamics of the killer and victim, coded as male and female, respectively, Gracey overlooks the deeper problem of the use of screen space and the performance of boyhood in the opening moments of *Halloween* and *Profondo rosso*. Regarding the prologue to *Profondo rosso* and the gender ambiguity of the figure of the child, the use of the point of view shot frames the killer in silhouette, rather than as a medium for scopophilic pleasure. Likewise, the opening sequence of *Halloween* has far more to say about the perspective of the child than the sexually explicit death of Michael Meyer's sister Judith. Gracey is only partially correct when he claims that "Argento's groundbreaking camerawork . . . inspired Carpenter in the creepy opening shots of *Halloween*, where we witness proceedings from the killer's point of view."[200] While both *Halloween* and *Profondo rosso* feature "a killer brandishing a kitchen knife . . . and all the particular implement's associations with domesticity and familial trimmings," it is the connection between of figure of the boy and concept of criminality that is of greater significance.[201]

In terms of gender and the use of screen space, the opening sequence of *Halloween* deploys an idealized vision of suburban childhood gone horribly awry. In his essay, "*Halloween*: Suspense, Aggression, and the Look" (1981), Steve Neale maintains that "Judith's killing is shown in a single shot, marked, in retrospect, as having been taken from Michael's point of view."[202] Depending upon Michael's proximity to the Meyers house, the camera, Neale remarks, travels both indoors and out, "peering through the window as Judith and her boyfriend go upstairs to her bedroom for

sex, then . . . round to the side entrance and into the kitchen to pick up a Halloween mask and a knife from the kitchen drawer."[203] After Judith's boyfriend leaves through the front door, the camera goes upstairs and into Michael's sister's bedroom, where Judith is stabbed to death, then downstairs and out the front door, where Michael is confronted by his parents. The sequence ends, according to Neale, with "a reverse cut to a crane as the camera swoops back to show Michael, six years old, dressed in a Harlequin garb and clutching the knife in his hand."[204]

Although I agree with Neale up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that the articulation of suspense, aggression, and violence in the opening sequence of *Halloween* is communicated mainly through the "unstable combination of looks involved in the construction of the shot."[205] Neale's claim that "tension and suspense arise as a conjunction of a number of different mechanisms and processes," specifically the connection between the look of the camera, the spectator, and an unknown assailant, rests upon the questionable assumption that the figures of the psychopathic adult and virtuous child epitomize the criminal and innocent, respectively.[206] According to Neale, the audience would never imagine that the killer is a six-year-old and not a grown-up man intent upon killing and punishing "a woman who asserted a sexual appetite."[207] On the contrary, the ambiguous distinction between the figures of the child and adult, rather than the shock effect of their difference, points to the imbrication of the concepts of innocence and criminality. As a result, the child works against norms of good and evil by complicating the figure of the killer and monster as simply evil and unsympathetic.[208]

The shock value of *Halloween*, although indebted to the U.S. cultural imaginary of the 1950s, marks a shift away from the aesthetic and narrative conventions of genre film and media at that time. Movies like *The Thing from Another World* and *Forbidden Planet* (Fred M. Wilcox, 1956) flicker upon the television while Laurie babysits Tommy Doyle (Brian Andrews) and

Lindsey Wallace (Kyle Richards), but the monster that has invaded Haddonfield is of a different order entirely.[209] As I point out in chapter 1, the horror film during the early to mid-twentieth-century sought to externalize the horrors of the Great Depression and World War II by favoring the aesthetic and textual continuities of gothic horror and science fiction. After 1978, "the common impression of a horror film for a younger generation most likely meant the gory slaughter of contemporary American teenagers by a deranged serial killer in everyday surroundings." According to Rick Worland, "the movie that crystallized these shifts was John Carpenter's *Halloween*."[210]

Taking the same line of argument further, it would be a mistake to assume that the structuring antinomy of innocence and criminality is constitutive of the relationship between the victim and killer in *Halloween*, specifically in terms of gender norms and the cultural function of the figure of the boy. Rather than distinguish between the female victim and male killer via the opposition between innocence and criminality, I propose an alternative. Instead, I argue that the use of screen space and the perspective of the child in relation to the killer's point of view in *Halloween* underscores a more complicated and productive approach to the question of gender and the braided identities of killer and victim in the early slasher film.[211] Worland's distinction between the American horror film before and after 1978 is improved upon by addressing the cultural and historical context in America leading up to the Reagan Era. This is especially true regarding the connection between the figure of the monstrous male child and the female victim hero or Final Girl.

For example, in his essay, "A Reintroduction to the American Horror Film" (2011), Adam Lowenstein complicates Neale's interpretation of *Halloween* when he argues that the female victim hero and male killer are not opposing figures, "but two halves of a whole."[212] Lowenstein,

expanding upon Carol Clover's notion of the Final Girl in her essay "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film" (1987) and her subsequent book *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (1992), points out that the killer's point of view in *Halloween* "is part of a constitutive mirroring of the Final Girl's point of view, not its opposite."[213] Lowenstein describes Michael Meyers as more closely resembling the children Laurie babysits than an adult. The acts of criminality perpetrated by Michael in *Halloween*, beginning with the murder of his sister Judith, are not, as Neale argues, punishment dispensed to women who assert "a sexual appetite" and violate the norms of bourgeois society by engaging in premarital sex.[214] Rather, Lowenstein argues that Michael's behavior both as a monstrous child and childish monster point to "fantasies of domination and revenge directed toward parents by the child of divorce."[215]

Embracing the cultural and historical context that scholars like Neale, Worland, and Clover discount, Lowenstein focuses on the rising divorce rate in America between 1960 and 1980. Citing the work of John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, Lowenstein writes that divorce in America "'jumped ninety percent,' meaning that during those years, 'the number of divorced men and women rose by almost two hundred percent."[216] As a result, Lowenstein concludes that Judith Meyers, as well as the other victims of *Halloween*, "fill spaces left vacant by their proper residents: parents."[217] According to Lowenstein, "absent or impotent parents in the slasher film are nearly as ubiquitous as masks, knives, and screams. The image of Michael's parents in *Halloween*'s opening sequence crystallizes the typical parental presence in the slasher film: oblivious, away when they're needed, returning too late, saying nothing, paralyzed."[218]

The absence and impotence of parents in the slasher film plays an important role in the opening sequence of *Halloween*, in addition to *Profondo rosso* and *Child's Play*. Not unlike the films in chapter 1, the figure of the child in the early American slasher film points to the emotional

resonance of early parent-child attachment and relations, in addition to the more conventional Freudian psychoanalytic construction of masculinity as phallic preoccupation and castration fears.[219] Lowenstein's interpretation of the relationship between the female victim hero and male killer in *Halloween* emphasizes the crisis of the nuclear family and the braided identities of Laurie Strode and Michael Meyers. Moreover, Lowenstein's analysis of *Halloween* draws attention to scholars like Gracey and Neale and the tendency to overemphasize the psychosexual tension that exists between the figures of the female victim and male killer as separate, rather than related, personalities. The question of sexual motivation when the murderer is a boy of six disregards the cultural function of the figure of the child in relation to the concept of criminality in the early slasher film cycle.[220]

In hindsight, the box-office success of *Halloween* contributed to the lasting popularity of the early and late slasher film cycles, including the *Friday the 13th*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and *Child's Play* series.[221] *Halloween*'s contribution to the modern horror film is also linked to the fear that the American suburb was threatened during the Reagan Era by the remodeling of the nuclear family and the rising divorce rate in particular. As Jason Zinoman points out, *Halloween* takes place in "a decidedly normal, safe environment, an idyllic middle-class suburb that looks less like the 1970s than an idealized vision of the 1950s."[222] Similar to Bobby's hometown in "Tag . . . You're It," the evocation of a more innocent decade in *Halloween* serves as a backdrop for the criminal activities of the monstrous child and childish monster. The idea of danger in *Halloween* is projected upon the well-manicured lawns and suburban communities represented in the movies, comic books, and television programs of Carpenter's youth.[223]

The performance of boyhood and criminality in relation to the dominant ideology of postwar American prosperity is vital to *Halloween* and the early slasher film cycle. Regarding the

link between the monstrous child and childish monster in particular, Robin Wood's distinction between the child*like* and child*ish*, a point that I address in chapter 1, is especially helpful. In his book, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* (2003 [1986]), Wood examines the connection between films like *E.T. The Extraterrestrial* (Steven Spielberg, 1982), the *Star Wars* series, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg, 1981), and *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (Nicholas Meyer, 1982) by using the figure of the child as a concept that functions to "paper the cracks" of cultural anxieties during the Reagan Era, including: nuclear warfare, evil-non-Americans, the liberated woman, and the fear that democratic capitalism may not be cleanly separable from Fascism.[224]

According to Wood, the success of the above-mentioned films "is only comprehensible when one assumes a widespread *desire* for regression to infantilism, or a populace who wants to be constructed as mock children."[225] Wood argues that the films of the Reagan Era are distinguished by "the urge to evade responsibility – responsibility for actions, decisions, thought, responsibility for changing things" via the sentimental figure of the child as one who does "not have to be responsible, there are older people to look after them."[226] Indeed, Wood's interpretation of the modern horror film and *Halloween* illuminates the conceptual uncertainty of innocence and criminality at a time (1980-1989) when the dominant ideology of the Cold War Era sought to maintain a sentimental view of the nuclear family that was timeless and inviolable.

Wood, more so than any scholar that I refer to, is responsible for taking up the question of the cultural function of the figure of the child in horror cinema and media. In his essay, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film" (1979), Wood aligns the child with the figure of the monster as "the true subject of the horror genre."[227] According to Wood, the monster represents "the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization *re*presses or *op*presses: its re-emergence dramatized, as in our nightmares, as an object of horror, a matter of terror."[228] In terms of

repression as a cultural condition of the Reagan Era, Wood argues that "the repression of the sexuality of children . . . from the denial of the infant's nature as sexual being to the veto on the expression of sexuality before marriage" is germane to the figure of the child(ish) monster in *Halloween*, in addition to the sexually promiscuous teenager who is sentenced to death by a society that is concerned with upholding the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism.

By reducing the murder of Judith Meyers to a reactionary disavowal of teenage promiscuity, the cultural and historical specificity of the figure of the child is lost within the dominant ideology and gendered norms of good and evil. Instead, I propose that we look at the braided identities of the monstrous child and childish monster, especially with regard to Lowenstein's argument that the female victim hero and male killer are not opposing figures, "but two halves of a whole."[229] In doing so, it is evident that the victim in *Halloween* is not the virtuous or promiscuous teenage girl, as the case may be, but the child who is made monstrous by the repression of sexuality.

Michael's curiosity regarding Judith's "sexual appetite," not unlike his interest in Laurie's "virginal inhibition," points to the child who is monstrous as a result of the dominant ideology of the Reagan Era and the nostalgia for a mythical age of contentment and social order. Hence of the question of the figure of the monstrous child in *Halloween* gives new meaning to Wood's argument that "the 'otherness' of children . . . is that which is repressed within ourselves, its expression therefore hated in others: what the previous generation repressed in us, and what we, in turn, repress in our children, seeking to mould them into replica of ourselves, perpetuators of a discredited tradition."[230] Rather than the slogan "Morning in America," or "Make America Great Again," as the case may be, the monstrous child as peeping Tom in *Halloween* is in fact a sympathetic character in search of the creature comforts of hearth and home. Alas, the American

Dream for Michael Meyers is a sordid tradition that has been passed down from the postwar to Reagan years.

If only the remainder of the *Halloween* franchise lived up to the promise of its opening sequence. For Wood, Carpenter's film is "a resourceful amalgam of *Psycho*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *The Exorcist* and *Black Christmas*," despite the fact that the film's formal and stylistic creativity masks "its lack of real *thinking* about the ideological consequences . . . of the monster."[231] Placing *Halloween* somewhere between the progressive and the reactionary wings, Wood is especially intrigued by the opening sequence of the film. "The opening is quite stunning," Wood writes, "both in its virtuosity and its resonances. The long killer's-point-of-view tracking-shot with which the film begins," coupled with the revelation that the murderer is a bewildered yet monstrous six-year-old, "are the implications for the definitive family horror."[232] Indeed, the ambiguous distinction between the figures of the child (innocence) and adult (criminality), rather than the shock effect of their difference, is one of the most horrifying aspects of *Halloween*.

Unfortunately, Wood observes, "not only are those implications not realized in the succeeding film [*Halloween II* (Rick Rosenthal, 1981)], their trace is obscured and all but obliterated."[233] Rather than focus upon the intersection of the figure of the male child and the concept of criminality, Wood complains that "the film identifies the killer with the 'Bogeyman', as the embodiment of an eternal and unchanging evil which, by definition, can't be understood; and with the Devil . . . by none other than his own psychoanalyst (Donald Pleasance) – surely the most extreme instance of Hollywood's perversion of psychoanalysis into an instrument of repression."[234] Unlike the progressive horror films that Carpenter is so careful to reference, Wood protests that the opening sequence of *Halloween* imagines a world that is sadly eclipsed by the

dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism. Ultimately, the monstrous child is simply evil and unsympathetic.

Correspondingly, the push-pull dynamic of innocence and criminality in the opening sequence of *Halloween* briefly calls into question the norms of good and evil as a framework for gender, genre, and the figure of the child, in addition to a political climate of conservatism and paranoia generally associated with a broader cultural Puritanism. The representation of boyhood and criminality as a twisted game of violence and domination is a predominant motif in the opening moments of *Halloween*, as well as *Profondo rosso* and *Child's Play*. The monstrous child in the opening sequence of *Halloween*, like the return of Christine Baxter in *Don't Look Now*, is a figure that, "most intolerably, is . . . *one who will replace*" Oates' Master of the castle, or the dominant ideology of bourgeois patriarchal norms including monogamy, heterosexuality, and the nuclear family.[235] By the same token, the monstrous child at the start of *Halloween* exists within and rebels against an idealized vision of America after World War II. Carpenter, if only for a moment, turns to a locale that is animated by a puritanical moral code: the well-manicured lawns imagined in the media of his youth. Interestingly, it is the Cold War horror comic book that illustrates the sociopolitical import of the image of boyhood and the early American slasher film cycle.[236]

For instance, narrative devices like the "just deserts" motif are critical to the postwar horror comic and, by extension, the opening sequence and closing moments of *Halloween*. According to Carpenter in *Tales from the Crypt: From Comic Books to Television*, the "just deserts" motif in EC comics was a trope in which the criminal, at the end of the story, received their comeuppance; ironically, in the same way they delivered it to others. In "Taint the Meat . . . It's the Humanity!" (*Tales from the Crypt* #32, Oct.-Nov. 1952, artwork by Jack Davis), a mild-mannered butcher tries to boost profits by selling spoiled meat to his unsuspecting customers. After his plot is discovered,

the butcher attempts to skip town, only to find that he has accidentally poisoned and killed his son with tainted meat, a crime that drives the butcher's wife into a murderous rage. Picking up a kitchen knife, she stabs her husband to death. The final panel of the comic pictures the butcher's wife standing behind a cooler filled with the body parts of her recently deceased husband, absentmindedly chanting "tainted meat?"

"In EC Comics and in much of horror," Carpenter notes, "there is a code that allows the bad guy, or the evil force or whatever it is, to be if not vanquished at least put at bay at the end so we [the audience] can walk out safely."[237] The "just deserts" motif is employed and recontextualized in *Halloween* when the ostensibly vanquished Michael Meyers, repeatedly shot and stabbed by Dr. Loomis and Laurie, falls from a second story window only to escape into the night unharmed. The tenacity of the bogeyman archetype as a non-specific embodiment of terror is reinforced in the closing moments of the film through a series of subjective POV shots, accompanied by the atmospheric sound of breathing and the main theme of Carpenter's musical score. At the end of *Halloween*, the killer and the camera return to the scenes of the crime; the criminal's comeuppance is replaced by the killer's nostalgic homecoming and the promise of further mayhem.[238] Arguably, Michael's homecoming at the close of *Halloween* reinforces the braided identities of the childish monster and monstrous child. Looking back upon the scenes of the crime, as well as the town in which he was born and raised, Michael is a monster that is worthy of our sympathy.

Conversely, Michael Meyers, especially at the beginning and end of *Halloween*, is a child(ish) monster worthy of the vilification of men like Ronald Reagan. The framing narrative of *Halloween* is not a matter of virtuoso filmmaking centered upon the shock effect of the killer's identity. Rather, it is a fleeting glimpse of the intersection of postwar horror comics and the early

American slasher film cycle. *Halloween* points to a broader intermedial history of criminality and juvenescence in the United States, as well as the early slasher film cycle. The cultural function of the figure of the monstrous child underscores the connection between the *giallo* film (*Profondo rosso*) and late slasher film cycle (*Child's Play*) in terms of the intersectionality, rather than structuring antinomy, of boyhood innocence and criminality.

Child's Play (Tom Holland, 1988)

In the opening scene of *Child's Play* (Tom Holland, 1988), voodoo serial killer Charles "Chucky" Lee Ray (Brad Dourif) dashes through the wintertime streets of Chicago. Abandoned by his getaway driver Eddie Caputo (Neil Giuntoli), Ray, also known as the Lakeshore Strangler, enters a children's toy store after being shot by Detective Mike Norris (Chris Sarandon). Mortally wounded, Ray transfers his soul into the body of a Good Guy doll, a red haired, freckled, proportionally child-sized companion dressed in overalls and sneakers. Lightning strikes through a skylight as the dying criminal recites an incantation. The toy store is engulfed in flames. In the following shot, Norris stands over the lifeless body of Ray. Lying next to Chucky is the Good Guy doll he has possessed. Firelight casts an ominous shadow over the doll's smiling and seemingly vacant face.

According to Kim Newman, *Child's Play* is "an effective, slick variant of the boy who cried wolf theme," the story of six-year-old Andy Barclay (Alex Vincent) who fails to "convince adults that his doll Chucky is possessed by a voodoo serial killer who wants to migrate to his body."[239] In the opening scene of the film, Ray, whose name is derived from noted criminals Charles Manson, Lee Harvey Oswald, and James Earl Ray, transmits himself, or rather the vital force of the criminal man, into a Good Guy doll in order to elude the police. Having outmaneuvered

the slightly bovine Detective Norris, Chucky's smug complacency is quickly replaced by an overpowering appetite for vengeance and a return to human form. After murdering Eddie Caputo, Chucky discovers that the only way to escape from the Good Guy doll he has occupied is to possess the first person he revealed his true identity to, which is Andy.

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to the childish monster and the concept of criminality include the false dichotomy between the supernatural and progressive horror film, the figure of the doll as a juvenescent form of criminality, and the intersection of voodoo economics and sociopolitical inequality. In addition, I analyze the relationship between the figure of the innocent or priceless child and childish monster in terms of moral ambiguity, consumer culture, and the single-parent household. I also examine the figure of the childish monster in relation to bourgeois patriarchal norms associated with Karen Barclay (Catherine Hicks) and her son Andy. Ultimately, the cultural function of the figures of the innocent child and All-American Mom in *Child's Play* work with, rather than against, norms of good and evil by extolling the triumph of the priceless child over its archrival, the childish monster as manifestation of the cultural logic of late capitalism.

This raises a point that is fundamental to *Child's Play*. Specifically, I interrogate the figure of the doll and its location within the "degraded landscape" of the horror film and the cultural logic of late capitalism. As Chucky and Andy make their way through the streets of Chicago, the criminal and the child function as signposts, guiding the viewer toward a series of clues that illuminate the social, political, and economic conditions of urban America in the 1980s. Coming of age in the Windy City during the presidency of Ronald Reagan (1981-1989), the child is subjected to a range of anxieties linked to consumer culture and financial crisis, including voodoo economics, Hoovervilles and homelessness, and the metropolis as a "third world" city.

By extension, the crisis of the nuclear family and the single-parent household in *Child's Play* is represented via the childish monster's collaboration with, and ultimate failure to possess or master, the figure of the priceless child. Ironically, Chucky's failure to return to human form shares much in common with Miss Giddens's failure to exorcise the ghosts of Bly House, in that the spirit world and the blending of presence and absence transform the governess and child's plaything into figures that prey upon the children they are responsible to protect and entertain. In *Child's Play*, the concept of criminality and the childish monster intersects with the concept of innocence and the priceless child in terms of the audio-visual portrayal of the monstrous doll by way of the voice of Brad Dourif. After my preliminary analysis of the film, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the above-mentioned themes and questions [Wood, 1979; Tudor, 1989; Jameson, 1991; Berlant, 1997; Williams, 1976].

Compared to movies like *Profondo rosso* and *Halloween*, which are commonly identified as exemplary of the Italian *giallo* format and early slasher film cycle, *Child's Play* is widely dismissed as a derivative and inferior product, a painful reminder of a bygone era of progressive horror (1975-1982) replaced by the cultural logic of late capitalism.[240] Unlike its more esteemed predecessors, and the discursive framework that has legitimized their artistic and sociopolitical value, *Child's Play* is a footnote.[241] Wheeler Winston Dixon writes that *Child's Play* is one of the last major horror franchises of the 1980s and "pales in comparison to Holland's far superior *Fright Night*" (1985), also starring Chris Sarandon as the vampire Jerry Dandrige.[242]

Dixon's dismissal of *Child's Play* is redolent of a well-established trend in horror criticism beginning with Robin Wood's valorization of the progressive horror film, specifically *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.[243] Robin Wood's distinction between the progressive and reactionary horror film of the 1970s and 80s is a case in point. According to Wood, the progressive horror film is

imbued with a sense of social and political activism, specifically the fight against patriarchal capitalism. Wood references Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* (1972), Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), and Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) as examples of this trend. Horror in the 80s, on the other hand, reinforces the dominant ideology, representing the monster as simply evil and unsympathetic, depicting Christianity as a positive presence, and confusing the repression of sexuality with sexuality itself. Examples include Craven's *Swamp Thing* (1982), Hooper's *Poltergeist* (1982), and Romero's *Creepshow* (1982).[244]

In addition to Wood, Carol Clover's analyses of gender in the slasher and modern horror film contributed to a new wave of feminist studies and a renewed political and historical engagement with the horror film that included the work of a number of like-minded scholars [Freeland, 2000; Williams, 1983; Creed, 1993; Sobchack, 1987]. Afterward, Barry Keith Grant and Christopher Sharret repeatedly anthologized both Wood and Clover, further solidifying the now standard view that privileges the progressive horror film over its reactionary counterpart [Grant and Sharrett, 2004 (1984); Grant, 2015 (1996)]. Having said that, I argue that the above-mentioned distinction between the progressive and reactionary horror film is incomplete, specifically regarding the notion that the supernatural is a hindrance or obstruction to social and political activism. Though I concede that *Child's Play* is a less-than-stellar mid-budget hit for United Artists, I still insist that it is a frequently overlooked exemplar of the horror film and, more specifically, the relationship between the figure of the child and the concept of criminality in the late slasher film cycle.

Regarding Dixon's dismissal of *Child's Play* in particular, I propose that the condemnation of the late slasher film is grounded in the assertion that supernatural horror is devoid of political awareness. For example, Wood observes that horror in the 80s is defined by the monster as simply

evil and unsympathetic; it is a creature that fails to embody the political force intrinsic to the theory of repression. "All monsters are by definition destructive," writes Wood, "but their destructiveness is capable of being variously explained, excused and justified. To identify what is repressed with 'evil incarnate' (a metaphysical, rather than a social, definition) is automatically to suggest that there is nothing to be done but strive to *keep* it repressed."[245]

For Wood, the gesture toward a political categorization of horror movies is typically embodied by the monster as a human psychotic or schizophrenic struggling for recognition within the single unifying master-figure of the family.[246] Likewise, Peter Hutchings and Andrew Tudor discriminate between the early and late slasher film cycles based upon the viewpoint that the quality of horror is closely associated with the movement from the otherworldly (vampires) to everyday (psychotics).[247] "Supernatural movies simply rework old traditions," Tudor writes, "ranging from voodoo to feline metamorphosis, and from possessive spirits to . . . a vengeance-seeking ghostly tree-stump!"[248]

In fairness, Tudor's interpretation of the supernatural horror movie in his book *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (1989) is a cornerstone of horror studies. Regarding the above-mentioned quotation, it is not my intention to discredit Tudor's understanding of the late slasher film cycle – or for that matter any of the scholarship that I cite in this dissertation – but rather to illuminate the political awareness of the supernature-based horror movie and the cultural function of the figure of the childish monster in *Child's Play*. Moreover, some readers may object that a supernatural being is neither historically specific nor a legitimate social and cultural form. Aren't supernatural monsters little more than the embodiment of the metaphysical category of evil? The answer to that question (no), together with the explanation of why that answer is so compelling (the difference between the *elsewhen* of Dracula and the modern

urban location of *Child's Play*) is provided by Andrew Tudor. The dichotomy between the supernatural and progressive horror film is a creative tension, rather than a qualitative distinction, that centers upon the figure of the childish monster in *Child's Play*.

It is precisely the fictitious *elsewhen* of the classic vampire narrative (Transylvania) that Tudor refers to when he argues that "the horror movie of the eighties, with its relentless physicality and its everyday settings, seems far removed from the niceties of the 1931 *Dracula*."[249] In contrast, Charles Lee Ray's transformation into Chucky is a pivotal example of what Tudor regards as the "penetration of the everyday world by malevolent supernature."[250] Unlike the classic vampire, which, according to Tudor, is a figment "of peasant superstition or mid-European folk memory," Chucky is a monster that has "become part of our everyday environment, no longer safely insulated in mythic history."[251] It is the connection, rather than the false dichotomy, between the supernatural and the political that is exposed when Chucky returns to Chicago as a child's plaything. More important than the victims that he stalks and slashes, Chucky's métier is defined by the intersection of the doll as a juvenescent form of criminality with voodoo economics and the single-parent household.

Consider, for example, the purchase of Chucky by Andy's mother Karen Barclay. Karen, a beleaguered department store employee and divorcee, has already failed to deliver on her promise to buy Andy a Good Guy doll for his birthday. As luck would have it, Karen's friend and coworker Maggie Peterson (Dinah Manoff) informs her that a vagrant (Juan Ramírez) is prepared to sell a pirated Good Guy for a discount. Karen and Maggie rush outside to a littered alleyway behind the store, hoping to seal the deal. As a demonstration of foreshadowing, the peddler is a grotesque individual: soiled cap, yellowed scarf, tattered overcoat, graying fingerless gloves, and foul language imply both threat and disgust – the primary characteristics, according to Noël Carroll, of

monstrosity and horror.[252] After completing his transaction with Karen the beggar sneers, "May it bring you and your kid a lot of joy." Ever the informed consumer, Maggie retorts, "How do we know the damn thing isn't stolen?" to which the vagrant, pulling back his overcoat and thrusting out his crotch, replies, "Steal this!"

Thus the concept of criminality and the figure of the childish monster enter through the back door of consumer culture and the single-parent household. The back alley sale of Chucky operates beyond the proscribed consumer venue of the department store. Furthermore, the figure of the doll as a juvenescent form of criminality, by association with its vendor, emerges as a type of delinquent that is, according to Daniele Velo Dalbrante, "*naturally* inclined to crime, due to a biophysic anomaly."[253] The body of the criminal, as well as the terrain in which he is bought and sold, is imagined as a marketplace of degradation, or what Fredric Jameson regards as "the forms, categories, and contents of commercial culture."[254] Chucky is a manifestation of the cultural logic of late capitalism, a "degraded" figure situated within a "landscape of schlock and kitsch" that is symptomatic of "the grade-B Hollywood film, . . . the murder mystery, and the science fiction or fantasy novel."[255]

Likewise, Karen's investigation of Chucky's true identity leads her outside of the norms of bourgeois society into a criminal underworld populated by the homeless and disenfranchised. Convinced that Andy's doll is a menace to society, Karen stumbles upon the degraded landscape of a South Chicago shantytown. Homeless men and women warm their hands over burn barrels and seek shelter inside of makeshift homes. Evocative of the Hoovervilles and homeless encampments strewn across the United States during the Great Depression, the socioeconomic conditions of Chicago during the late 1980s and early 30s hold the clue to Chucky's true identity.[256] Similar to *The Night of the Hunter*, Karen's foray into the degraded landscape of a South Chicago

shantytown is linked to the allegorical significance of the Great Depression and the right-wing economic and cultural agendas of the Reagan Revolution and voodoo economics in particular. As a result, Chucky's voodoo powers are connected with the scarcity of housing and unemployment, thereby providing a deeper awareness of the correlation between consumer culture and social inequality.

By the early 1980s the United States economy was in the midst of a deep recession, experiencing the worst unemployment rates since the Great Depression. The subsequent economic policies promoted by Ronald Reagan, known as "Reaganomics," included four pillars: reduce government spending, reduce income and capital gains marginal tax rates, reduce government regulation, and control the money supply to reduce inflation.[257] According to Paul Krugman, George H.W. Bush, "during his failed bid for the 1980 Republican presidential nomination," derided Reaganomics as "voodoo economic policy," criticizing "Reagan's 'supply-side' doctrine" reforms, specifically "the claim that cutting taxes on high incomes would lead to spectacular economic growth, so that tax cuts would pay for themselves."[258]

This is a point that is vital to *Child's Play*, in particular the financial and commercial impact of the 1980s and its representation in horror cinema and media. Looking back at James Twitchell's assessment of the downsizing of the monster product, the gasoline crisis of 1979 and the waning of the U.S. auto industry takes on new meaning when applied to *Child's Play* and the performance of the childish monster and criminality. In her book, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (1997), Lauren Berlant also critiques the right-wing economic and cultural agendas of the Reagan Revolution. According to Berlant, the triumph of the Reaganite view is that "the intimacy of citizenship is something scarce and sacred, private and proper, and only for members of families."[259]

In *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*, Berlant writes that "the intimate public sphere" and the rise of the Reaganite right is "a familial politics of the national future," a movement that "came to define the urgencies of the present."[260] "Now everywhere in the United States," Berlant writes, "intimate things flash in people's faces: pornography, abortion, sexuality, and reproduction; marriage, personal morality, and family values."[261] Berlant points out that "these issues do not arise as private concerns: they are key debates about what 'America' stands for, and are deemed vital to defining how citizens should act. In the process of collapsing the political and the personal into a world of public intimacy, a nation made for adult citizens has been replaced by one imagined for fetuses and children."[262]

Rather than a common public culture – a public sphere in which ordinary citizens hold sway over the state – Berlant argues that the Reaganite view and conservative ideology "has convinced a citizenry that the core context of politics should be the sphere of private life. In so doing, it develops a different story about what has happened to citizenship in both the law and daily life during the last few decades. The privatization of citizenship has involved manipulating an intricate set of relations between economic, racial, and sexual processes."[263] The consequence of the Reaganite cultural revolution, according to Berlant, "involves the way intimacy rhetoric has been employed to manage the economic crisis that separates the wealthy few from everyone else in the contemporary United States. By defining the United States as a place where normal intimacy is considered the foundation of the citizen's happiness, the right has attempted to control the ways questions of economic survival are seen as matters of citizenship."[264]

Applying Berlant to *Child's Play*, upward mobility and the American Dream for Charles "Chucky" Lee Ray is a matter of inserting himself as a childish monster within the economic order of consumer culture. Chucky's survival depends upon his ability to pose as a consumable object –

to translate criminality into a child's plaything. Ultimately Ray accomplishes this act of translation through the intimate public sphere and family values, in particular Karen's back alley purchase of Chucky. Not unlike Ben Harper's act of desperation in *The Night of the Hunter*, the beleaguered parent's attempt to provide for their family in a time of economic austerity and social and moral decay results in the figure of the adult being punished for their act of sacrifice. Although Karen does not steal $10,000, she decides to break the law in order to provide for Andy. Yet the connotations of Karen's black market dealings differ from Ben Harper's bank robbery in that Karen's punishment at the hands of Chucky is coded as a retaliation and perpetuation of the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism. Hence the question of economic survival in *Child's Play*, unlike *The Night of the Hunter*, is seen as a matter of Karen's failure to live up to the role of the ideal citizen. In contrast, Ben Harper's failure to stand by his family is overshadowed and, in a sense, forgiven by the transgressions of Harry Powell. Ultimately, the introduction of Chucky into the Barclay household in *Child's Play* is viewed as a lesson to the single mother regarding the rules of proper versus non-legal consumption.[265]

The cultural function of the figure of the childish monster is also prominently displayed when Karen visits the home of Chucky's African-American voodoo mentor John Aelsop Bishop, also known as Dr. Death (Raymond Oliver). Like the homeless camp, Karen is horrified by the squalor and depravity that she uncovers. More like a black magic altar than a place of residence, Bishop's apartment is littered with disfigured mannequins and graffiti depicting various acts of blood sacrifice. Comparable to the working-class terraced house in *Village of the Damned*, the tenement building that Dr. Death lives in, juxtaposed with Karen and Andy's and Gordon and Anthea Zellaby's more luxurious accommodations, underscores the intersection of racial and economic inequality with the moral panic concept and ritual satanic abuse.

The city of Chicago portrayed in *Child's Play* is a wealthy white domain invaded by a "third world" of poverty-stricken and nonwhite criminals. Not unlike *Village of the Damned*, the familiar American locale in *Child's Play* consciously channels the anxiety of alien incursion and the paranoid narrative of apocalypse, in which the norms and cherished beliefs of the nuclear family are declared null and void. To put it bluntly, Dr. Death's voodoo tenement building signifies the death of the America Dream at the hands of a lower class of freaks and deviants. Correspondingly, the decline of industrial Chicago in *Child's Play* points to similar fears affecting Hollywood and the Los Angeles metropolitan area during the late 1980s and early 90s and the tail end of the Reagan Era. Similar to *The Night of the Hunter*, the sociopolitical crises of the Great Depression and the Cold War are imagined from a perspective that is distinctly metropolitan, rather than rural or working class.[266]

The figure of the childish monster in relation to Dr. Death and the "third world" city of *Child's Play* is a vital example of what Héctor Tobar considers "a metropolis of the 'developing world,'" defined by the spread of inequality and the struggle for civil rights. The degraded landscape of the Hooverville and satanic voodoo altar in *Child's Play* is not a sign of moral and economic decline, but of a politically aware and motivated population struggling to give voice to the urgency and virtue of social security and cultural diversity.[267] Regarding the intersection of voodoo economics and sociopolitical inequality, it is possible to observe how the figure of the childish monster in *Child's Play* is determined by the polarization of white American affluence and an "alien nation" of non-native-born Americans who are forced to assimilate to the dominant ideology and cultural logic of late capitalism. Accordingly, Chucky's misinterpretation of voodoo is a crime punishable by death for his African-American teacher rather than himself. Clearly a pacifist, John Bishop's *nom de guerre* ("Dr. Death") is a window into the anxiety of the decay of

American exceptionalism more so than a moniker that instills fear in the viewer.

In short, Chucky is a manifestation of the cultural logic of late capitalism and the collusive relationship between commercial culture and socioeconomic inequality. The figure of the childish monster in *Child's Play* illuminates the monstrosity of consumer society, or what Jameson describes as the terminological underside of culture throughout history: blood, torture, death, and terror.[268] Thus Chucky is a key example of what Jameson regards as "the commodity fetishism of a transition to late capital," specifically the commodification of, and failure to distinguish between, the object and human subject.[269] As a result, Chucky's desire to live beyond death is in fact a form of death obsession or death anxiety – a never-ending quest for a body that is perpetually disfigured and destroyed.

In similar fashion, Raymond Williams emphasizes that "in almost all its early English uses," up to the mid-eighteenth century, "consume had an unfavorable sense; it meant to destroy, to use up, to waste, to exhaust."[270] In relation to Williams, the difference between the keywords "customer" and "consumer" in *Child's Play* – or the distinction between the "degree of regular and continuing relationship to a supplier and the more abstract figure in a more abstract market" – is demonstrated when Ray breaks into the toy store at the opening of the film.[271] Figuratively speaking, the toy store is open after hours and the clientele are desperate for the season's top selling product – a child-sized toy that is not only the object of consumer envy but also a second life that disturbs the continuity between childhood and adulthood. Ray's "purchasing power," in its irregularity and discontinuity, is a critique of American consumer culture and the economic system of late capital. The shift from the criminal man to the figure of the doll as a childish monster underscores the destructive potential of consumer choice and voodoo economics.

Berlant's interpretation of infantile citizenship takes on new meaning in *Child's Play* via

the figure of the doll as a juvenescent form of criminality within the late slasher film cycle. The cultural function of the childish monster in *Child's Play* ostensibly works against norms of good and evil within the historical context of the Reagan Era and the intersection of consumer culture and financial crisis. By consciously exploiting anxieties that pertain to the decline of the American Dream at the hands of a lower class of nonwhite criminals, Chucky is represented as a figure that exploits the single-parent household and threatens to illuminate the terminological underside of culture and the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism.

Alas, Chucky's disclosure of *Child's Play*'s most important underlying narrative anxiety – the absence of Karen's husband and Andy's father – is the moment at which the fate of the childish monster is sealed by the innocent child and All-American Mom. The amalgamation of paternity, gender, and the nuclear family confirms that *Child's Play* works with, rather than against, norms of good and evil by extolling the triumph of the priceless child over its archrival, the childish monster. Nevertheless, Chucky's connection with Andy, and the possibility of the braided identities of the childish monster and monstrous child, is both a confession and a calculated manipulation. When Karen asks her son why he and Chucky are so close, Andy replies that Chucky's "real name is Charles Lee Ray and he's been sent down from heaven by Daddy to play with me."

In *Child's Play*, the figure of the doll or childish monster (Chucky) enters into a dialogic relationship with the figure of the priceless child (Andy) regarding norms of good and evil and how they are defined and enforced by the nuclear family. For example, the representation of Andy's relationship with Chucky is at first a benign expression of anger and grief at the inexplicable loss of Andy's father. Yet Andy soon discovers that Chucky is a monstrous rejuvenation of fatherhood that translates the rational aspects of the marketplace into a waking

nightmare of destruction and disfigurement. The value of Chucky and the childish monster, to borrow from Miriam Formanek-Brunell, is "determined by its ability to subvert convention, mock materialism, and undermine restrictions" posed by, for example, patriarchal authority.[272] A consumable surrogate father to Andy, the figure of the monstrous doll in *Child's Play* is a question of vitality and criminality, in which Chucky's life force is located both within the degraded figure of the child's plaything and the fractured Barclay family.

Taking the same line of argument further, the performance of the childish monster and criminality in *Child's Play*, specifically the adult's perverse and disembodied return to the figure of the child's plaything, is sustained by the voice of Charles Lee Ray. The signature of the *Child's Play* franchise is the versatility of actor Brad Dourif's voice that speaks from within the Good Guy doll. A frequent player in horror cinema, Dourif is referred to by Newman as "the premier twitchy psycho of his generation."[273] Nominated for an Academy Award for his performance in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* (Miloš Forman, 1976), Dourif has also appeared in *The Eyes of Laura Mars* (Irvin Kershner, 1978; take that Paul Coates!), *Blue Velvet* (David Lynch, 1986), *Exorcist III* (William Peter Blatty, 1990), Argento's 1993 film *Trauma*, and Rob Zombie's remake of the *Halloween* series (2007, 2009).

Dourif's changeling voice is a critical aspect of *Child's Play* and the performance of the childish monster. But what is even more discomforting is the *silence* that Andy listens to when he is alone with Chucky. The confession and calculated manipulation of Ray's "true identity," or the deception that Chucky has been sent from heaven by Andy's father, is communicated offscreen and behind closed doors, and, more importantly, out of earshot. Regarding Neale's articulation of suspense, aggression, and violence in *Halloween* and the early slasher film cycle, it is the unstable combination of *speech* involved in the construction of the shot that suggests that a killer is hidden

beyond the boundaries of the camera's field of audio-vision. Even more significant than the crisis of the nuclear family and the conflict between the childish monster and priceless child is the *unheard* voice of criminality that seduces, corrupts, and endangers Andy and the innocence of boyhood. Much the same way that the voice is filtered differently through one's skull and through the air by way of a recording device, the conceptual symbiosis of boyhood and criminality is filtered through the late slasher film cycle in a manner that is resonant with the Italian *giallo* and early American slasher film.[274]

The Good Guy in *Child's Play* is the hit of the holiday season due to its ability to talk to its owner in the voice of a prepubescent boy – to simulate the recognition of another as its friend and companion. The hinge between Chucky as a lovable and harmless toy and a serial killer, pre- and post-possession, is Dourif's voice – the shift in pitch from preadolescent to adult, innocent and playful to criminal and uncouth. Ultimately, the horror of *Child's Play* is the disjuncture of body and voice, or the pivotal moment at which Ray's criminal identity is *audibly*, as well as *visibly*, exposed. The uncertain existence of the villain in *Child's Play* points to the conceptual intersection of criminality and innocence, as well as the childish monster and priceless child, in terms of the audio-visual portrayal of the monstrous doll and the voice of Brad Dourif.

Andy's failure to convince adults that Chucky is a voodoo serial killer – to bridge the communicative gap between childhood and adulthood – is ineffective on multiple levels. Andy is unable to warn his mother that she is in danger or, for that matter, console her when her close friend and co-worker Maggie is murdered by Chucky. While babysitting Andy as a favor to Karen, Maggie is thrown from the Barclay's fourth-story kitchen window as punishment for not allowing Chucky to watch the nine-o'clock news and a story relating to Eddie Caputo. Andy is not only unable to stop Chucky from killing, he also, like Carlo in *Profondo rosso*, becomes an accomplice

to the killer's criminal behavior – a victim who is manipulated by a killer who exposes the trauma of the loss of the symbolic father. For example, it is Andy who helps Chucky to locate Eddie Caputo, carrying Chucky from his middle-class Chicago home to Caputo's Southside flophouse. Furthermore, Andy is the only person in the apartment at the time of Maggie's murder, making him a suspect in Officer Norris's investigation.

Ultimately Ray's possession of a child's toy is a liberating experience and a license to kill – an intentional as well as pathological regression into childhood. By the same token, it is Chucky, not Andy, who properly embodies the figure of the monstrous child by way of the exploitation of innocence as an alibi for the concept of criminality. The figure of the childish monster, free to roam where he pleases, is reminiscent of the Midwich Children in *Village of the Damned*, inasmuch as Chucky is perceived as monstrous, and yet at the same time irreproachable, with regard to the Barclay family and the virtue of bourgeois patriarchal norms. Hence the racial, sexual, and hegemonic overtones of voodoo economics in *Child's Play*, as performed by George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan, are exacerbated and contained within the cultural function of the figure of the childish monster.

A Frankenstein in the age of late capitalism, Chucky endorses the credo of consumer production and branding at the point of death – toys to be desired are in fact toys that frame their owners for murder. Hiding in plain sight as a toy that no one would think to interrogate, the childish monster is both a child's plaything and the hideous rejuvenation of the role of the father in the symbolic order. By extension, the proper place of *Child's Play* within the pantheon of the modern horror film is determined by the fact that the figure of the doll can kill as effectively as celebrity slashers. As David Hajdu points out, the capacity for selfless love is the ability to put away childish things, or "grow up and pack up our toys."[275] Conversely, Charles Lee Ray's possession of and

transformation into Chucky is representative of the adult's refusal to pack up its toys and, if only for a moment, pledge allegiance to the overthrow of patriarchal capitalism.

Chapter 3

Pictures of Anxiety:
Horror Cinema, Media, and Girlhood

> Monstrous little women, mad moppets, deadly dollies, deranged daughters, sinister sisters – call them what you will, there is no doubt that multifarious images of the evil girl-child haunt the celluloid corridors of popular cinema.
>
> Barbara Creed[4]

> The history of the horror film is essentially a history of anxiety in the twentieth century.
>
> Paul Wells[276]

> The greatest blessing a society can confer on its young is to turn them into the heirs, rather than the orphans, of history.
>
> Robert Pogue Harrison[277]

Barbara Creed, in the opening to her paper "Baby Bitches from Hell: Monstrous-Little Women in Film" (1994), asks a deceptively straightforward question: Why do girls star in horror films more frequently than boys?[278] In movies like *The Bad Seed*, *The Innocents*, and *Carrie* Creed observes that the representation of the female child monster haunts "the celluloid corridors of popular cinema," in addition to the cultural imaginary, during the second half of the twentieth century. Contrary to Twitchell's modern bestiary, in which the typology or "downsizing" of the monster product takes precedence over the question of the cultural function of the figure of the child, Creed argues that "images of evil children, circulated in posters and film books, are predominantly of feminine furies: Regan, from *The Exorcist*, . . . Carrie, an avenging monster,

[4] Creed, Barbara. "Baby Bitches From Hell: Monstrous Little Women in Film." *Scary Women*, Jan. 1994, sec. 1, par. 1. Chapter 3 endnotes may be found on pp. 222-229.

drenched in pig's blood, burning up the entire school; and Lolita, the child-woman, sunning herself in her bikini, supremely indifferent, yet fully aware of her devastating effect on the wretched professor."[279]

Linked to the twentieth century's second-wave of Western feminism, Creed, in addition to Linda Williams and Carol Clover, is associated with a practice of film scholarship defined to a large extent by feminist theory and the demand for a more careful analysis of the intersection of gender and sexuality in the horror film. This is especially true regarding the cultural function of the figure of the monstrous female child or child-woman and the cinematic preoccupation with the normal and the pathological. Creed's exploration of gender and juvenility in "Baby Bitches," as well as the "Scary Women" symposium where Creed presented her paper, represents a unique and justly venerated theoretical and historical framework for understanding the figure of the female child in horror films between the 1940s and 80s.[280]

In particular, the "Scary Women" symposium's website serves as a key example of the importance of the monstrous female child in relation to gender and media studies. Operating as an archive for the symposium, including papers and links related to the conference, the website is furnished with a number of image files, GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format), and related graphic media that accentuate the monstrous-feminine and, more broadly, the importance of gender in the horror film. Regarding the discursive framework that has legitimized (*Halloween* and *Profondo rosso*) and marginalized (*Child's Play*) the early and late American slasher film cycles, "Scary Women"'s digital afterlife is a fascinating assemblage of academic areas of interest including cultural studies, film studies, and women's studies. Produced by the UCLA Film and Television Archive, "Scary Women" is a treasure trove of audio clips, downloadable, and multimedia online content created long before the popularity of web-based communities related to gender and genre

fan cultures made their way to the web en masse.

Nearly a quarter century after "Scary Women," the figure of the girl in the horror film is alive and well, and has played a key role in my thinking about the monstrous female child.[281] In this chapter I interrogate the representation of the monstrous little woman or baby bitch in *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan*. Specifically, I analyze the performance of girlhood and anxiety in Cold War Hollywood cinema and the American horror film after 9/11. I also focus on the relationship between the female child monster and the myth of the All-American Mom as a site of generational conflict. I argue that the cinematic questioning of childhood innocence and the figure of the middle-class American mother during the Cold War and post 9/11 is pertinent to changes in the child image found in the horror and social commentary film. The performance of anxiety as a cultural condition helps to reinforce my central argument that historical context and different historical eras are fundamental to the moral ambiguity of the monstrous female child.

Furthermore, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the image of the female child in the horror film during the historical period in question (1955-2009). Celebrating the multifarious image of the evil girl-child or monstrous-feminine, my decision to revisit the "Scary Women" symposium is motivated by the recognition that my dissertation owes a debt to the lasting influence of second-wave feminism upon horror and media studies, including the works of Barbara Creed and Linda Williams in particular. Along the same lines, films like *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* support the case that a feminist critique of media and gender is foundational to the child image and the performance of girlhood. In addition to feelings that are commonly associated with the horror film (nausea, repulsion, disgust), anxiety most forcefully demonstrates the desire to comprehend or master the female child monster. By extension, *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* are fundamental to my analysis of the performance of girlhood and anxiety, in particular

the media fascination with the spectacular girl and willful female subject.

Before I turn to my analysis of *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan*, I would like to address how this chapter fits into my dissertation overall. Two points have emerged over the course of my work on this chapter that are connected with Creed's interest in the question of why girls star in horror films more frequently than boys. First, what is the cultural function of girlhood in the horror film during the long twentieth century (1956-2009)? Second, in what capacity is the figure of the female child a topic of anxiety with regard to gender and film genre?

The answer to both of these questions is figuratively compressed and encapsulated in a theory that I refer to as the monstrous cultural imaginary. In short, the figures of the monstrous child and childish monster are defined by the interaction between three concepts: innocence, criminality, and anxiety. One of the overarching claims of this dissertation is that the conceptual imbrication of innocence and criminality culminates in a feeling of anxiety that is either unconsciously channeled or consciously exploited for shock effect at a particular historical moment during the years 1955-2009. In terms of a mathematical equation, innocence + criminality = anxiety.

The monstrous cultural imaginary is especially pertinent to the baby bitch insofar as the sexual child is made monstrous by the adult imagination. Similar to Miss Giddens's fears of sexuality and moral ruin in *The Innocents*, the adult who is terrified by the female child, to borrow from Robin Wood, seeks to manipulate the infantile in order to provide an "escape from an adult world perceived as irredeemably corrupt, or at least bewilderingly problematic."[282] The fervor with which Miss Giddens torments the children of Bly House is matched and surpassed by the All-American mothers in *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan*. The reason that girls star in horror films more frequently than boys is that the female child's most horrifying attribute is the embodiment

of anxiety and the illumination of bourgeois ideology. Rather than the metaphysical category of evil, the baby bitch, to a greater degree than her male counterpart, is the embodiment of moral ambiguity and the downfall of patriarchal capitalism.

In this chapter I look at the horror film by way of the cultural function of the girl and the concept of anxiety in two movies that, although external to the modern horror phase (1961-1984), are nonetheless indebted to a progressive ideology typified by *Carrie*, Brian De Palma's adaptation of Stephen King's first published novel (1974). In *The Bad Seed* and *Orphan*, I argue that the early postwar and post-9/11 American horror film work against norms of good and evil and the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism. As a result, the emergence of the figure of the female child is entwined with the postwar and post-9/11 U.S. cultural imaginary as a topic of anxiety.

The performance of girlhood and anxiety in *The Bad Seed* intersects with the stardom and commodification of Shirley Temple and Sigmund Freud in America. In *Carrie*, the child reaches adult status within the modern horror film and women's and gender studies. And in *Orphan*, the monstrous-feminine appears in the post-9/11 horror film as a homicidal child-woman adopted by a normative middle-class family. In terms of film selection, the arrangement of movies that I have picked for this chapter, not unlike the films that I discuss in chapter 1, are intentionally unorthodox. As mentioned previously, the cultural function of the figure of the child works against norms of good and evil by exposing the categorical limitations of horror. The monstrous little woman or baby bitch exists between and outside the everyday use of the term "horror" and films that are widely recognized and excluded as such.[283] Ultimately, the figure of the monstrous child in this chapter illuminates the fecund and enigmatic relationship between the figure of the girl and the concept of anxiety.

Similar to the concepts of innocence and criminality, anxiety is less a characteristic than a structure of feeling.[284] The figure of the female child is not exactly represented by the definition of anxiety, so much as identified with a temporal and spatial dynamics that is overwhelming to adults in particular. In her book, *Ugly Feelings* (2007), Sianne Ngai writes that anxiety belongs "to Ernst Bloch's category of 'expectation emotions.'"[285] Based on Fredric Jameson's interpretation of the German Marxist philosopher, Ngai notes that anxiety, unlike envy, greed, and admiration, aims "'less at some specific object as the fetish of their desire than at the configuration of the world in general, or (what amounts to the same thing) at the future disposition of the self.'"[286]

The figure of the female child in the horror film is illuminated by anxiety in a manner that is unique to the interface of innocence and criminality, as well as the disposition toward the child as a configuration that is at once sentimental and incomprehensible. As Joyce Carol Oates reminds us, the figure of the child is a being that alters "by degrees, not quite before our eyes, yet in our presence."[287] Intimate and yet withdrawn from knowledge, anxiety underscores the connection between the child as the beloved and intolerable successor to the adult. As mentioned previously, the child is defined as monstrous because she is a future replacement of, and imperfectly resembles, the adult and the bourgeois ideology of the nuclear family. The monstrous female child in this chapter, through the lens of anxiety, is less an object that exists in the world – a thing that is either good or evil – than a conceptual framework or mathematical problem; a regulatory "body" that, according to Ngai, "is invoked . . . as something 'projected' onto others . . . a quality or feeling the subject refuses to recognize in himself and attempts to locate in another person or thing (usually as a form of naïve or unconscious defense)."[288]

Anxiety is a dominant emotion in horror movies, especially during the Cold War Era and post 9/11. The horror film during the years 1956-2009 is riddled with images of dread and

anticipation regarding the performance of girlhood and motherhood in particular. The desire for reassurance, a defensive posture that projects anxiety onto the child, is fueled by mad science (*The Bad Seed*), God (*Carrie*), and secular morality (*Orphan*). In particular, the dilemma of motherhood is represented in this chapter as an impassable quandary glossed by the hope "that our experience is not too far from the average."[289]

The takeaway is this: From the point of view of the adult, and motherhood especially, the monstrous female child is terrifying. Contrary to the mythology of the priceless child as a figure of unfettered simplicity and unworldly naiveté, the postwar and post-9/11 horror film envisions the figure of the female child as both threatened and threatening, helpless and monstrous. The binary opposition of innocence and criminality is offered up in *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* as a fallacious argument to quiet the nerves and deny the fact that the female child is at once the adult's most cherished possession and most injurious opponent. In the case of *Don't Look Now*, John Baxter – and the patriarchal order – is tricked into believing that his daughter Christine has returned from the dead because of a red overcoat. As a result, John exposes himself to the predations of a serial killer.

Similar to Miss Giddens in *The Innocents*, the figure of the child in this chapter is framed by the mother's inability to protect her offspring from her desire to stalk and destroy the child in the name of anxiety itself. It is important to remember that the baby bitch or scary woman is horrifying because the figure of the child complicates the difference between the norms of good and evil. In this chapter – and in this dissertation – the values of bourgeois society are performed by adults who exploit the child as a figure that is vulnerable and otherworldly. Yet the monstrous child is more than capable of turning the tables. In *The Bad Seed*, the precocious killer Rhoda Penmark sets in motion an idea that, more than half a century later, is embodied by Esther Coleman

in *Orphan*. In these films in particular, the children are not only watching us, they are hunting us too.

The Bad Seed **(Mervyn LeRoy, 1956)**

The opening scene of *The Bad Seed* introduces the viewer to eight-year-old Rhoda Penmark (Patty McCormack), her parents Christine (Nancy Kelly) and Kenneth (William Hopper), and the Penmark's landlord and neighbor Monica Breedlove (Evelyn Varden). Colonel Penmark, departing on an extended business trip to Washington D.C., bids farewell to his wife and daughter. Before leaving, Kenneth enters the family conservatory and proudly watches Rhoda at the piano as she plays "Au Clair de la Lune" ("By the Light of the Moon"), a French folk song now considered a lullaby for children.[290] Like the piano piece "Suite No. 1" in *Don't Look Now*, Rhoda's performance epitomizes the figure of the girl as morally ambiguous. Once again, a little girl learning to play the piano communicates both innocence and anxiety. Colonel Penmark asks Rhoda, "What will you give me if I give you a basket of kisses?" Rhoda replies, "I'll give you a basket of hugs!"[291]

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to the monstrous child and the concept of anxiety include the morally ambiguous figure of the girl in relation to the suburban middle-class family, the representation of the All-American Mom as a site of generational conflict, and the location of *The Bad Seed* within the horror film. I argue that the cinematic questioning of childhood innocence after World War II illuminates the intersection of the horror and social commentary film and, by extension, the performance of anxiety as a cultural condition of the Cold War Era and the popularization of Freud in American culture. Ultimately, *The Bad Seed* offers a unique portrait of the biopolitics and popular imagination of postwar America regarding the figure

of the female child and the conceptual arrangement of anxiety and criminality. Throughout my analysis of *The Bad Seed*, I include the work of scholars who have focused on the above-mentioned themes and questions [Kincaid, 1998; Creed, 1994; Plant, 2010; Menand, 2012].

In *The Bad Seed*, the Penmark residence is coded as a loving and prosperous household, recalling Maxwell Anderson's Tony-award-winning play (*Bad Seed*, premiered December 8, 1954), in addition to William March's bestselling novel and source text (*The Bad Seed*, published April 8, 1954).[292] Regarding Mervyn LeRoy's adaptation, the screen is filled with good cheer and patriotic fortitude, underscoring the suburban prosperity that middle-class American families enjoy after the close of World War II. According to Steven Mintz, the postwar era's greatest appeal, in addition to the economic boom, "is that it seems a much more innocent and child-friendly time: a time of open spaces, of brand-new neighborhoods, Good Humor ice cream trucks, 25-cent movies, and amusement parks."[293] Early postwar America, Mintz writes, is "the golden age of American childhood. It serves as the yardstick against which all subsequent changes in childhood are measured."[294]

If the early postwar period is the golden age of American childhood then Rhoda Penmark, at first glance, is its prototypical golden child. Rhoda's hairstyle, composed of blond bangs and braided pigtails, compliments a red-and-white dotted-Swiss dress that is worn throughout the film, and Rhoda is especially fond of tap dancing around the Penmark home in her cleated patent leather shoes.[295] Yet Rhoda's girlish good looks and youthful demeanor communicate a timeless quality strangely out of place; she is a child of the 1850s as much as the 1950s. The opening scene of *The Bad Seed* promises to quickly subvert the fabled golden age of postwar American prosperity and the value of the priceless child in need of protection from adult society.

After Kenneth's departure, the fractured home front of *The Bad Seed* is transformed into a

matrilineal nightmare, a suburban wasteland, Joyce Carol Oates writes, populated by "well-intentioned but foolish adults who react to Rhoda's outward, innocently beguiling behavior in mawkish, stereotypical ways."[296] "I know I'm behind the times but I thought children wore blue jeans and playsuits," comments Monica Breedlove, "now you my love look like a princess in that red-and-white dotted-Swiss."

The interpretive anxiety that Rhoda embodies in *The Bad Seed* is at once admired by Monica and feared by Christine, who finds her daughter an unsettling presence within the Penmark home – a reminder of a traumatic experience that she cannot reclaim. Gradually, Christine discovers that her biological mother is Bessie Denker, the infamous psychopathic killer loosely based upon the lives of Belle Gunness and Jane Toppan, and Rhoda's genetic forebear.[297] Shielded from this revelation by her adoptive father Richard Bravo (Paul Fix), Christine is forced to decide the fate of Rhoda for the betterment of humanity, a decision that, to varying degrees and depending upon what version of *The Bad Seed* is referred to, perpetuates a cycle of murder, suicide, and moral decay.

In *The Bad Seed*, the morally ambiguous figure of the innocent girl works against norms of good and evil within the single-parent household and the postwar suburban middle-class family. Widely regarded as the quintessential child villain film, *The Bad Seed* is, above all, structured around the concept of anxiety and the ambiguity of girlhood and innocence.[298] Rhoda conforms to, and hints at the lurking monstrosity within, a set of cultural demands and physical attributes that James Kincaid refers to as desirable, blank, and drained of humanity.[299] Kincaid asks the reader to "compare the large eyes, generally narrow chins, high cheekbones, and empty come-hither expressions" of film stars like Alicia Silverstone, Betty Boop, Macaulay Culkin, Elijah Wood, Winona Ryder, Sandra Bullock, Ricky Schroder, Shirley Temple, Buster Brown, Demi

Moore, Marilyn Monroe, and Patty McCormack.[300] "The physical makeup of the child," writes Kincaid, "has been translated into mainstream images of the sexually and materially alluring."[301]

In her essay, "Baby Bitches From Hell," Barbara Creed endorses Kincaid's interpretation of erotic innocence when she argues that *The Bad Seed* is a response to the 1930s "cult of the child-star epitomised in the figure of Shirley Temple."[302] The physical makeup and cultural significance of the female child pertains to Rhoda insofar as she conforms to and destabilizes a set of demands (patriotism, the nuclear family, suburban prosperity) that are linked to American popular culture during the postwar era. More specifically, the monstrous child portrayed in *The Bad Seed* is a force of nature and environment, a "natural little girl," Perin Gurel observes, who represents a series of "underlying anxieties about pronatalism and heredity."[303] Although it is true that the golden age of American childhood is closely associated with the baby boom and the rise of suburban nuclear families, it is also a period defined by eugenics and what Gurel describes as "the social movement to limit the reproduction of humans deemed hereditarily flawed."[304] *The Bad Seed* offers a unique portrait of the biopolitics and popular imagination of postwar America regarding the figure of the female child and the conceptual arrangement of anxiety and criminality.

For example, Rhoda's homicidal tendencies are broached, albeit indirectly, during a conversation between Christine and Reginald Tasker (Gage Clarke), a psychoanalytic criminologist. Tasker announces that he is compiling a collection of data on Dorothy Allison, a nurse and mass murderer, while Christine enjoys a gin and tonic – one of the rare moments in *The Bad Seed* when the All-American Mom is not preoccupied with child-rearing. Christine asks Tasker if he is familiar with the concept of childhood criminality. "Do children ever commit murders," Christine wonders, "or is crime something that is learned gradually and grows as the criminal grows so that only adults do really dreadful things?" "Oh yes, children often commit

murders," Tasker replies, "and quite clever ones, too. Some murderers, particularly the distinguished ones, who are going to make great names for themselves, start amazingly early . . . like mathematicians and musicians. . . . Poets develop later," Tasker adds, further emphasizing the art of criminality; "Pascal was a master mathematician at twelve, Mozart showed his melodic genius at six. And some of our great criminals were top-flight operators before they got out of short pants and pinafores."

Curiously, Tasker's idea of Western civilization in *The Bad Seed* is mostly disconnected from the diegetic present. As a result, the notion of criminality is located in a romanticized past ideally suited to Rhoda's anachronistic appearance and precocious charms; the work of art, and, by extension, human nature, adhere to a mythology that equates perfection with pathology and the killer instinct. Christine is dubious. "Yes," she retorts, "but they [the children] grew up in the slums among criminals and learned from their environment." On the brink of realizing that mother and daughter share a troubled past, Christine is interrupted by the doorbell and the arrival of Richard Bravo. Bravo joins the conversation and quickly agrees with his adoptive daughter that criminality is a learned trait and not determined by heredity.

Tasker complicates matters further when he reports, "some fellow criminologists, including some behavior scientists, have begun to make me believe we've all been putting too much emphasis on environment and too little on heredity. They cite a type of criminal born with no capacity for remorse or guilt, no feeling of right or wrong. Born with a kind of brain that may have been normal in humans 50,000 years ago." "Nonsense," Bravo answers, responding to Tasker's interpretation of born criminality, "if you encounter a human without compassion or pity or morals, you grew up where these things weren't encouraged. Or at birth he received some

pitiable or physical damage to the brain tissues, certainly not inherited. That's fine and absolute for me, the rest is hogwash."

Framed between the male-dominated parley on nature versus nurture, Christine's attitude shifts from dubiety to credulity. "Do you really mean to say that nice family surroundings and advantages could make no difference at all?" Christine asks. "Yes," replies Tasker, "it's as if these children were born blind, *permanently*, and you just couldn't expect to teach them to see." Piggybacking upon the superficially plausible link between childhood, criminality, and eugenics, Christine asks if one would "notice any brutish expressions on their faces?" "Sometimes," Tasker answers, "but more often they present a more convincing picture of virtue than normal folk." "But that's horrible!" exclaims Christine. "It's just that they are bad seeds," Tasker concludes, "plain bad from the beginning. And nothing can change them." Beginning with Tasker's analysis of the bas seed, Christine's refusal to believe that her daughter is a serial killer is violently disproven when she discovers that Rhoda has murdered her classmate Claude Daigle by hitting him over the head with her cleated patent leather shoe, in addition to killing the family's caretaker, LeRoy Jessup (Henry Jones), and a neighbor from the Penmark family's previous hometown of Wichita, Kansas.

This point is critical to *The Bad Seed*, in particular the argument that the physical makeup of the female child-monster and the virtuous All-American Mom are represented as a site of generational conflict. At first glance, Rhoda's erotic innocence ("I'll give you a basket of hugs!") and Christine's guileless solicitude ("But that's horrible!") are commensurate with the ideal of American prosperity and suburban contentment after World War II. *Under* the skin, however, Tasker's prognosis about the criminal child is a key example of what Canguilhem identifies as "the general problem of the normal and the pathological," a dilemma that is "defined as a

teratological [the study of abnormality or monstrosity] problem and a nosological [the classification of disease] problem."[305] Not even Christine's mild-mannered dismissal of the formation of criminality can overturn the lurking anxiety that she is somehow inextricably bound to her daughter's as yet unacknowledged pathological state. Later, after Christine's traumatic experience of girlhood is finally reclaimed, she is confronted with the genetic burden that she has bestowed upon Rhoda. As a result, Christine is forced into the role of the domestic tyrant and tiresome meddler apropos of the "momism critique" in Philip Wylie's book *Generation of Vipers* (1942).[306] The figure of the mother in *The Bad Seed* is transformed from a loving parent into a homicidal maniac not unlike the slashers that emerge nearly a quarter-century later.

In *The Bad Seed*, the All-American Mom finds herself in a generational conflict with the monstrous little woman or baby bitch. In particular, the figure of the monstrous child illuminates the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism and moral motherhood, specifically the figure of the homemaker who expects to be economically supported by her husband. Christine's decision to embrace the figure of the child as a highly sentimental form of popular culture is, to borrow from Rebecca Jo Plant, based upon a convoluted relationship with "the admonitions of modern psychologists" and the popularization of Freudian psychoanalysis in postwar and popular American culture.[307] Christine discovers that her love of Rhoda is not only synonymous with the decision to cultivate overly intimate bonds with the figure of the child, it is also the rationale by which Christine decides to murder Rhoda and commit suicide. Ultimately, the horror of *The Bad Seed* is rooted in the concept of anxiety, the morally ambiguous figure of the innocent girl, and the morbidly depraved logic of the All-American Mom.

Accordingly, the location of *The Bad Seed* within the horror film, not unlike *The Night of the Hunter*, illuminates the cultural and historical context of the postwar era. Nominated for four

Academy Awards and hailed as an outstanding example of suspense melodrama, literate horror, and modern tragedy, LeRoy's film adaptation shares little in common with *Abbott and Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Charles Lamont, 1953), *The Curse of Frankenstein* (Terence Fisher, 1957), *House on Haunted Hill* (William Castle, 1959), *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (Herbert L. Strock, 1957), *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (Ed Wood, 1959), *Them!* (Gordon Douglas, 1954), and *I Vampiri* (*The Vampires*; Riccardo Freda and Mario Bava, 1956). However, before the arrival of Norma(n) Bates in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, it is Rhoda and Christine Penmark who embody the anxiety that the natural little girl and All-American Mom next door are homicidal maniacs. The cinematic questioning of childhood innocence in *The Bad Seed* intersects with the horror and social commentary film and, by extension, the performance of anxiety as a cultural condition.

In *The Bad Seed*, the biopolitical imaginary of the postwar era is linked to the popularization of Sigmund Freud in American popular culture. After 1945, Louis Menand writes, "Freudian concepts flourished in both sophisticated and popular cultural realms."[308] However, Menand argues that "Freudianism managed to coexist in the [American] cultural imagination with trends in psychiatry and intellectual life with which it was partly and sometimes wholly incompatible."[309] Indeed, *The Bad Seed* is a key example of the professional and social success of Freudian psychoanalysis in the United States, regardless of the incompatibility with postwar American culture and "a society generally antipathetic to abstract systems and philosophical systems."[310]

One reason that Freudianism thrived in America is that it was ideally suited to the Cold War discourse of anxiety.[311] Galvanized by W.H. Auden's book-length poem *The Age of Anxiety* (1947), the cultural currency of the phrase "the age of anxiety" inspired Leonard Bernstein to write a symphony based upon Auden's "baroque eclogue," which premiered in 1949, a ballet composed

by Jerome Robbins (1950) based on Bernstein's symphony, and a stage version of the poem performed in New York City by the Living Theatre Studio in 1954. Admittedly, the fame of Auden's abstruse poem is not exactly evidence of a wide readership. Regardless of what the poem was about (the Second World War, not the Cold War), the concept of anxiety blossomed in the United States after World War II, intersected with Freud, and eventually played a critical role in explaining why Rhoda Penmark, quite frankly, was bad to the bone.

According to Daniel Smith, the "Age of Anxiety" is a key example of how a structure of feeling saturates the popular imagination. "From the moment it appeared," Smith writes, "the phrase has been used to characterize the consciousness of our era, the awareness of everything perilous about the modern world: the degradation of the environment, nuclear energy, religious fundamentalism, threats to privacy and the family, drugs, pornography, violence, terrorism. . . . As a sticker on the bumper of the Western world, 'the age of anxiety' has been ubiquitous for more than six decades now."[312] For Smith, there is a distinction between anxiety as a historical or epistemic condition and as a personal struggle of the body and the mind. In short, Smith writes, "calling the 20th century 'The Age of Anxiety' starts to sound like calling the 17th century 'The Age of the Throbbing Migraine': so metaphorical as to be meaningless."[313]

Nevertheless, Menand is right to consider what Auden meant by the concept of anxiety, as well as to identify the individuals that influenced his thinking. At the top of that list are Reinhold Niebuhr and Søren Kierkegaard. In his book, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941), Niebuhr writes that anxiety "is the inevitable concomitant of the paradox of freedom and finiteness in which man is involved. Anxiety is the internal precondition of sin. It is the inevitable spiritual state of man."[314] In other words, Menand explains, "The human condition [for Niebuhr] is a paradox of radical freedom and radical unfreedom. In theological terms: my will to do good in the world is

inexorably constrained by my inherent sinfulness. The full awareness of the paradox produces anxiety. Auden was a reader and admirer of Niebuhr, and he likely knew this passage."[315] The meaning of original sin, also the subject of Kierkegaard's book *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844), was important to Auden. Interestingly, *The Concept of Anxiety* was translated into English and published in 1944, "the same year," Menand writes, "that Auden began work on *The Age of Anxiety*."[316]

The appeal of Freudian psychoanalysis in postwar America is linked to the concept of anxiety both in terms of theology (Kierkegaard, Auden) and atheistic existentialism (Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre). Kierkegaard's "teleological suspension of the ethical," in which the individual abandons the demands of the ethical or social in favor of a direct relation between wo/man and God, intersects with the existentialist view that, according to Menand, "anxiety is the mark of an authentic confrontation with the recognition that there is no prior supra-personal constraint on individual freedom, a recognition that is both dreadful and liberating."[317]

At the same time, the rise of psychoanalysis in the United States after the war contributed to a rapid increase in the number of psychiatrists between 1948 and 1976. The arrival of European psychoanalysis in America, as a result of Hitler and Stalin, in addition to significant public investment in mental health practitioners and subsidized education through the offices of the National Institute of Mental Health, prepared the way for psychiatric diagnosis as a legitimate practice that helped to validate a range of stress-related disorders including battle trauma and anxiety. By the mid-1950s, anxiety as a medical disorder was normalized and diagnosed as a response to stress that was both treatable and infectious.

"Under these circumstances," Menand concludes, "Freudianism and existentialism must have seemed an obvious cocktail to mix."[318] The transmission of anxiety between the battlefield

and the home front is, if anything, the foundation upon which *The Bad Seed* is constructed. Christine Penmark's inevitable realization that her daughter is a sociopath is skillfully rendered both in terms of Nancy Kelly's performance and the subtle juxtaposition of Christine's epiphany and the round of gin and tonics that she mixes for herself and Reginald Tasker. By the time that Freud has been watered-down by charlatans like Monica Breedlove, the fate of the Penmark family, and Rhoda in particular, is sealed as an open and shut case of moral degradation.

The question of whether *The Bad Seed* belongs to the horror genre-film or not is entwined with the deterministic nature of Rhoda's status as a monstrous child. Rhoda personifies the anxieties of postwar America and the exploitation of commercial pleasure; the tap shoe in *The Bad Seed* is a murder weapon rather than an accessory to the dance routine "On the Good Ship Lollipop" (Richard A. Whiting and Sidney Clare, 1934), first performed by Shirley Temple in the film *Bright Eyes* (David Butler, 1934). By contrast, Rhoda operates beneath the radar of adult supervision and consumer society in *The Bad Seed*, while at the same time augmenting the commercial appeal of the monstrous child in the horror film – a figure that has maintained a high degree of popularity throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. According to William Paul, "*The Bad Seed* was a striking multimedia success in the 1950s. As germinated through the best-selling novel (1954), Broadway hit play (1954), and sensationalistic Hollywood film (1956), it proved to be the seminal work for the child's rebirth as monster."[319] In Paul's view, Warner Brothers recognized the centrality *The Bad Seed* "via a 1985 made-for-TV movie advertised as both the precursor and, thanks to the remake, the obvious successor to *The Exorcist* (1973) and *The Omen* (1976).[320]

The figure of the girl and the concept of anxiety in *The Bad Seed* is equated with criminality as a heritable trait. Rhoda, not unlike Christine Baxter in *Don't Look Now*, epitomizes the

monstrous female child because her performance illuminates the ambiguous distinction between the normal and the pathological. Rhoda is not only foundational to the horror film, she is also a key example of "the methods of physical anthropology and . . . the premise that science can discover the causes of crime by using the human body as fundamental data."[321] Yet if Rhoda is a biological throwback to an earlier evolutionary stage marked by physical and mental anomalies, she is also a figure that exposes the conceptual entanglement of innocence and criminality in the horror film; the golden age of American childhood *depends* upon what it claims to dispossess or presuppose. In the case of Brian De Palma's *Carrie*, the figure of the monstrous female child complicates the distinction between innocence and criminality via "the taboo aspects of children's display" and the argument that images of the young as a category of appeal and anxiety are determined less by age than by the communication of youthfulness.[322]

Carrie (Brian De Palma, 1976)

The opening shower sequence of *Carrie* is one of the most audacious interpretations of *Psycho* reproduced on film. Like the shower sequence of *Psycho*, the shock effect of *Carrie* is firmly established in the figure of the female body and the disparity between repose and transgression. The image of the female as a category of appeal and anxiety, in *Carrie* more so than *Psycho*, is determined less by age than by the communication of youthfulness. The same holds true for the use of music and the invocation of a range of alternating emotions in compounding tension.[323] As in *Don't Look Now*, not to mention Bernard Herrmann's violin motifs for *Psycho*, the music of Pino Donaggio complicates the figure of the female adolescent and the distinction between childhood and adulthood, this time accompanying the cinematography of Mario Tosi and a slow motion tracking shot of the girl's locker room at Bates High School that focuses on a group

of partially clothed and naked girls as they prepare for class.[324]

Carrie White (Sissy Spacek), isolated from the popular clique in the foreground (Sue Snell, played by Amy Irving, and Chris Hargensen, played by Nancy Allen), is wrapped in the comforting steam of a hot shower. Similar to the opening of *Profondo rosso*, the musical reverie of De Palma's film is rudely interrupted when Carrie discovers a stream of blood running down her thigh. Chromatically identical to the red-lettered opening credits, the sight of blood is a key example of what Barbara Creed, citing Julia Kristeva, identifies as "the structuring of subjectivity within and by the processes of abjectivity."[325] The representation of blood in the shower sequence of *Carrie* is coded as "that which does not 'respect borders, positions, rules,' that which 'disturbs identity, system, order.'"[326] According to Creed, blood is a bodily waste, similar to feces, urine, and pus; a substance that "the body protects itself from . . . by ejecting."[327] Like the corpse of the vampire in "Tag . . . You're It" (*Tomb of Terror*, 1954), menstruation is "a sickening, cloying lump of a horrible phenomenon" that men are amazed by, "their eyes blazing with awe . . . and fear."[328]

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to *Carrie* and the concept of anxiety include the monstrous-feminine, the conflict between the supernatural child and apocalyptic mother, and juvenation and the medium of youthfulness. I argue that the relationship between the figures of the female child-woman and Christian fundamentalist is indicative of a generational conflict that is defined by moral ambiguity, the braided identities of the killer and victim, and the single-parent household. Taking the same line of argument further, I examine the cultural and historical specificity of the figure of the supernatural child in relation to the patriarchal symbolic order, the disintegration of bourgeois consciousness, and the cultural function of anxiety in relation to the dominant ideology of suburban prosperity. Throughout my analysis of *Carrie*, I include the

work of scholars who have focused on the above-mentioned themes and questions [Creed, 2007 (1993); Stossel, 2014; Clover, 1992; Williams, 1983].

The communication of youthfulness in *Carrie* is shocking because, unlike Rhoda and Esther in *The Bad Seed* and *Orphan*, Carrie does not suffer from a genetic disposition that "may seem to have a simple, single source."[329] In his book, *My Age of Anxiety: Fear, Hope, Dread, and the Search for Peace of Mind* (2014), Scott Stossel, echoing Georges Canguilhem's interpretation of the imbrication of the normal and pathological, writes that "anxiety is at once a function of biology and philosophy, body and mind, instinct and reason, personality and culture."[330] Stossel complicates matters further when he writes that "even as anxiety is experienced at a spiritual and psychological level, it is scientifically measurable at the molecular level and the physiological level."[331] Contrary to *The Bad Seed* and *Orphan*, the figure of the female as a category of appeal in the shower sequence of *Carrie* expresses the affect of anxiety as a supernatural and biological arrangement that works against norms of good and evil, the patriarchal symbolic order, and the dominant gaze of the camera.

For the reader who is unfamiliar, the story of Carrie White, played by Sissy Spacek, focuses on the bullied daughter of a Christian fundamentalist, played by Piper Laurie. Due to her unorthodox attire and social anxiety, Carrie is the target for a wave of abuse that culminates in the movie's violent denouement. Carrie's shy mannerisms are consciously exploited in the film with unapologetic delight, especially in the opening sequence. "Split in true De Palma fashion into two separate scenes," writes Neil Mitchell, Carrie "is slapped with a baseball cap, bombarded with sanitary towels and tampons and slapped again."[332] Tormented by Chris Hargensen and her dim-witted boyfriend Billy Nolan (John Travolta), Carrie, despite the patronage of Sue Snell in the form of prom date Tommy Ross (William Katt), exterminates the majority of Bates High School

in a fit of rage at the conclusion of the film after being doused with pig's blood. The monstrous-feminine, or what it is that is shocking, terrifying, and horrific about the figure of the woman, is aligned with the sight of blood and the structuring of the image of Carrie White "within and by the processes of abjectivity."[333]

This is a point that is reflected in the critical response to De Palma's film. According to Pauline Kael, Spacek's performance as "the browbeaten daughter of a religious fanatic, the butt of every joke, the social outsider in every situation" contributes to a "terrifyingly lyrical thriller. . . . a menstrual joke – a film noir in red, and a perverse mixture of comedy and horror and tension."[334] De Palma's conscious exploitation of anxieties surrounding the figure of the menstrual monster and female child complicates societal norms and the "'borders, positions, and rules'" that provide the illusion of "'identity, system, and order'" with regard to visual pleasure and the patriarchal symbolic order.

For example, the shower sequence of *Carrie*, like *Psycho*, fragments and objectifies the female body through a series of close-up shots that alternate between Carrie's breasts, torso, thigh, crotch, and face. Subsequently, Carrie's feelings of pleasure and vulnerability are as fully represented as they are violated by the dominant gaze of the camera. After the menstrual blood, screams, and throwing of tampons and sanitary napkins, the stinger from *Psycho*, Bernard Herrmann's well-known sonic motif that accompanies the death of Marion Crane (Janet Leigh), announces Carrie's budding telekinetic abilities. Carrie's belated entrance into adulthood, and subsequent public humiliation, are conflated with the performance of girlhood and monstrosity. However, rather than a scene of death and dismemberment, Carrie's shower sequence is a story of formation pertaining to the monstrous-feminine and the figure of the supernatural child. The image

of the female body, if only for a moment, is liberated from, rather than exterminated by, the male order via the sight of blood and the progress from childhood to maturity.

Unfortunately, Carrie's fear that menstruation is a sign of illness and death is exacerbated, rather than diminished, by her classmates, teachers, and mother. Carrie's suffering at the hands of Sue Snell and Chris Hargensen is compounded by her gym teacher Miss Collins (Betty Buckley), who is skeptical about Carrie's simplicity and unworldly naiveté. After sharing her experience with her mother, Margaret informs Carrie that menstruation, or the "curse of blood," is divine punishment for sin that can only be avoided with genuflection and fervent prayer. "You're a woman now," Margaret tells Carrie before slapping her across the face with a Bible and reading from Genesis 2:22. De Palma, consciously exploiting the figure of the apocalyptic mother and the horror of religious fundamentalism, places the camera over Margaret's shoulder, framing the Bible above the head of Carrie, who kneels and looks downward in shame. Instead of Genesis 2:22, Margaret's Bible is opened to "The Sins of Women."

The figure of the supernatural child operates in relation to the construction of the abject within the social and familial arenas of pedagogic and religious discourse. As a result, the concept of the monstrous-feminine is imprinted upon the body of Carrie White for all to see and ridicule. In addition to the display of blood at the beginning and end of De Palma's film, Carrie's telekinetic abilities are coded by the general public as monstrous and abject as a result of the transgression of borders and the desire to "bring about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability."[335] The monstrous female child in *Carrie* is produced at the border between the normal and the supernatural. As a result, the symbolic order and norms of good and evil are thrown into doubt, producing an especially troublesome moral dilemma: Bullied and abused by her peers and family, is Carrie justified in using her telekinetic abilities to avenge herself upon the

dominant ideology of suburban American prosperity?

This is a point that is especially relevant to the concept of the monstrous-feminine and the conflict between the female child-woman and the figure of the apocalyptic mother. More so than *The Bad Seed* and *Orphan*, *Carrie* illuminates the intersection of girlhood and anxiety as a site of supernatural and generational conflict. Regarding the portrayal of motherhood in particular, Carrie's subservience to Margaret is shot through with outbursts of frustration and resentment, until the conclusion of the film when Carrie can no longer flee from the reality that her mother is a puritanical maniac. The conflict between the female child-woman and the figure of the mother is conflated with Carrie's subjugation to the norms of good and evil in adult society and the representation of Bates High School as microcosm of the American suburb. De Palma is fully aware of the social and political implications of the childish monster in his decision to juxtapose the sunny and provincial suburb with the gothic doom and gloom of the White house. Enshrouded by a thunder storm that seems to belong only to them, Margaret and Carrie's gothic house, not unlike the Bates home in *Psycho*, stands in direct opposition to the image of suburban normality.

For example, Carrie and her mother sit down to dinner by candlelight. Underscoring the narrative and aesthetic continuities of gothic horror, a lightning storm outside provides the White dining room with a lighting scheme that is atmospheric and foreboding – a wall-length tapestry of Leonardo da Vinci's 15th-century mural painting *The Last Supper* flashes across the screen as Margaret interrogates and humiliates her daughter regarding Carrie's interest in attending the high school prom with Tommy Ross. Pino Donaggio's string arrangement and solo flute contribute to a range of "alternating emotions" with regard to "the film's tonal shifts (from dramatic to reflective and from romantic to comedic and horrific), and, perhaps most significantly, in compounding tension."[336]

Similar to Margaret's renunciation of Carrie's period, the apocalyptic mother infantilizes her daughter by informing Carrie that the failure to eat dessert is a punishable sin. After Carrie tells her mother that sugar gives her pimples, Margaret proclaims that "pimples are the Lord's way of chastising you." Shortly thereafter, Carrie broaches the topic of being invited to the prom by Tommy Ross, an invitation that she has accepted, and De Palma cuts to a medium shot of Margaret's face, which is accented for dramatic effect by candlelight and a flash of lightning. Turning to the topic of normality, Carrie informs her mother that her classmates at school think she is eccentric or "funny" like Margaret, and that Carrie wants to be "normal" like the other teenagers at school. Foreshadowing the end of the film when Carrie is doused in pig's blood, Margaret throws a cup of water in Carrie's face before launching into a tirade. Suddenly, after refusing to consider her wishes, Carrie employs her telekinetic abilities to close the windows surrounding the dining room and kitchen. Once again, Donaggio alludes to Carrie's budding independence and womanhood by way of Herrmann's stinger motif from *Psycho*.

In the above-mentioned scene, the figures of the supernatural child and apocalyptic mother engage in a morally ambiguous confrontation and generational conflict regarding the norms of good and evil. Carrie's confrontation with Margaret underscores a recurring motif in this dissertation pertaining to the figure of the child and the crisis of the single-parent household. In De Palma's film, Carrie rebels against her mother's authority, in contrast to *The Bad Seed*, in which Rhoda's confrontation with Christine Penmark and the All-American Mom is concealed behind the representation of happy domesticity and patriotic fortitude. Conversely, Carrie's dispute with Margaret is similar to Pearl Harper's encounter with Reverend Harry Powell in *The Night of the Hunter*, inasmuch as the figure of the innocent female child is represented as stranded within a gothic and expressionistic world that is warped by sin and salvation. Nevertheless, Carrie is a

unique figure in this dissertation for two reasons. First, unlike Rhoda and Pearl, Carrie is a supernatural force that is capable of mass destruction. Second, Carrie is defined by the notion of juvenation and the medium of youthfulness.

In De Palma's film, the figure of the supernatural child and Carrie's budding telekinetic abilities are underscored by "the taboo aspects of children's display," the ambiguous relationship between innocence and experience, and the argument that images of the young as a category of appeal and anxiety are determined less by age than by the communication of youthfulness.[337] As a result, one of the unique aspects of *Carrie* is the performance of anxiety and the complication of girlhood as a stage of life and moral classification. By far the oldest performer in this dissertation, Spacek's acclaimed interpretation of Carrie White is also a return to a Hollywood tradition that is determined by the representation of juvenescence, or the period of being young. Regarding the juvenated appeal of Carrie White, the perils of being seventeen are performed by Sissy Spacek, who was twenty-seven during the filming of *Carrie*.

In her book, *Precocious Charms: Stars Performing Girlhood in Classical Hollywood Cinema* (2013), Gaylyn Studlar's exploration of the performance of girlhood, including the films of Mary Pickford, Shirley Temple, Deanna Durbin, and Elizabeth Taylor, illuminates how the female child or child-woman is pictured "*via the medium of* youthfulness," a practice of juvenation which focuses upon "images of the young as a category of appeal rather than age boundaries that define the differences between child and adult."[338] Moving between the literary and filmic representation of girlhood, the image of the baby bitch in films like *Carrie*, *The Bad Seed*, and *Orphan* indicates a longstanding thematic and aesthetic preoccupation with the representational ambiguities of childhood precocity, anachronism, and witchcraft.

Studlar argues that the allure of performance in Hollywood cinema is in many cases

predicated upon the actor's persona or "constructed 'self' as juvenated well beyond the time the actor is young."[339] In addition to the question of stardom, which falls outside of the concerns of this dissertation, Studlar points to the theme of typecasting and the link between box-office appeal and actors who play one type of role throughout their career. This pertains to *Carrie* in particular, inasmuch as the figure of the female child in *Carrie*, rather than Spacek's noteworthy performance as the eponymous heroine, underscores the performance of youth and the figure of the child as a recurring phenomenon in the horror film and especially during the years 1955-2009.

The performance of girlhood and anxiety as a medium of youthfulness is foundational to *Carrie* regarding the figure of the childish woman as supernatural force. The collapse of age as a determining factor in girlhood, not unlike the breakdown of gender normativity in *Profondo rosso*, bleeds into the representational status of social order and moral certainty in *Carrie*. As a mythology and discursive form in De Palma's film, the representational ambiguity of Carrie works against norms of good and evil by representing a zero degree of modern horror and the breakdown of the notion of suburban prosperity as the twentieth century draws to a close.

For example, after returning home from the prom Carrie takes a bath. Not unlike the shower sequence at the start of the film, Carrie is bathed in blood. Consequently the act of purification and defilement is subsumed under "the structuring of subjectivity within and by the processes of abjectivity."[340] Preparing for bed, Carrie encounters Margaret and breaks down in her arms. They recite the Lord's Prayer together, and Margaret abruptly stabs Carrie in the back with a butcher's knife. Carrie falls down the stairs and is cornered in the kitchen by Margaret, who attempts to stab Carrie again. In self-defense, Carrie uses her telekinetic abilities to project a medley of kitchen knives and sharp objects into her mother, crucifying Margaret in the doorway. Suddenly, the house starts to shake and then collapses around them as Carrie embraces her mother's body. Vanquishing

the Puritan American mother, Carrie's act of matricide is interrupted by the decision to obliterate the household entirely. Like the high school before it, the White house is crushed beneath the force of the monstrous female child.

The destruction of the White house in *Carrie* is representative of the disintegration of bourgeois consciousness, a collapse that is represented by Carrie's developmental status as both a girl and a woman.[341] The death of the monstrous female child is relevant to *Carrie* in that the literal disintegration or collapse of the White house at the conclusion of the film is a political, moral, and somatic catastrophe, a plague upon suburban America and the revelation of "hidden depths, existing both as dream and menace."[342] In *Carrie*, the monstrous child is a "dark and beautiful" rendering of girlhood and a notion for sideways growth, in which "the child who by reigning cultural definitions can't 'grow up' grows to the side [or is buried beneath the rubble] of cultural ideals."[343]

This is a point that is especially relevant to the relationship between the figure of the supernatural child or menstrual monster and the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism. According to Barbara Creed, "most critical articles on *Carrie* explore the way in which the film presents a critique of the family and of middle class American values."[344] Creed, citing Robin Wood and David Pirie, argues that *Carrie* is not a family horror film but an example of the witch as menstrual monster. Wood's "discussion of the relationship between the horror film and its 'true milieu,' the family," Creed remarks, "places *Carrie* in 'The Terrible Child' category (along with *It's Alive* and *Cathy's Curse*) which has connections with the category of 'Satanism, diabolic possession, the Antichrist.'"[345] According to Creed, "Wood discusses the ways in which the monster's attack is almost always related to sexual and emotional repressions within the familial context: 'The child-monsters are all shown as products of the family, whether the family itself is

regarded as guilty . . . or innocent.'"[346]

Likewise, Pirie's analysis "of *Carrie* . . . sees the breakdown in the adult-child relationship as a reflection of a wider collapse in social relationships."[347] According to Creed, Pirie "sees the Prom apocalypse, where Carrie . . . destroys the entire gathering, as the core of the film."[348] On the one hand, Creed agrees with Wood and Pirie that "the mother-child relationship in *Carrie*, as in *Psycho*, is depicted as abnormal and perverse. . . . As in *Psycho*, the monstrous child is ultimately depicted as a creation of the psychotic, dominating mother."[349] On the other hand, Creed argues that the nuclear family tends to overshadow the image of the witch in the horror film and specifically the topic of "the witch's supernatural powers . . . linked to the female reproductive system – particularly menstruation."[350] By focusing on the terrible child as a byproduct of the nuclear family, the performance of girlhood and Carrie's menstrual monstrosity is disregarded.

Contrary to Wood and Pirie, Creed's interpretation of *Carrie* indicates a point of view that is highly relevant to the performance of girlhood and anxiety. As Carol Clover points out, "much of the torment Carrie comes in for has to do with menstruation. When she gets her first period in the locker room shower and doesn't know what it is, the other girls scream with laughter and shout 'Plug it up! Plug it up!' as they pelt her with tampons and sanitary pads."[351] I agree with Creed and Clover that Carrie's sexual and supernatural awakening is a critical, and frequently misinterpreted, aspect of De Palma's film.

This is a point that is vital to *Carrie*, specifically regarding the braided identities of killer and victim in relation to the childish monster and the treatment of gender in the horror film. For example, in her essay, "When the Woman Looks," Linda Williams argues that "the relay of looks within the [horror] film . . . duplicates the voyeuristic pleasure of the cinematic apparatus itself."[352] Citing Christian Metz and Laura Mulvey, Williams proposes that the relay of looks is "one of the

primary pleasures of film viewing, [specifically] the impression of looking in on a private world unaware of the spectator's own existence."[353] To support her claim, Williams quotes from *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1922), in particular the female victim's failure to look at the monster and thereby "maintain the distance between observer and observed so essential to the 'pleasure' of the viewer."[354]

As a result, Williams concludes that "the (male) voyeur's properly distanced look safely masters the potential threat of the (female) body it views, the woman's look of horror paralyzes her in such a way that distance is overcome; the monster or the freak's own spectacular appearance holds her originally active, curious look in a trancelike passivity that allows him to master her through *her* look."[355] In the case of *Halloween*, Steve Neale's argument that the articulation of suspense, aggression, and violence in the opening sequence of Carpenter's film is communicated mainly through the "unstable combination of looks involved in the construction of the shot" operates as a key example of the male voyeur's mastery of the female body.[356]

But what if the adult female is replaced by the childish monster? How exactly does this affect the psychosexual tension that exists between the male killer and female victim? How does this complicate the relay of looks and the binary opposition between active/male and passive/female? While the dramatic tension of gender and sexuality still exists in a film like *Nosferatu* or *Carrie*, the downsizing of the monster product overturns a number of canonical approaches to gender and genre, illuminating the female image in a way that builds upon and responds to the work of scholars like Williams, Creed, and Clover. Most importantly, the concept of mastery as a gendered dynamic, especially when viewed through the medium of youthfulness, poses a series of questions that demonstrate that the monstrous child is not a force of evil, but a

rebellious and motivated identity at odds with a range of social and cultural norms related to the modern horror film.

Long before she is doused in pig's blood, the catalyst for anger and revenge in *Carrie* is introduced at the beginning of the film, in the admittedly farfetched notion that Carrie is oblivious to what menstruation is. This moment of misrecognition, though, should not be taken literally. On the contrary, the manner in which the opening sequence of *Carrie* is staged by the camera is a subversive take upon "film theory's conventional assumption that the cinematic apparatus," especially in the modern horror film, "is organized around the experience of a mastering, voyeuristic gaze."[357] "Needless to say," writes Clover, "horror movies spend a lot of time looking at women, and in first-person ways that do indeed seem well described by [Laura] Mulvey's 'sadistic-voyeuristic' gaze. But the story does not end there."[358]

The relationship between the opening scenes of *Carrie* and *The Bad Seed* are determined by the ways in which women's bodies are regulated and disciplined within a male-dominated society. The communication of pleasure in *Carrie* points not only to the relationship between gender and genre, it is also a profound interpretation of what Kael identifies as the "narrative modes and patterns of address, and the relationship of the 'ideal' spectator addressed by the text to the real social subject who responds to that address."[359] The performance of girlhood and anxiety in *Carrie* intersects with *The Bad Seed* along the lines of suburban American prosperity and the myth of the All-American Mom as a site of generational conflict.

Orphan **(Jaume Collet-Serra, 2009)**

In this dissertation I examine the opening scene or sequence of a film and base my interpretation upon that clip almost exclusively. In doing so, it is my intention to examine the

emergence of the child as a morally ambiguous figure that is entwined with varying historical and cultural contexts during the years 1955-2009. Up until now, these include: the Great Depression, World War II, Britain's age of affluence, Italy's Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*, and the Cold War. That said, the child in this dissertation is an emergent figure that is typically handled by way of the cultural and historical function of monstrosity and the question of how the monstrous child and childish monster have been molded and remolded over the twentieth century and beyond in film, literature, television, and comic books.

In the case of *Orphan*, it is the exception that proves the rule. *Orphan*'s alternate ending, rather than its opening scene or sequence, is the most inspired treatment of the monstrous child in the film overall. As opposed to the opening moments of *The Bad Seed* and *Carrie*, the alternate ending of *Orphan* is a motion picture of the female child that is discarded – it is a moment that is left on the cutting room floor. Sadly, its counterpart is a more conventional denouement, a battle between the norms of good and evil that reinforces the symbolic order. The triumph of the All-American Mom (Kate Coleman, played by Vera Farmiga) over the baby bitch in the form of Kate's adoptive daughter Esther (Isabelle Fuhrman) represents the childish monster in *Orphan* as simply evil and unsympathetic. Likewise, the repression of sexuality is confused with sexuality itself. In case the viewer is uncertain as to whether the childish monster is nothing if not the embodiment of evil, Manohla Dargis of *The New York Times* points out that Esther is provided with "an exotic accent and predatory habits that suggest she worked for SPECTRE back in the motherland before landing in America as an undercover devil doll."[360]

Be that as it may, the alternate ending of *Orphan* illuminates a framework that has been examined throughout this chapter, namely the concept of anxiety and the female child as a morally ambiguous figure. The scene begins with Esther, who reapplies her make-up and dentures while

looking into a cracked mirror. Her face is bloodied and lacerated; her attempt at cosmetic rejuvenation is woefully inadequate. In the following shot, Esther walks downstairs and is surrounded by police. Like Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) in *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950), Esther is ready for her close-up. Enjoying her final moments of freedom after ruthlessly murdering her adoptive family, Esther shamelessly parades over the bodies of Kate and her husband John Coleman (Peter Sarsgaard), as well as their biological children, eight-year-old Max (Aryana Engineer) and thirteen-year-old Daniel (Jimmy Bennett).

Unlike the "authentic" conclusion of *Orphan*, the alternate version compresses and encapsulates nearly all of the themes and questions that are constitutive of the child figure, including the depiction of innocence, the ambiguity of play, the appearance and disappearance of children, and the anxiety of parenthood. Indeed, the picture of girlhood that I am curious about in *Orphan* is one of the only scenes in the film that is deemed inadmissible, theatrically speaking. Esther's fleeting moment of celebrity, not unlike Norma Desmond's swan song in *Sunset Boulevard*, is a fitting segue into the conclusion of my dissertation. The childish killers in *Orphan* and *Sunset Boulevard*, like many of the children that I write about, are a celebration and a hideous reminder of the dominant ideology and curdled humanism of the Cold War Era.

Regarding the different versions of the childish monster pictured at the end *Orphan*, Esther's rebellious streak – which is either punished by Kate or surveilled by the police – illuminates how the sentimental figure of the child (i.e., Shirley Temple) functions to "paper the cracks" of cultural anxieties. The underlying anxieties of the Cold War Era and post 9/11 indicate that some fears are meant to last, including evil non-Americans, the liberated woman, and the fear that democratic capitalism may not be cleanly separable from Fascism.[361]

The correlation between *Orphan* and *Sunset Boulevard* doubles back to a number of films that I write about in previous chapters. In addition to *Village of the Damned* and *The Bad Seed*, *Orphan* brings to mind a particular historical moment during the 1950s that is characterized by militaristic braggadocio, middle-class prosperity, anticlimax, and fear. The versions of Esther that I am fascinated by are framed between the Second World War and the War on Terror. Consequently, Esther represents a perversely nostalgic remembrance of communist infiltration, as well as the anxieties surrounding what Slavoj Žižek refers to as "the two events which mark the beginning and the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century: the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the financial meltdown of 2008."[362]

In what follows, the stages of my argument pertaining to the monstrous child and the concept of anxiety include the figure of the childish monster in the horror film after 9/11 and the financial meltdown of 2008, the crises of masculinity and the All-American Mom, and the normative and pathological ambiguity of the figure of the childish monster in relation to kinship and the adoption process. The performance of girlhood in *Orphan* is shocking because, like Rhoda in *The Bad Seed*, Esther Coleman suffers from a genetic disposition or disability that is coded as pathological at a particular historical juncture. Esther, like Rhoda, embodies the affect of anxiety as a biological, rather than supernatural, arrangement that works against norms of good and evil and the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism via the notions of kinship and the SPECTRE of communist expansion. The dramatic impact of the alternate ending of *Orphan* is determined by the braided identities of the killer and victim in relation to the female child image and the treatment of gender and sexuality after the attacks of 9/11 and the Great Recession.

This is a point that is vital to the figure of the monstrous child and especially the childish monster in *Orphan*. As mentioned previously, the similarity between *Orphan*, *Don't Look Now*,

and *The Bad Seed* is uncanny – or plagiaristic. However, the cultural and historical contexts of the Cold War and Post-9/11 Era present a fundamental difference that is embodied by the figure of the child in *Orphan*. *Orphan*, like *The Innocents*, is determined by a practice of looking that is paranoid and erotic. Yet the matter of historical allegory is more pronounced in *Orphan* when compared to Clayton's adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw*. Similar to *Village of the Damned*, the figure of the child in *Orphan* embodies the Cold War narrative of the childish monster as alien incursion. Regarding the overlap of Cold War and post-9/11 anxieties, the question of what it means to think historically is most forcefully expressed in *Orphan* regarding a theme that I explore in *The Bad Seed*, namely the dread of adoption and kinship.

True to form, it is the crisis of masculinity that sets the narrative of the childish monster in motion. John Coleman, reminiscent of Kenneth Penmark in *The Bad Seed*, steps into his daughter's room to proudly admire Esther's artistic accomplishments. Yet John, unlike Kenneth, discovers that his adoptive daughter, in contrast to his biological children, is a murderous and sexually overactive child-woman who suffers from hypopituitarism, a rare hormone disorder which causes proportional dwarfism. Sadly, Esther is not the precocious nine-year-old that John and Kate adopted at the old-fashioned orphanage run by Sister Abigail (C.C.H. Pounder) – she is a thirty-three-year-old homicidal maniac who wants to eliminate Karen and her children and become John's wife.

In *Orphan*, as well as *The Bad Seed*, it is the representation of the artistic potential of the childish monster, in addition to the baby bitch's anachronistic appearance, that is an early warning sign of death and destruction. Like Rhoda, the image of Esther, as well as the art that she works upon, belongs to a generation that comes before the diegetic present. Esther's anachronistic appearance (pigtails, Peter Pan collar) and artistry adhere to a Cold War mythology that equates

the art of criminality with pathology and the killer instinct. The cinematic questioning of childhood and innocence in *Orphan*, as well as *The Bad Seed* and *Village of the Damned*, reveals that the social value of the figure of the priceless child is defined not by vulnerability or the need for protection from adult society. On the contrary, the figure of the childish monster or monstrous child, as the case may be, embodies the concepts of innocence and *in*vulnerability to a degree that is alarming and disconcerting to adult society and the symbolic patriarchal order.

This is a point that illuminates the Cold War narrative of the childish monster after 9/11. In *The Bad Seed* and *Village of the Damned*, Rhoda's ability to play the piano is as much a developmental abnormality as the social skills of the Midwich Children, who have grown and adapted at an inhumanly rapid pace and are framed by the villagers of Midwich as a communist insurgency. By comparison, Esther's skill with a paintbrush, when illuminated by the ultraviolet light of her fish tank, is a Day-Glo nightmare that is coded as foreign and exotic; in the blink of an eye John's paternal self-esteem and sense of normalcy are replaced by terror and anxiety. Peeling away the wallpaper of his daughter's room, a clichéd menagerie of childish images (lions and tigers and bears) are replaced by a blacklight ink phantasmagoria of sex and violence with John, locked in a passionate embrace with Esther, front and center. The threat of terrorism after 9/11 is figuratively compressed and encapsulated in *Orphan* by the artistry of the childish monster as threat to the nuclear family.

Orphan, according to Dargis, evokes a set of Cold War and post-9/11 anxieties regarding national security and the threatened nuclear family, while at the same time intersecting with the psychological thriller, for example *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (Curtis Hanson, 1992) and *The Good Son* (Joseph Ruben, 1993), starring Macaulay Culkin and Elijah Wood.[363] Similar to *Rosemary's Baby*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Exorcist*, *It's Alive*, and *The Omen* (Richard

Donner, 1976) *Orphan* looks to the modern family horror cycle and the American Dream in extremis. Regardless of their professional accomplishments, John and Kate, an architect and onetime Yale music professor, are desperate to prove that they can reproduce a loving family within the material and ideological framework that is ambiguously projected as the birthright of every white male heterosexual American.

In *Orphan*, the bourgeois preoccupations of the Coleman family are a blessing and a curse. For example, Kate's tendency to passively support John disguises John's obviously lucrative income, a point that is never mentioned in the film. Like the cultured and working-class men and women in *Village of the Damned*, the Colemans are both sequestered from and riddled by the austerities of the outside world. Dargis, no doubt aware of the collapse of the U.S. housing market in 2007, identifies the Coleman residence as "one of those sprawling houses that always looks spotless even if no one ever drags a mop across its polished floors, which makes you wonder who will swab up the inevitable pooling blood."[364] In the midst of the housing bubble and credit crisis of 2007-2009, the Coleman's *Architectural Digest*-worthy home is as imperiled as the middle-class family that lives within it.

John and Kate are oblivious to the traumas of 9/11 and the Great Recession and look instead to the post-Soviet States for comfort and the promise of heteronormative reproduction. During their visit to the orphanage, John and Kate are inexorably drawn to the *only* child who happens to come from Russia with adoption paperwork that is suspiciously incomplete. Contrary to *Village of the Damned*, the Colemans are represented as perfectly at ease with the threat of communist infiltration. The crises of masculinity and the All-American Mom, not unlike the disembodiment of Charles Lee Ray in *Child's Play* or the plight of Christine Penmark in *The Bad Seed*, is represented as a form of death obsession or death anxiety – a never-ending quest for an adopted

child that, as we see in the alternate ending of the *Orphan*, is disfigured and destroyed.

Hence the cultural and historical implications of the alternate ending of *Orphan* are illuminated when viewed through the figure of the childish monster and the crisis of the nuclear family. Like many of the adults in this dissertation, John and Kate are both enamored of and terrified by children. Only two years after starring in the horror film *Joshua* (George Ratliff, 2007), in which an affluent young Manhattan family is torn apart by the increasingly sadistic behavior of their disturbed son, Farmiga's performance in *Orphan* focuses upon a mother who is reeling from an unfaithful husband, a failed career, and a third child's stillborn death. Hoping that adoption will be a reparative experience, the All-American Mom in *Orphan* shares much in common with Christine Penmark in *The Bad Seed* inasmuch as the ideal of American prosperity is ultimately a fortress of solitude. Compared to the plight of Kate Coleman, John's crisis of masculinity regarding Esther's blacklight ink phantasmagoria is shored up by the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism. That is until Esther stabs John to death after being spurned by her adoptive father and would-be lover.

More importantly, *Orphan* spends considerable time exploring the crisis of the All-American Mom, in particular Kate's grief over her miscarriage and guilt having to do with drunken neglect as the reason for daughter Max's hearing loss. In addition to marital tensions with John, Kate is overwhelmed by anxiety and looks to the adoption process and, figuratively speaking, the SPECTRE of communism and terrorism for answers. The figure of the female childish monster, similar to *The Innocents* and *The Bad Seed*, is viewed by the figure of the mother as an object of simultaneous adulation and obsessive anxiety. Consequently, the narrative of the childish monster after 9/11 is entwined with the crises of masculinity and the All-American Mom by way of the normative and pathological ambiguity of the concept of anxiety in relation to the figure of the

female child.

Like Miss Giddens in *The Innocents* and Christine Penmark in *The Bad Seed*, Kate's interpretation of the figure of the child in *Orphan* illuminates the failure to distinguish between the child*like* and the child*ish*. Kate's initial hope that Esther is a symbol of new growth and regeneration is quickly replaced by a regressive Victorian sentimentalization of the child as an identification figure for the All-American Mom or "childish adult." Esther, like Flora in *The Innocents*, is subsumed under "a ghostly, unreachable fancy" that is the object of Kate's and Miss Giddens's impassioned and misguided feelings.[365] Kate's return as the matriarch of the Coleman family – in the "authentic" ending of the film – is based upon the figure of the childish monster and the manipulation of "the use of the infantile" to provide an "escape from an adult world perceived as irredeemably corrupt, or at least bewilderingly problematic."[366] In conjunction with John's discovery of Esther's blacklight-ink painting, the childish monster in *Orphan* is determined by a practice of looking that is hallucinatory and erotic.

This is a point that has been taken up in the media in response to *Orphan* during its theatrical release, specifically regarding questions of kinship and the adoption process. For example, Nathan Lee of *National Public Radio*, like Robin Wood before him, wonders whether "the persistence of the Evil Child Thriller can be attributed to the fact that America, when it comes to the movies, behaves like a nation of helpless, frightened children?"[367] According to Lee, the negative reception to *Orphan* is based on the worry "that this silly, vicious, wildly campy shocker may have a detrimental effect on adoption. Now, there are any number of amusing things about the movie, but the notion that prospective adopters may think twice in order not to bring home a deranged foreigner with a penchant for dressing in 19th century clothes and killing people with hammers is the most delightful."[368]

The dread of kinship and the adoption process is a recurring motif in the response to *Orphan*. In the *San Francisco Chronicle*, an argument is made that demon children have long been a staple commodity of horror films like *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Bad Seed*, and *The Omen*. However, the perennial paranoia of the orphan as monstrous child "has sparked outrage from the adoption community, which says that *Orphan* promotes negative stereotypes about parentless children."[369] Including a 4,145-member Facebook group called "I Am Boycotting Warner Bros.' 'Orphan' Movie," outrage from various Christian and adoption groups prompted Warner Brothers Entertainment Inc. to change the initial voice-over from the *Orphan* trailer that ominously stated, "It must be difficult to love an adopted child as much as your own," to "I don't think Mommy likes me very much."[370]

The conflation of the child(ish) monster with the status and rights of the orphan as a political and cultural icon taps into a reservoir of anxiety that intersects with Cold War-alien-incursion narratives popularized in the 1950s, in addition to the threat to homeland security that is a defining characteristic of the dominant ideology of American politics and culture after 9/11. Like Gordon and Anthea Zellaby, the desire to imagine the secret life of children in *Orphan* and in the mass media activates a moral panic that is both tragic and wildly imaginative. Subsequently, rhetoric of paranoia and isolationism is offered up as a hideous public service announcement in which Esther Coleman represents the scourge of communism as a political and cultural epidemic that poses a fundamental threat to the nuclear family and the norms and cherished beliefs that it represents. The conscious exploitation of the threat of communist expansion in *Orphan* unconsciously channels more pressing concerns and anxieties that pertain to the threat of terrorist activity and America's War on Terror.

For example, the *Daily Beast*'s Melissa Fay Greene describes Esther as a "mythic amalgam of *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Bad Seed*, *Grendel*, and the shark from *Jaws*," a comparison that is also made with regard to Brian De Palma's *Carrie*.[371] "Pure evil," writes Greene, has appeared in the upscale Coleman "home, and you can tell it's pure evil because of that scary font."[372] To clarify, Greene is referring to the red crayon poster for *Orphan* that is reminiscent of the "redrum" scrawl in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980). Greene continues to complicate the boundaries between the cinematic and the political when she observes that "the disturbing soundtrack [of *Orphan*], that black hair, and the fact that [Esther is] a *Russian orphan* adopted as an *older child*" are somehow linked to "the overthrow of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989."[373]

This is a point that is vital to the cultural function of the figure of the monstrous child in particular. Greene's wildly imaginative rendering of *Orphan*, very much like the overactive imaginations of many of the adults in this dissertation, picks and chooses from history and mythology to arrive at a pseudo-scientific narrative that is as frightening as the monstrous child could ever be. Seriously, how exactly do you explain the connection between a film like *Orphan* and "a concentration camp-like world of imprisoned children . . . exposed to the world. A majority of them . . . black-haired, brown-skinned Roma children discarded in a land of unrepentant racism . . . born with conditions like cleft palate, Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, crossed eyes, or club feet in a society that found disabilities shameful." ?![374] To be clear, are we talking about the status of orphaned children or are we talking about the privileged families of North America and Western Europe who want to feel sorry for the children while at the same time remaining unscathed by the horrors of war and human rights abuse?

For Kate Coleman, the desire to provide Esther with a fresh start at family life is very much indebted to the childish notion that if the orphan is liberated from "a concentration camp-like

world" the horrors of abandonment and disability will magically disappear and solve everybody's problems, especially the bourgeois preoccupations (security, fidelity, prosperity, sobriety) of the All-American Mom. Arguably, the monstrous child is not only indicative of the excessively active imagination of adults, it is also a concept by which the figure of the child is *entitled* to rebel against the social and cultural norms of the adult world. By doing so, the child monster in *Orphan* demonstrates that the Free World is as oppressive as the SPECTRE-like totalitarian regimes that are plotting against the United States of America. Fuhrman's performance as Esther is a camp tour-de-force of hysterical maliciousness because it epitomizes the monstrous child as a rebel with a cause.

Orphan is defined by the relationship between the figure of the child monster and the crises of masculinity and the All-American Mom. For example, speaking with her therapist Dr. Browning (Margo Martindale), Kate recalls a nightmare she had the previous night involving the stillbirth of her third child. The dream, which is the opening scene of *Orphan*, is a graphic representation of Kate's feelings of anxiety, isolation, and confusion regarding not only childbirth, but also her ability to remain a clean and sober mother to her living children. "I drove by the wine shop on our way home the other night," Kate confesses.[375] "Did you stop?" Dr. Browning asks. "I wanted to," Kate replies, "the thought went through my brain, you know? It wasn't even for myself, I just thought it would be nice to have a bottle handy in case we have guests."

In the dialogue between Kate and Dr. Browning the anxiety surrounding alcoholism is conflated with the biological, social, and emotional uncertainties of motherhood within the nuclear family. "Your dreams can be a manifestation of your emotions, it's your body and mind's way of dealing with the stress and grief of what happened," says Dr. Browning. "What if this has nothing to do with the stillbirth?" Kate replies. Dr. Browning asks Kate what she thinks her nightmare is

about, and Kate informs her therapist that she and her husband John "are seeing kids for the first time this weekend, and maybe the nightmares . . . maybe I'm just not ready to adopt yet." Similar to *The Bad Seed*, Kate's anxieties are normalized and diagnosed by Dr. Browning as a response to stress that is both treatable and infectious; the appeal of Freudian psychoanalysis post 9/11 shares much in common with the post-World War II cocktail of Freudianism and existentialism.

Dr. Browning, like Monica Breedlove (Evelyn Varden) in *The Bad Seed*, represents a mode of pseudo-scientific naiveté that disregards the legitimacy and challenges of motherhood by refusing to believe that the monstrous female child is dangerous. Later, out of concern for Esther's behavior and after speaking with Sister Abigail, who is eventually murdered by Esther, Kate and John bring Esther to visit with Dr. Browning. After speaking alone with Esther, Dr. Browning informs Kate and John that Esther is highly functional and that the fault lies with Esther's parents and Kate in particular, who, according to Esther, is blocking any progress with bonding between mother and adoptive daughter. Heightening the drama of this scene, *Orphan* crosscuts between Dr. Browning's objective and misinformed professional opinion and Esther throwing a disturbingly violent temper tantrum in the bathroom down the hall.

In addition to Dr. Browning, John is blissfully unaware of the dangers that Esther poses to his family. Like John Baxter in *Don't Look Now*, John Coleman is portrayed as more vulnerable than his wife and is eventually murdered by his adoptive daughter. The ability to distinguish between innocence and criminality in *Orphan* is affected by the role of gender in the horror film. In the case of *Orphan*, Daniel, like his father, is more concerned with playing videogames, while Max is "adopted" by Esther as a confidant and, later in the film, framed by Esther for the crimes that the childish monster has committed. The manner in which Esther insinuates herself into the Coleman family is one of the more interesting aspects of the film, specifically regarding the

performance of girlhood and the ambiguity of the child as a category of juventated appeal.

For example, at an open house held at the orphanage of St. Mariana, Kate and John meet Esther for the first time. Upstairs, apart from the children and adults playing together, John encounters Esther painting and singing alone. John is impressed by Esther's advanced abilities in painting. "Where'd you get the idea for this one?" John asks Esther. "My paintings always tell stories," Esther replies. "This one's about a sad mother lion who can't find her cubs." John is won over by Esther's precocity and her narrative at the very moment that Kate walks through the door of the studio accompanied by Sister Abigail, head mistress at St. Mariana. Kate is also taken with Esther's painting, and asks the young girl where she learned to paint. "I've just had lots of time to practice," Esther replies. "It's really boring here." "It's boring here?" Kate asks. "If you're so bored, then why aren't you down at the party?" "I've never really seen the point of it," Esther says. "Nobody's ever talked to me before. I guess I'm different."

For Kate in particular, the parent-child narrative of *Orphan* is defined by the ambiguity of play and the role reversal of wife/adult and daughter/child. After the adoption is finalized, Kate is cleaning Esther's room and discovers a dog-eared Bible that should belong to someone much older than a nine-year-old. However, Kate's desire to occupy the role of adoptive mother trumps her curiosity as to why Esther would hide the Bible in the first place. Kate, who has decided to put her career on hold and stay at home with her children, suspends her disbelief and takes on Esther as a piano student. One afternoon, Kate overhears Esther playing Tchaikovsky on the family piano, exhibiting a level of aptitude that far exceeds her previous performances and Kate's expectations. Kate confronts Esther, "You told me you didn't know how to play," Kate says. "No I didn't," Esther replies. When Kate accuses Esther of being misleading, Esther retorts, "You offered to teach me and I accepted. . . . I thought you would enjoy teaching me. It must be frustrating for

someone who loves music as much as you, to have a son that isn't interested and a daughter who can't even hear."

Concomitant with the art of criminality, Esther's manipulative attitude toward Kate extends to the sexual politics of the bedroom. Comparable to *The Innocents*, the sexual precocity of the child is both alarming and titillating. For example, in *Orphan*, Kate and John are having sex. After discovering that Esther is watching them they immediately stop. The following day Kate visits Esther in her room to talk about "the birds and the bees," only to discover that Esther is more than familiar with courtship and sexual intercourse. The level of sexual precocity that Esther exhibits is shocking to Kate, and serves as a turning point in the mother's estimation of the innocent child and her place within the nuclear family.

Like *The Innocents*, it is the greenhouse that serves as the locus for Kate and Esther's combative relationship.[376] A glass building in which plants are grown that need protection from cold weather, the greenhouse is emblematic of the apparent vulnerability and moral ambiguity of the figure of the child. Located behind the Coleman house, Kate's personal sanctuary contains a memorial for her stillborn child, Jessica. Placed at the feet of a large assortment of white roses is the following inscription: "I never held you, but I feel you. You never spoke, but I hear you. I never knew you, but I love you." Hoping to confide in her adoptive daughter and strengthen their relationship, Kate reads the inscription to Esther and explains how Jessica was stillborn. She tells Esther that Jessica's ashes have been spread at the base of the rosebush. "As long as this plant grows, part of her will be alive inside it," says Kate.

However, Kate's confession to Esther is both a reparative experience and an invitation for trouble – an act of compassion that simultaneously foreshadows a battle to the death. The paradox of motherhood in *Orphan* is that the final step in healing from the loss of a child is to kill another

child that is identified as pathological and a threat to the nuclear family. Contrary to John, who is an object of desire for Esther, Kate is a rival for the father/husband's affections. As an act of provocation Esther presents Kate with a bouquet of white roses as a gift. Esther's present infuriates Kate, especially after she told Esther how important the roses were in relation to Kate's memories of Jessica. Symbolic of innocence, the white rose is transformed by Esther into a symbol of her desire to overthrow Kate as the matriarch of the Coleman family.

The extent to which Esther is willing to go to discredit Kate reaches a morbid climax after Kate wrestles Esther to the ground upon receiving her "gift" of white roses. That night in the garage, Esther places her arm in a vice and breaks the bone before going to bed and calling for John. Telling him that it was Kate who injured her, Esther further arouses the psychodrama between husband and wife. Being that relations are already strained thanks to Kate's bout with alcoholism and John's infidelity, Kate is told by John to sleep on the couch downstairs, and Kate visits the liquor store to purchase two bottles of wine.

Later, after catching Kate in the act of snooping in her bedroom, Esther confronts her adoptive mother with the full extent of her plans. After Kate tells Esther that she will not allow Esther to hurt her children, Esther replies, "Me?! I'm not the one who passed out drunk and let Max almost drown in the pond. If it wasn't for John, she'd be dead, and you'd probably still be in jail." When Kate asks Esther how she knows about Max's near drowning, Esther hold up Kate's personal diary. Esther continues to torment Kate regarding the stillbirth of Jessica, reciting from memory from Kate's diary, "She was still kicking when the doctor told me it was something called phantom fetal movement. For sixteen days I carried my dead baby inside me. It was the cruelest torture I could imagine."

Shortly thereafter, Kate and Esther's fight to the death results in Kate's return as the

matriarch of the Coleman family. Moving from the greenhouse and Jessica's memorial to a frozen pond in the backyard, Esther's last-ditch effort, having been beaten at the pond and about to drown, is to appeal to Kate's motherly instincts. But Kate refuses Esther's performance of girlhood and kicks Esther in the face, after which Esther descends into the murky depths of the pond. Unlike *Don't Look Now*, the viewer is expected to savor the watery death of the child. Kate, who nearly allowed her daughter Max drown in the very same pond that Esther has perished in, is now a clean and sober monstrous mother.

Like Christine Penmark in *The Bad Seed*, Kate's refusal to mother Esther is the final assertion of motherhood itself. The relationship between Kate and Esther is not unlike the dynamic shared by Carrie and Margaret White in *Carrie*, or for that matter Miss Giddens and Flora in *The Innocents*. In each film, the distortion or conflicted relationship between the adult and the child is riddled with anxiety due to the conflation of the normal and the pathological. In the name of innocence, the children must suffer and die. In the case of *Orphan* in particular, the conflict between Kate and Esther is defined by a prolonged and rigorous examination of two adult women vying for the affections of *le Nom du Père*, or the Name of the Father.

Desperately looking for any and all imperfections that can be exploited, Esther reads through Kate's diary, and Kate finds Esther's Bible and looks more closely through its pages. As a result, she finds a series of color photographs of middle-aged men Esther attempted to seduce, then murdered. At the base of the inside cover Kate finds an imprint that reads "Saarne Instituute." After speaking with an attendant at the Saarne Instituute, located in Estonia (not Russia, Melissa Fay Greene!), Kate discovers that it is a mental hospital, not an orphanage. Similar to *Child's Play*, Esther hails from "the fictitious *elsewhen* of the classic [horror] narrative," while at the same time embodying what Andrew Tudor identifies as the "relentless physicality and everyday settings" of

the horror movie of the eighties."[377] A figment "of peasant superstition or mid-European folk memory," Esther, like Chucky, is a child monster that has "become part of our everyday environment, no longer safely insulated in mythic history."[378]

Later, Kate receives a phone call from a doctor at the Saarne Instituute, who informs her that the picture of Esther that she has sent them has been identified as a fully-grown adult with a rare hormone disorder called hypopituitarism. Leena Klaamer, Esther's real name, is born in 1976. Leena, the doctor informs Kate, has scars upon her neck and wrists due to the restraints that she wore at the Saarne Instituute, in addition to the fact that Leena was the most violent patient at the institute at the time. According to the doctor, Leena is dangerously ill and has killed at least seven people that the Saarne Instituute knows of before escaping to the United States.

This is a point that is critical to the performance of girlhood and anxiety in the horror film. In movies like *Peeping Tom* and *Psycho*, the child/victim exists with*in* the adult/killer, a dichotomy that is reversed in the case of Esther. The overlap of innocence and criminality, and the anxiety that this mélange provokes, is especially unsettling when projected against a fantasy of middle-class prosperity and fortitude. The look of concern upon Sister Abigail's face as she watches Kate and John bond with Esther at the orphanage is explained later in *Orphan*, when Sister Abigail explains to Kate and John that Esther's previous adoptive family died in a house fire from which Esther barely escaped. "This is an extraordinary little girl," says Sister Abigail. "She's very bright, she's very mature for her age, and she's very well-mannered. She's a bit of a princess, actually. She wears those ribbons on her wrists and her neck all the time. The only time we've ever had trouble with her is when we tried to take them off."

Unlike the anachronistic dress of Rhoda, Esther's dated fashion is dismissed as the precocious charms of a nine-year-old girl from a foreign and exotic land. For example, after being

adopted by the Colemans, Esther is teased by the children at her new school as dressing like Little Bo Peep. The ambiguity of Esther's life stage is detected by the children in *Orphan* before the adults. Shooting a bird with his paintball gun, Daniel is unable, when Esther prompts him, to put the bird out of its misery by crushing it with a rock. Smashing the bird without hesitation, Esther displays a comfort with violence, as well as a disturbing cruelty towards animals, that frightens and disgusts Daniel and Max.

Later at dinner, Daniel accuses Esther of eating abnormally – Esther cuts her steak into even slices before eating them – wondering out loud if people "in Transylvania or whatever country you're from" behave the same way. The allusion to Count Dracula at the Coleman's dinner table may be dismissed as yet another example of bad intertexuality. More importantly, Esther's resemblance to the classic horror archetype is compounded by a new generation of monstrosity that, at least in the alternate ending of *Orphan*, puts Daniel in his place. Daniel's moment of intertextual dexterity is counteracted by his refusal to acknowledge that Esther is his sister. Encouraging his parents to send Esther back to the "retard camp" where she came, Esther's abnormality is equated with a rebellious and motivated identity that hails from the old world as well as the new.

In *Orphan*, the figure of the monstrous child is an example of historical allegory. Both metaphorical and circumstantial, s/he, like 9/11, is an "event" that encompasses both the literal and the symbolic. Borrowing from Aviva Briefel and Sam Miller, the monstrous child is evocative of "the relationship between the concreteness of undeniable events and their metaphorical import."[379] The child monster, like the historical imaginaries in which s/he intersects, "reminds us of this duality through its own double nature as killing and meaning machine."[380] Briefel and Miller's history of horror after 9/11 is a reminder that in order to fully understand who the

monstrous child is, it is necessary that we examine the intersection of monstrosity and the historical and maternal imagination.

Especially in *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* the bond between the mother and child is a warped reflection of the traits that children have inherited and made their own. According to Marie-Hélène Huet, the role of the maternal imagination underscores the fear that "instead of reproducing the father's image, as nature commands, the monstrous child bore witness to the violent desires that moved the mother at the time of conception or during pregnancy."[381] In Huet's view, the erasure of paternity in favor of the dangerous power of the female imagination has haunted centuries of medical research, in addition to Romantic aesthetics and contemporary visual culture.[382]

In the case of *The Bad Seed*, the monstrous child is explained as a genetic trait that is passed down by Christine's family, and in *Carrie* Margaret White's sense of isolation and aggression is acted out by herself and Carrie as a holy war against the institutional inadequacies of high school. One might even argue that Kate Coleman, not unlike the *Daily Beast*'s Melissa Fay Greene, is so enamored with the loss of childhood that only a monstrous case of *schadenfreude* and the return of the repressed will do. The children in *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* are a projection of the anxieties of motherhood, both in terms of the All-American Mom and her angry and resentful doppelgänger who has been deprived of independence and success. The child is made monstrous as a result of the adult's anxiety and uncertainty in the face of their own personal trials and tribulations. For Christine Penmark, Margaret White, and Kate Coleman the desire to feel close with their daughters is convoluted and murderous.

In *Orphan* especially, the performance of girlhood and anxiety is in large part determined by a Cold War and post-9/11 ethos that is "framed by the government and the media as one in

which the fundamentals of our society and our very existence are threatened."[383] By the same token, Briefel and Miller, in their edited collection, *Horror after 9/11: World of Fear, Cinema of Terror* (2012), point out that a post-9/11 climate is defined by a sociey "in which every government and individual has to pick a side ('You're either with us or with the terrorists')."[384] In the introduction to their anthology, Briefel and Miller argue that the horror film after 9/11, not unlike its postwar equivalent, flourishes "in a context where we could not openly process the horror we were experiencing."[385] As a direct result, "the horror genre emerged as a rare protected space in which to critique the tone and content of public discourse."[386] Briefel and Miller observe that because the horror film takes place in a universe "where the fundamental rules of our own reality no longer apply . . . these products of popular culture allow us to examine the consequences not only of specific oppressive acts funded by our tax dollars, but also of the entire Western way of life."[387]

The long-term influence of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, according to Briefel and Miller, "is likely to be found in the provision of new templates for genre filmmaking."[388] This is a point that is critical to *Orphan*, in particular the opposition that Briefel and Miller draw between the allegorical and tangible value of monstrosity. According to Briefel and Miller, "we have come to expect that a monster is never just a monster, but rather a metaphor that translates real anxieties into more or less palatable forms."[389] In other words, the Great Depression (Dracula and Frankenstein), nuclear age (mammoth mutants), 1970s super psycho-killers, and "feminist era inspired hyper-macho crazies and the ultimate patriarchal cannibal, Hannibal Lecter," support the claim that "every generation gets the movie monster it deserves."[390] In the case of the horror film after 9/11 and the financial meltdown of 2008, the figure of Esther in *Orphan* taps into a range

anxieties that are linked to home invasion, homeland security, and the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism.

In *Orphan*, Esther's position between childhood and adulthood is coded as monstrous. Shortly before murdering John, Esther smears her mascara and lipstick, removes her dentures to reveal a set of decrepit teeth, and ages in front of the camera; a youthful child is violently transformed into a woman in her thirties. Like the alternate ending of the film, Esther stares into a cracked mirror. She removes her clothes to reveal that she binds her body to disguise her chest and bottom. Esther is labeled as monstrous due to the ambiguous distinction between childhood and adulthood, in addition to the repression of gender and sexuality – monstrosity is written upon the body as well as upon the walls of Esther's room in invisible fluorescent ink.

The difference between Esther's performance as an innocent child and as a fully grown adult serial killer is visually represented by the ultraviolet light in her fish tank. The dark side of Esther's seemingly innocent and harmless paintings of wildlife and dollhouses are revealed, once the blacklight is turned on, as a frightening Hieronymus Bosch-like vision of death and destruction. The two sides of Esther's identity, prelapsarian child and violently lapsed criminal adult, are externalized as two pictures that Esther represents for the normative middle-class family that has adopted her. Immersed in a world that she has created and manipulated through her own imagination, Esther epitomizes the monstrous female child and rebel with a cause.

Conclusion

The Monstrous Child and the Politics of Horror Cinema and Media

It is a point of interest that many of the films that I discuss have been remade or reissued at least once (and sometimes more than once) since their original versions. In the case of *The Innocents* alone, Jack Clayton's adaptation of Henry James's novella is regarded as the most accomplished version of *The Turn of the Screw* compared to other films, including *The Nightcomers* (Michael Winner, 1972), Eloy de la Iglesia's Spanish-language *Otra vuelta de tuerca* (*The Turn of the Screw*, 1985), *The Turn of the Screw* (Rusty Lemorande, 1992), *Presence of Mind* (Atoni Aloy, 1999), *In a Dark Place* (Donato Rotunno, 2006), and *The Others* (Alejandro Amenábar, 2001).[391] *The Innocents*, like *Don't Look Now* and *The Night of the Hunter*, has been reissued by The Criterion Collection and contains a wealth of special edition features including an introduction and audio commentary by cultural historian Christopher Frayling and an essay by film critic Maitland McDonagh. Other films that I examine have also experienced a long-lasting popularity in Hollwood and among viewers and film scholars.[5]

The reason that these films are speaking to us all these years later is that the figure of the child is one of most compelling images in horror cinema and media. The monstrous child, like

[5] *Village of the Damned* was followed by the release of *Children of the Damned* (Anton Leader, 1964) and John Carpenter's 1995 remake *Village of the Damned*. As mentioned previously, a number of films and television programs have referenced *The Night of the Hunter*, including *Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989), *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman, 1975), *The Blues Brothers* (John Landis, 1980), and *The Simpsons* ("Cape Feare," Season 2 Episode 5; October 7, 1993). *Halloween* has spawned a franchise that has dominated the horror genre spanning the years 1978-2009, and *Child's Play* has accomplished a similar feat during the years 1988-2013. *The Bad Seed* was remade for television in 1985 and has many themes in common with *Orphan*. And other adaptations of Stephen King's *Carrie* include *The Rage: Carrie 2* (Katt Shea, 1999); *Carrie*, a 2002 NBC television film directed by David Carson; and *Carrie* (Kimberly Peirce, 2013). Conclusion endnotes may be found on pp. 229-230.

Dracula, Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll, and Mr. Wolfman – and especially Mark Lewis and Norman Bates in *Peeping Tom* and *Psycho* – is a figure that speaks to a sense moral ambiguity that overturns the facile distinction between the metaphysical categories of good and evil. By complicating the difference between the concepts of innocence and criminality, the child has captured the popular imagination and proven once again that the figure of the monster is central to the horror film. As mentioned previously, I agree with Robin Wood and his argument that the figure of the monster represents "the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization *re*presses or *op*presses: its re-emergence dramatized, as in our nightmares, as an object of horror, a matter of terror."[392] But there is more that the monstrous child has to offer, in addition to the pioneering scholarship that Wood has completed on behalf of the horror film.

One of the abiding master narratives of horror studies proclaims that after the 1960s and 70s the social and political value of horror cinema was all but spent. Inspired by Robin Wood, film critics like Tony Williams, Christopher Sharrett, and David Greven argue that the late 1960s and early 70s represent a high water mark for the genre. The social and sexual revolutions that Wood identified as the most significant developments of the second half of the twentieth century, including gay liberation, civil rights, and second-wave feminism, constituted a frontal assault upon the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism. Since that time, a terminal decline has endured from the 1980s and 90s into the early twenty-first century. In keeping with Wood, the progressive battle for liberation was subsumed under the reactionary wing obsessed with the difference, rather than connection, between good and evil, self and other, straight and queer. According to Williams, the pursuit of social and political equality has been supplanted by a world defined by "the collapse of any viable oppositional movements engaged in active critical mobilization against the status quo."[393]

In this dissertation I have argued that the above-mentioned narrative of the horror film is incomplete. Rather than a constant sociopolitical struggle between the progressive and the reactionary over the virtue of bourgeois patriarchal norms, including monogamy, heterosexuality, and the nuclear family, I propose that a history of the figure of the child in horror cinema and media exists alongside the prevailing discourse surrounding the horror genre and the transition from a fabled golden age of horror filmmaking to a dark age of sociopolitical indifference and cultural and artistic stagnation. Contrary to Twitchell's rather bleak assessment of the monstrous child as a sign of the cultural logic of late capitalism, I propose that the figure of the child in this dissertation is indicative of a monstrous cultural imaginary – a "supersizing" of the monster product that is symptomatic of the continuing relevance of horror cinema and media. As mentioned previously, by focusing on the monstrous child we can see the politics of the horror film beyond Wood's designations of progressive and reactionary, in addition to the argument that the 1960s and 70s represent the horror genre's political apex.

This is especially true when we consider the question of why the horror films that I examine have been remade or reissued multiple times since their original versions. Recent scholarship on horror film cycles, sequels, spin-offs, remakes, and reboots support the argument that the business of horror cinema is not concerned exclusively with product at the expense of artistic integrity. "Far from signaling a mannered or moribund phase of the genre," writes Kevin Heffernan, "these horror remakes display tremendous suppleness and ingenuity in their deployment of motifs drawn from both original movies and contemporaneous films."[394] In particular, Heffernan argues that "the monstrous child . . . is emblematic of one of the dominant narrative trends of the contemporary American horror film, with the late 1990s witnessing the proliferation of these motifs in horror

hits such as *The Sixth Sense*, the US theatrical rerelease of *The Exorcist* in the year 2000, and *The Others* (2001)."[395]

Now more than ever, it is important that the horror film is analyzed and improved upon by continuing the work that Wood and others have accomplished regarding a critique of the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism via the monstrous child. The figure of the priceless child in need of protection from adult society, patriarchal capitalism and the nuclear family, the gendered arrangements of work and care, the depiction of Christianity as a positive presence, and the mythology of a golden age of socioeconomic prosperity that is conducive to youth culture are NOT the social and sexual revolutions that Robin Wood identified as the most significant developments in American culture during the second half of the twentieth century. The horror film is not only at its best when it adheres to a position of resistance to the status quo and the belief that the boundaries between the norms of good and evil are to be enforced with extreme prejudice. Building upon Wood's interpretation of the politics of horror cinema and media, the monstrous child is the reason that the films that I examine are speaking to us all these years later. Thanks to the monstrous child the horror film is alive and well.

On the one hand, I agree with Robin Wood that the horror films of the 1960s and 70s represent a list of works that are exceptional and highly influential. On the other hand, I think that the horror film is more than capable of returning to and surpassing the genre's apex of the 60s and 70s via the monstrous child. This is a claim that I support in each and every chapter of this dissertation. In my introduction I write that Christine Baxter in *Don't Look Now* epitomizes the figure of the monstrous child. Christine, both as virtuous girl and murderous dwarf, is a character that alternates between the norms of good and evil, in relation to the concepts of innocence, criminality, and anxiety.

The image of Christine is figuratively compressed and encapsulated in Pino Donaggio's "Suite No. 1," a piano piece that captures the complexity and moral ambiguity of the child in terms of pastoral innocence, the ambiguity of play, the intersection of fear and fairy tale, the appearance and disappearance of children, and the anxiety of parenthood. According to Neil Mitchell, Donaggio's success as a composer is derived from his "background in both classical and contemporary music," specifically his ability to invoke a range of "alternating emotions" with regard to "the film's tonal shifts (from dramatic to reflective and from romantic to comedic and horrific), and, perhaps most significantly, in compounding tension."[396]

In chapter 1 I examined the figure of the child as a gothic, atomic, and apocalyptic subjectivity in *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter*. I focused upon the representation of childhood innocence and monstrosity during the transition from classic to modern horror phases and argued that the passage from World War II to the Cold War was implicated in the change in conception of the child as a result of unprecedented economic prosperity and the rise of the middle-class family. I proposed that films like *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter* challenged the fantasy of a golden age of British and American history by exposing the relentless evocation of childhood terror and rebellion. Accordingly, the figure of the child and the concept of innocence was shaped by the culture, manners, and morals, in addition to the political and military tensions, of the Cold War Era.[397]

In chapter 1 I argued that the failure to differentiate between the concepts of innocence and criminality is a fundamental issue for adults and the dominant ideology of bourgeois society. The values associated with the nuclear family (security, fidelity, prosperity, sobriety) are challenged and overturned by the monstrous child. Miss Giddens, Gordon Zellaby, and Harry Powell fail to see the difference between love and hate and instead succumb to a paranoid way of looking. Instead

of viewing Flora and Miles, the Midwich Children, and John and Pearl Harper as precocious and vulnerable, they see the children as corrupt and intolerable. The fraught relationship between the child and adult in the horror film is expressed in terms of violence, of the unending and pervasive need to frame and explain, rather than see and accept, the frightening and deeply felt humanity of the figure of the child.[398] The concept of innocence blurs the distinction between the victim and killer, insider and outsider, us and them, powerful and powerless. *The Innocents*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Night of the Hunter* are narratives of corruption in the guise of salvation.

The innocent child illuminates adult society as a place that is virtually bereft of charity and tenderness. In *The Innocents*, Miles and Flora are treated as miniature adults by the living (their Uncle and Miss Giddens) and the dead (Peter Quint and Miss Jessel). The figure of the child is regarded as an empty vessel to be filled with the values of adulthood and the norms of wealth, pleasure, and prudence. In a society that is represented as irredeemably corrupt and bewilderingly problematic the child is made monstrous according to the adult imagination. In *The Night of the Hunter*, Preacher looks at John and Pearl as sinners in the hands of an angry God; the wrath of God and the criminality of Preacher are conflated in a story where the corruption of man embodies the social and cultural instabilities of the Great Depression and Cold War Era. In *Village of the Damned*, the child is an alien and exotic creature that poses a direct threat to Midwich and Britain's age of affluence.

In chapter 2, I concentrated upon the media interface between the golden age of horror comics (1948-1955), the Italian *giallo* film (1964-1975), and the early and late American slasher film cycles (1978-1988). I focused on the opening moments of *Profondo rosso*, *Halloween*, and *Child's Play* in order to look at the figure of the monstrous child and the transition from the *giallo* to slasher format. I concluded that while only a fleeting image in *Profondo rosso*, the child

eventually took center stage in *Child's Play*, completing a story of formation that was consistent with the early *giallo* cycle. I expanded upon the question of childhood innocence and moral panic by investigating the intermedial history of boyhood and criminality in the United States and Italy between 1954 and 1988. As a result, I proposed that the cultural and historical context of the second half of the twentieth century was a critical aspect of the transition from the *giallo* to slasher, specifically regarding the question of crime and graphic narrative violence, the perspective of the child(ish) monster, and the false dichotomy between supernatural horror and political awareness.

Regarding the figure of the boy and the concept of criminality in particular, I examined the historical conditions of Italy (*Profondo rosso*), the American suburb (*Halloween*), and metropolis (*Child's Play*) as sites of economic and sociopolitical crisis. I argued that contrary to the age of affluence and the fabled golden age of childhood that followed World War II, the 1970s and 80s were defined by the intersection of youth culture and cultural conflict. Like the figure of the postwar juvenile delinquent in the 1950s and 60s, the male child in horror films of the 1970s and 80s rebelled against the command to "paper the cracks" of cultural anxieties during the Reagan Era and the socially and politically turbulent period between 1968 and 1982 that was known in Italy as the Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*.[399]

Unlike chapter 1, my analysis of *Profondo rosso*, *Halloween*, and *Child's Play* relied upon an expanded conceptual framework. Beginning with the horror comic book *Tomb of Terror* (1954), I interrogated the cultural function of the figure of the boy and the concepts of criminality and innocence in the *giallo* film and slasher film cycles during the years 1975-1988. I argued that the intersection of the monstrous child and childish monster distinguishes the *giallo* and slasher film cycles, illuminating the normative and pathological specificity of the figure of the male child and the concept of criminality. By way of a comparative analysis of *Profondo rosso*, *Halloween*, and

Child's Play I demonstrated how the performance of boyhood points to the conceptual entanglement of innocence and criminality. As I pointed out in chapter 1, the concept of innocence *depends* upon what it claims to dispossess or presuppose.

In chapter 2 I questioned one of the fundamental problems of the previous chapter, namely the failure to adequately challenge the distinction between the norms of good and evil as a determining characteristic of the child monster in terms of gender and sexuality. By offering a comparative analysis of innocence and criminality in the *giallo* and slasher film cycles, I demonstrated how the performance of boyhood intersects with a broader intermedial history of criminality, juvenescence, and homosexuality regarding the character of Carlo Ricci in *Profondo rosso*. In terms of the postwar comic book and the child(ish) monster, the moral ambiguity of boyhood is determined by a cultural logic of late capitalism, in which a degraded landscape of consumption and circulation threatens to deconstruct the prevailing distinction between normality and pathology, as well as gender norms and sexuality. The putative opposition between innocence and criminality is illuminated as a technique that works with, rather than against, the norms of good and evil and a political climate of conservatism, paranoia, and a broader cultural puritanism that is structured by the dominant ideology of heteronormative reproduction.

The alternative that I offer is to *rebel* against the patriarchal symbolic order and to embrace the conceptual ambiguity of the monstrous child. As mentioned previously, the reason that so many of the films I discuss have been remade since their original versions is that the politics of horror cinema and media are ideally suited to the monstrous child and a social and political critique of the United States, Britain, and Italy during the years 1955-2009 and beyond. To borrow from Robin Wood, the cultural function of the figure of the child is monstrous because it continues to struggle

for recognition and the right to reclaim what the dominant patriarchal order has *re*pressed or *op*pressed.[400]

The prologue to *Profondo rosso* overturns the slasher and post-slasher cycles' misogynistic fondness for monsters, gender specific victims, and phallic utensils. Regarding gender and sexuality, Carlo's entanglement with the primal scene and his mother's criminal activities indicates how the cultural function of the figure of the child interacts with norms of good and evil, in addition to the historical context of the Years of Lead and the crisis of domestic tranquility. By extension, the figure of the child(ish) monster in *Halloween* underscores the gender dynamics and braided identities of the victim and killer within the American suburb, rather than the Italian metropolis, as a site of sociopolitical crisis. Conversely, the opening scene of *Child's Play* focuses on the representation of the birth of the childish monster in the age of consumer culture. Chucky, struck by lightning and a voodoo incantation, shares more in common with Frankenstein's Monster and the offspring of scientific and industrial technology than the child victim and child(ish) monster in *Profondo rosso* and *Halloween*, respectively.

Every film in chapter 2 is notably concerned with the POV of the child as a state of impossibility – a camera angle that is inhuman and rebellious. *Profondo rosso*, *Halloween*, and *Child's Play* communicate a sense of anxiety and moral ambiguity via the perspective of the child as a figure that is deprived of agency and humanity. Carlo Ricci, Michael Meyers, and Charles Lee Ray are literally or figuratively disembodied, specifically according to the norms of good and evil, gender and sexuality, and commodity fetishism. Regarding the figure of the child in relation to the concept of criminality, the representation of crime and graphic narrative violence points to the media interface between the golden age of horror comics, the Italian *giallo* film, and the early and late American slasher film cycles.

Lastly, in chapter 3 I explored the representation of the monstrous little woman or baby bitch in *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan*. In this chapter I analyzed the performance of girlhood and anxiety in Cold War Hollywood cinema and the American horror film after 9/11. I focused on the relationship between the female child monster and the myth of the All-American Mom as a site of generational conflict. I argued that the cinematic questioning of childhood innocence and the figure of the middle-class American mother during the Cold War and post 9/11 was pertinent to changes in the child image found in the horror and social commentary film. By extension, the performance of anxiety as a cultural condition helped to reinforce my central argument that historical context and different historical eras were fundamental to the moral ambiguity of the monstrous child.

Including the work of scholars who focused on the image of the female child in horror cinema during the historical period in question (1955-2009), I revisited the "Scary Women" symposium (UCLA, 1994) and the lasting influence of second-wave feminism upon horror and media studies, as shown in the works of Barbara Creed and Linda Williams. I proposed that films like *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* support the case that a feminist critique of media and gender is foundational to the child image and the performance of girlhood in this period. In addition to feelings that are commonly associated with horror cinema (nausea, repulsion, disgust), I argued that anxiety most forcefully demonstrates the desire to comprehend or master the female child monster during the transition from classic to modern horror phases and beyond. *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* were fundamental to my analysis of the performance of girlhood and anxiety, in particular the media fascination with the spectacular girl and willful female subject.

The monstrous female child in the horror film engenders a state of interpretive anxiety that is rife with ambiguity and nuance. As a result, the female child or baby bitch is at once impervious

to classification and demonstrative of a cultural imaginary that flourishes during the modern horror phase (1961-1984) and beyond. For that reason, I have found it necessary to rearrange and expand a chronology of modern horror in order to both widen and more narrowly focus on the relationship between the figure of the girl and the concept of anxiety. The function of childhood and gender in the horror film, regarding the fight against patriarchal capitalism from Vietnam to Reagan, is contingent upon a cultural history that operates in relationship to aesthetic mutations and textual complications.[401]

The question that must be asked regarding the baby bitch is one of development: "What its history is, how it expands, how it contracts, how it is extended to a particular domain, and how it reinvents, forms, and develops new practices."[402] In chapter 3 I argued that the baby bitch explicitly demonstrates a process of dislocation, fragmentation, and isolation – she is a missed opportunity, a moment that is lost in time. In psychoanalytic terms, the performance of girlhood in the horror film is a "privileged object in the staging of fantasies of intimate encounters with otherness and visualizations of the impenetrable."[403]

Anxiety, rather than feelings that are commonly associated with horror film (nausea, repulsion, disgust), most forcefully demonstrates the desire to master or be brought near to the morally ambiguous female child. Thus, a cultural history of childhood and anxiety demands that the chronological boundaries of the classic and modern horror film be expanded to allow for a more nuanced interpretation of gender and genre. It is my assessment that during the years 1956-2009 a narrative of paranoia and xenophobia has persisted and become synonymous with the female child or child-woman in horror cinema and media. The picture of anxiety is a biological, social, and cultural dilemma that is directly linked to the monstrous-feminine and the figure of the female child in early postwar and post-9/11 horror cinema.

Regarding the Cold War and Post-9/11 Era, the monstrous female child is viewed as a threat to the dominant ideology of patriarchal capitalism insofar as it resembles or is exposed by the flora and fauna of the world: a colony of ants and bees (*Village of the Damned*), a fish tank (*Orphan*), a greenhouse (*The Innocents*), a bucket of pig's blood (*Carrie*). The representation of motherhood in *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan* intersects with the gendered arrangements of work and care, specifically the negotiation of the child as a stage of life and moral category. Pulled between the child as a thing and a social construction, the horror film during the years 1956-2009 is rooted in the anxieties of the interface between the figure of the female and the values of bourgeois society.

The relationship between motherhood and girlhood is a continuity that is fundamental to *The Bad Seed*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan*. In each film the performance of the female child or child-woman is a pathological figure, a criminal by birth and a harbinger of social decay. Generating a degree of anxiety among adults and mothers in particular, the monstrous female child underscores a point that is vital to the child in popular culture: The ability to distinguish between the child as a subject of rational analysis and as a social construction within a particular historical and cultural context is as fraught as the distinction between the norms of good and evil and the concepts of innocence and criminality.

The picture (and song) of the monstrous child in *Don't Look Now* has provided me with the opportunity to illuminate the cultural function of the figure of the child in the horror film. In this dissertation I have made it a point to closely observe the relationship between the child and its function according to different historical periods and major historical events leading up to and during the years 1955-2009. These include: the Great Depression, World War II, Britain's age of affluence, Italy's Years of Lead or *anni di piombo*, the Cold War, 9/11, and the financial meltdown

of 2008. By looking at the figure of the child in terms of cultural and historical context it is possible to address the question of how the child is capable of opening the horror genre to more expansive analyses within cinema and media studies.

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Carrie. Directed by Brian De Palma, performance by Sissy Spacek, United Artists, 1976.

Child's Play. Directed by Tom Holland, performance by Brad Dourif, MGM/UA, 1988.

Profondo rosso / *Deep Red*. Directed by Dario Argento, performance by Gabriele Lavia. Rizzoli Film and Seda Spettacoli, 1975.

Don't Look Now. Directed by Nicolas Roeg, performances by Sharon Williams and Adelina Poerio, British Lion Films, 1973.

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Dracula. Directed by Tod Browning, performance by Bela Lugosi, Universal Pictures, 1931.

Frankenstein. Directed by James Whale, performance by Boris Karloff, Universal Pictures, 1931.

Freaks. Directed by Tod Browning, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1932.

Halloween. Directed by John Carpenter, performance by Will Sandin, Atlantic Releasing and Embasy Pictures, 1978.

The Innocents. Directed Jack Clayton, performances by Pamela Franklin and Martin Stephens, 20th Century Fox, 1961.

Meet Me in St. Louis. Directed by Vincente Minnelli, performance by Margaret O'Brien, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1944.

The Night of the Hunter. Directed by Charles Laughton, performances by Sally Jane Bruce and Billy Chapin, United Artists, 1955.

Orphan. Directed by Jaume Collet-Serra, performance by Isabelle Fuhrman, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2009.

Peeping Tom. Directed by Michael Powell, performance by Carl Boehm, Anglo-Amalgamated Film Distributors, 1960.

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Psycho. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, performance by Anthony Perkins, Paramount Pictures, 1960.

Poltergeist. Directed by Tobe Hooper, performance by Heather O'Rourke, MGM/UA, 1982.

A Story of Children and Film. Directed by Mark Cousins, Dogwoof, 2013.

Sunset Boulevard. Directed by Billy Wilder, performance by Gloria Swanson, Paramount Pictures, 1950.

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Village of the Damned. Directed by Wolf Rilla, performance by Martin Stephens, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1960.

Endnotes

Introduction

[1] *Don't Look Now*'s opening sequence contains more than one hundred shots and lasts just seven minutes. According to Sanderson, Roeg depicts the film's narrative preoccupations in the opening sequence through images, ellipses and compression. Sanderson, Mark. *Don't Look Now*. BFI, 1996, p. 33.

[2] At the end of *Don't Look Now* it is revealed that Christine has not returned from the dead, but is mistaken for an aged female dwarf (Adelina Poerio) who wears a red mackintosh that is identical to the one worn at the beginning of the film.

[3] Prior to *Don't Look Now* Donaggio had never scored a film. Today his résumé includes an impressive number of horror, crime, and mystery films such as *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976), *Dressed to Kill* (De Palma, 1980), and *Due occhi diabolici* / *Two Evil Eyes* (Dario Argento and George A. Romero, 1990). Other films scored by Donaggio include: *Piranha* (Joe Dante, 1978), *Blow Out* (Brian De Palma, 1981), *Body Double* (De Palma, 1984), *Trauma* (Dario Argento, 1993), and *Passion* (De Palma, 2012).

[4] Freud, Sigmund. "The 'Uncanny.'" 1919. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Translated by James Strachey, vol. 17, Hogarth Press, 1955, p. 220.

[5] I will have more to say about the provocative and unsettling aspects of the afterimage of Christine on pp. 14-16.

[6] According to Tudor, the transition from the classic (1931-1960) to modern horror film (1961-1984) is divided into the following phases: Phase I: The Classic Period (1931-1936); Phase II: The War Period (1941-1946); Phase III: The Fifties Boom (1956-1960); Phase IV: American Decline (1963-1966); Phase V: The Seventies Boom (1971-1974); Phase VI: Sustained Growth (1978-1983). Tudor, Andrew. *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie*. Wiley, 1989, pp. 24-78.

[7] The function of the figure of the child as a social and political meaning is one of the driving forces behind the horror film as a culturally relevant art form during the years 1955-2009 and beyond. It is also an indication of the moral ambiguity of the monstrous child in popular culture. In his book, *The Normal and the Pathological*, the prominent philosopher of science Georges Canguilhem (1904-1995) maintains that "every conception of pathology must be based on prior knowledge of the corresponding normal state." At the same time, "the scientific study of pathological cases becomes an indispensable phase in the overall search for the laws of the normal state." Canguilhem, Georges. *The Normal and the Pathological*. Translated by Carolyn R. Fawcett and Robert S. Cohen, Zone Books, 1991, p. 329. See also Canguilhem, Georges. *Knowledge of*

Life. 1965. Translated by Stefanos Geroulanos and Daniela Ginsburg, Fordham UP, 2008, pp. 121-146.

[8] Examples include, but are not limited to: *Ring* / *Ringu*, a 1998 Japanese psychological horror film directed by Hideo Nakata, adapted from the novel *Ring* by Kôji Suzuki, which in turn draws on the Japanese folk tale "Banchō Sarayashiki"; *Who Can Kill a Child?* / *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?*, also released as *Island of the Damned*, a 1976 Spanish horror film directed by Narciso Ibáñez Serrador; and *Let the Right One In* / *Låt den rätte komma in*, a 2008 Swedish romantic horror film directed by Tomas Alfredson, based on the 2004 novel of the same title by John Ajvide Lindqvist.

[9] Studlar, Gaylyn. *Precocious Charms: Stars Performing Girlhood in Classical Hollywood Cinema*. U of California P, 2013, p. 2.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., p. 1.

[12] I will have more to say about the connection between innocence and science fiction, criminality and social commentary, and anxiety and gender and sexuality in chapters one, two, and three, respectively.

[13] According to Wood, the progressive horror film is imbued with a sense of social and political activism, specifically the fight against patriarchal capitalism. Wood references Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* (1972), Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), and Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) as examples of this trend. Horror in the 80s, on the other hand, reinforces the dominant ideology, representing the monster as simply evil and unsympathetic, depicting Christianity as a positive presence, and confusing the repression of sexuality with sexuality itself. Examples include Craven's *Swamp Thing* (1982), Hooper's *Poltergeist* (1982), and Romero's *Creepshow* (1982). Wood, Robin. "An Introduction to the American Horror Film." *The American Nightmare: Essays on the Horror Film*, edited by Robin Wood and Richard Lippe, Festival of Festivals, 1979, pp. 23-24.

[14] Examples include: *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968), *Night of the Living Dead* (Kyra Schon as Karen Cooper; George A. Romero, 1968), *The Exorcist* (Linda Blair as Regan MacNeil; William Friedkin, 1973), *It's Alive* (Larry Cohen, 1974), and *The Omen* (Harvey Stephens as Damien Thorn; Richard Donner, 1976). See also Williams, Tony. *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film*. 1996. Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2014.

[15] In one of the most controversial scenes in *Frankenstein* (1931), Karloff's Monster stumbles upon the child Maria playing along the shore of what is meant to be Lake Geneva, Switzerland. In actuality the scene is shot at Malibu Lake, California, thirty miles west of Universal Studios. In the film, Maria invites the Monster to join her throwing flowers into the water. After the flowers are used up, the Monster, in a moment of confusion, throws Maria into the lake and she drowns. More specifically, Karloff's performance is a poignant reminder of the childlike qualities of the Thing Without a Name. The neglected offspring of scientific and industrial technology,

Frankenstein's Monster is the prototype not only of the creature's problematic encounter with childhood; it is also a moving picture of the monster *as* child. By contrast, the Monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) saves a young girl from drowning in a stream, only to be shot and wounded by her male companion. Shortly thereafter, in Geneva, the Monster encounters Victor Frankenstein's younger brother William, "a beautiful child . . . with all the sportiveness of infancy." Learning that William is related to his maker, the Monster strangles William to death. Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. 1818. Norton Critical Edition, W.W. Norton, 1996, pp. 95-97.

[16] Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. Routledge, 1996, p. 40.

[17] Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" p. 226. I will have more to say about the connection between animation and the uncanny with regard to dolls and automata in chapter 2.

[18] Eagleton, Terry. *On Evil*. Yale UP, p. 1.

[19] Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" p. 226.

[20] Eagleton, *On Evil*, p. 2.

[21] Drawing on the mythical father in Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913), Lacan's definition of the role of the father in the symbolic order is determined by the legislative and prohibitive function, or the promulgation of the law, concerning the relationship between the individual and the mother as a dual pair. See Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. 1966. Translated by Bruce Fink, W.W. Norton, 2002, pp. 66-67; ---. *On the Names-of-the-Father*. 2005. Translated by Bruce Fink, Polity, 2013; ---. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III, The Psychoses*. 1981. Translated by Russell Grigg, W.W. Norton, 1993, pp. 242, 306, 316.

[22] Stockton, Kathryn Bond. *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Duke UP, 2009, p. 12.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., pp. 1, 12-13. Rather than the figure of the queer child, I am concerned with Stockton's notion of sideways growth and the murderous motives of the child monster in horror cinema and media. I will have more to say about the brutality of the innocent child in chapter 1.

[25] In *Don't Look Now* the connection between the figure of the child and the childish monster is a dominant motif. In other films that I discuss, the resemblance to *Don't Look Now* is uncanny – or plagiaristic. For example, in the movie *Orphan*, John Coleman (Peter Sarsgaard), like John Baxter, is an architect who is tricked into believing that his adoptive daughter is a nine-year-old girl. In actuality Esther (Isabelle Fuhrman) is a sexually mature thirty-three-year-old woman who suffers from hypopituitarism, a rare hormone disorder that causes proportional dwarfism. Like John Baxter, John Coleman is murdered by an aged female dwarf who infiltrates the nuclear family. Indeed the form of the monstrous child-woman or baby bitch from hell (Creed, 1994) is fundamental to the third chapter of my dissertation, a cornerstone of which is Mervyn LeRoy's *The Bad Seed*, a film that *Orphan* is also conspicuously indebted to. See also *Monstrous Children*

and Childish Monsters: Essays on Cinema's Holy Terrors, edited by Markus P.J. Bohlmann and Sean Moreland, McFarland, 2015.

[26] Oates, *The Accursed*, p. 611.

[27] Ibid. Ironically, the Master of the castle in Oates's novel *The Accursed* (2013) is a demonic figure intent upon the corruption of the pastoral college town of Princeton, New Jersey during the years 1905-1906.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Cook, Daniel Thomas. *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer*. Kindle ed., Duke UP, 2004, intro.

[30] By the early 1970s, Britain's postwar economic boom, or age of affluence, had been replaced by an age of economic instability and social discontent that shattered "the optimism – or the illusions – of the first postwar decades." The fact that *Don't Look Now* is primarily filmed in Venice only reinforces the juxtaposition of prosperity and instability regarding the Italian economic miracle and Years of Lead. Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. Penguin Books, 2005, pp. 453-454. See also Gundle, Stephen. *Between Hollywood and Moscow: The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943-1991*. Duke UP, 2000.

[31] Chinn, Sarah, and Anna Mae Duane. "Introduction." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 43, nos. 1 & 2, Spring/Summer 2015, p. 14.

[32] Kaplan, E. Ann. "Troubling Genre/Reconstructing Gender." *Gender Meets Genre in Postwar Cinemas*, edited by Christine Gledhill, Kindle ed., U of Illinois P, 2012, p. 71.

[33] Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood*, intro.

[34] According to Zelizer, the early twentieth century is marked by "the transformation in the cultural meaning of childhood – specifically, the new exaltation of children's sentimental worth. If child life was sacred, child death became an intolerable sacrilege, provoking not only parental sorrow but social bereavement as well." Zelizer, Viviana A. *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. Basic Books, 1985, p. 23.

[35] Mintz, Steven. *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*. Harvard UP, 2004, p. 275.

[36] Gubar, Marah. *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. Oxford UP, 2009, p. 4.

[37] Stockton, *The Queer Child*, p. 5.

[38] Introduced in 1929 by the Milanese publisher Mondadori, paperback translations of English language novelists such as Arthur Conan Doyle, S.S. Van Dine, Edgar Wallace, Anne K. Green, and later Agatha Christie and Rex Stout, were "promoted with a very bright, even garish yellow

[*giallo*] cover." Drawing on the British rational-deduction fictions, in addition to the early twentieth century American fantasy murder mysteries of Edgar Allen Poe, films like *Don't Look Now* and *Profondo rosso* are indebted to the *giallo*-jacketed detective thriller and crime story. Bondanella, Peter. *A History of Italian Cinema*. Continuum, 2009. p. 372.

[39] Gundle, Stephen. *Between Hollywood and Moscow: The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943-1991*. Duke UP, 2000, p. 138.

[40] Wood, Robin. *Hollywood from Vietnam To Reagan*. 1986. Columbia UP, 2003, p. 150. See also Siegel, Michael Loren. *Roma De Profundis: Post-Economic Miracle Rome and the Films of Dario Argento (1970-1982)*. 2010. Brown U, PhD dissertation.

Chapter 1

[41] Twitchell, James B. *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror*. Oxford UP, 1985, p. 259.

[42] Ibid., pp. 259-60. Twitchell lists the following TV miniseries and films as examples: *'Salem's Lot* (Tobe Hooper, 1979), *The Bad Seed* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1956), *The Children* (Max Kalmanowicz, 1980), *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976), *The Changeling* (Peter Medak, 1980), *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976), *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973), *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968), *Eraserhead* (David Lynch, 1977), *Inseminoid* (Norman J. Warren, 1981), *The Brood* (David Cronenberg, 1979), *It's Alive* (Larry Cohen, 1974), *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979).

[43] Ibid., p. 258. Contra Twitchell's fascination with the classical horror archetype, it is generally agreed that American horror cinema in the 1970s is a highly creative period. Robin Wood's distinction between the progressive and reactionary horror film of the 1970s and 80s is a case in point.

[44] Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures*, p. 258. Twitchell is nostalgic for the horror films made by Universal Studios during the decades of the 1930s through the 1950s. Films include, but are not limited to: *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931), *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931), *The Mummy* (Karl Freund, 1932), *The Invisible Man* (Whale, 1933), *The Wolf Man* (George Waggner, 1941), and *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (Jack Arnold, 1954).

[45] Ibid.

[46] Lowenstein, Adam. *Shock Waves: Trauma, History, and Art in the Modern Horror Film*. 1999. U of Chicago, PhD dissertation, p. vii.

[47] Clarens, Carlos. *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film*. Capricorn Books, 1967; Huss, Roy, and T.J. Ross, editors. *Focus on the Horror Film*, Prentice Hall, 1972; Prawer, S.S. *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror*. Oxford UP, 1980.

[48] Wood and Twitchell, unlike their predecessors, argue that cinema is an autonomous art. By virtue of their reading of genre film and popular culture, they have paved the way for a new generation of horror scholarship, including the work of Adam Lowenstein (2005), Robert Spadoni (2007), Angela Smith (2011), and Caetlin Benson-Allott (2013).

[49] In *Peeping Tom*, Mark is abused and experimented on by his father, played my Michael Powell, who is conducting a study of the effects of fear upon the human nervous system. Norman, on the other hand, kills his mother and her lover in a fit of jealous rage, only to repress the severity of his crime by internalizing his mother's identity and developing a split personality in *Psycho*. The teenage trauma of Norman Bates is currently the subject of the TV series *Bates Motel* (A&E, 2013-present).

[50] According to Rasmussen, the enduring success of films like *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* are thanks in part to the "economic doldrums of the Great Depression and the enhanced appeal of exotic, even unreal settings, which were both a visual escape from an emotional echo of troubled conditions at home." After World War II, Rasmussen points out that with "the advent of nuclear power and the start of the Cold War, science fiction split from gothic horror in the 1950s and established its own identity and aesthetics." Rasmussen, Randy Loren. *Children of the Night: The Six Archetypal Characters of Classic Horror Films*. McFarland, 1998, pp. 1-2.

[51] The figure of the child and the horror film during the years 1955-1961 are viewed by scholars like Steven Mintz and James Twitchell as belonging to a time that was supposedly more innocent and prosperous compared to the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Mintz and Twitchell's perspective is affected by a distinct nostalgia for a sociopolitical and economic form of American life at midcentury that functions as a standard of excellence that is blind to historical accuracy. This is a point that I will revisit at the conclusion of this dissertation regarding the prevalence of horror film remakes in the recent past. See Levin, Yuval. *The Fractured Republic: Renewing America's Social Contract in the Age of Individualism*. Basic Books, 2016, pp. 13-30; Roche, David. *Making and Remaking Horror in the 1970s and 2000s: Why Don't They Do It Like They Used To?* Kindle ed., UP of Mississippi, 2014; Klein, Amanda Ann, and R. Barton Palmer, editors. *Cycles, Sequels, Spin-Offs, Remakes, and Reboots: Multiplicities in Film and Television*. Kindle ed., U of Texas P, 2016.

[52] Stockton, *The Queer Child*, p. 5.

[53] Dixon's understanding of the transition between the classics and rebirth of the horror film is limited to stardom, franchise, auteurism, and industry conduct, excluding the cultural and historical developments of the time. For example, Dixon argues that horror films in the 1950s "were trying to find a new audience." The "predations of Abbott and Costello's burlesques of Universal's classic monsters," coupled with the growing popularity of television, spawned a series of technological (3-D) and industrial (independent film production) countermeasures that functioned as a transitional period until the rebirth (1949-1970) of horror truly began with *Psycho*. Dixon, Wheeler Winston. *A History of Horror*. Rutgers UP, 2010, pp. 65-75.

[54] Thompson, David. *The Big Screen: The Story of the Movies*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012, p. 287.

[55] Ibid., pp. 249-250.

[56] Regarding "the old models of fantasy and escapism," Thompson cites *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951), the films of Danny Kaye, Bob Hope, and Bing Crosby, the nightclub act of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, and the war films that celebrated World War II "and the way it found character in fellowship," including *Battleground* (William Wellman, 1949), *Sands of Iwo Jima* (Allan Dwan, 1949), and *Twelve O'Clock High* (Henry King, 1949). Thompson, *The Big Screen*, p. 250.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Including: *The Thing from Another Planet* (Christian Nyby, 1951), *Godzilla* (Ishirō Honda, 1954), *Them!* (Gordon Douglas, 1954), *Fiend Without a Face* (Arthur Crabtree, 1958), and *The Blob* (Irvin Yeaworth, 1958).

[59] Thompson, David. *The Moment of Psycho: How Alfred Hitchcock Taught America to Love Murder*. Basic Books, 2009, p. 17.

[60] Thompson, *The Moment of Psycho*, p. 15. According to Doherty, the first European play dates of *Rock Around the Clock* in late 1956 coincided with "a rising crescendo of teenage violence. In England, police arrested more than '100 youths, boys, and girls' driven to violence by the 'hypnotic rhythm' and 'primitive tom-tom thumping' of" the movie, "in what was called 'the most impressive aftermath of any film ever showed in Britain.' The queen herself requested a private screening to see what the fuss was about." Doherty, Thomas. *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*. 1988. Temple UP, 2002, p. 64. See also Ronan, Thomas P. "Rock 'N' Roll 'N' Riots; Britain Views With Alarm." *The New York Times*, 23 Sep. 1956, p. 188, http://nyti.ms/29Qy1R3.

[61] Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics*, p. 84.

[62] Nelson, Claudia. *Precocious Children & Childish Adults: Age Inversion in Victorian Literature*. Kindle ed., Johns Hopkins UP, 2012, p. 2.

[63] Examples include, but are not limited to: Wilson, Edmund. "The Ambiguity of Henry James." Esch and Warren, pp. 170-173; Felman, Shoshana. "Henry James: Madness and the Risks of Practice (Turning the Screw of Interpretation)." Esch and Warren, pp. 196-228; Hanson, Ellis. "Screwing with Children in Henry James." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2003, pp. 367-391.

[64] Stockton, *The Queer Child*, p. 5.

[65] Locke, Richard. *Critical Children: The Use of Childhood in Ten Great Novels*. Columbia UP, 2011, 87-88.

[66] Wilson, "The Ambiguity of Henry James," p. 170.

[67] Ibid., p. 172.

[68] Tate, Allen, et al. "A Radio Symposium." Esch and Warren, p. 176.

[69] In his book, *Horror in the Cinema* (1967), Ivan Butler argues that Wilson's interpretation of *The Innocents* is "an amiable and cleverly reasoned academic argument, but does not really hold water." Butler's reasoning is echoed by Colm Tóibín, who notes that "the problem of the Freudian reading of the story is that, while the children do not see the ghosts, the reader does. . . . The ghosts existed, it is true, only in the mind of the governess; the ghosts, more importantly, also gave the reader the creeps." Butler, Ivan. *Horror in the Cinema*. Zwemmer, 1967, p. 107; Tóibín, Colm. *All a Novelist Needs: Colm Tóibín on Henry James*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2010, p. 41.

[70] *The Innocents*. Directed Jack Clayton, performances by Pamela Franklin and Martin Stephens, 20th Century Fox, 1961. All other quotes are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

[71] Butler, *Horror in the Cinema*, p. 109.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" p. 226.

[75] Creed, Barbara. "Baby Bitches From Hell: Monstrous Little Women in Film." *Scary Women*, Jan. 1994, sec. 5, par. 6.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Creed, "Baby Bitches From Hell," sec. 5, par.13.

[80] Kincaid, James R. *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting*. Duke UP, 1998, p. 52.

[81] Greene, Grahame. *The Grahame Greene Film Reader: Reviews, Essays, Interviews, and Film Stories*. Applause, 1993, p. 58.

[82] Ibid.

[83] It is important to remember that the Master of the castle in Oates's novel *The Accursed* (2013) is a demonic figure intent upon the corruption of the college town of Princeton, New Jersey during the years 1905-1906.

[84] Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay: The War on Effeminate Boys." *Social Text*, no. 29, 1991, p. 20.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Felman, "Henry James: Madness and the Risks of Practice," p. 197.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures*, p. 297.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., p. 299.

[92] Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*, p. 156.

[93] Ibid.

[94] For example, Creed writes that "the mise-en-scene, or setting, of desire," as well as the "theme of corruption and hysteria . . . played out . . . in relation to Flora" in *The Innocents* is an "all-pervading atmosphere of feminine mystery." Creed, "Baby Bitches From Hell," sec. 5, pars. 9, 14.

[95] Hanson, "Screwing with Children in Henry James," p. 367.

[96] Ibid., pp. 367-368.

[97] Hanson, "Screwing with Children in Henry James," p. 373.

[98] For a survey of the critical history of Clayton's film and James's novella see Peter G. Beidler's edition of *The Turn of the Screw* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995).

[99] Harland, Henry. "Academy Portraits: Mr. Henry James." Esch and Warren, p. 152.

[100] Inversely, the key to surviving the minotaur is to remember that the concept of innocence is the labyrinth.

[101] Films related to this cycle include: *The Thing from Another World* (Christian Nyby, 1951), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956), and *Forbidden Planet* (Fred Wilcox, 1956).

[102] The normal child and the pathological Child in *The Midwich Cuckoos* are distinguished by the lowercase and uppercase C.

[103] The cultural function of the figure of the child in *Village of the Damned* is circumscribed by the atomic age and the detonation of the first nuclear bomb on July 16, 1945. Also known as the Trinity test, and followed by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in August 1945 that ended World War II, the first large-scale use of nuclear technology ushered in profound changes in sociopolitical thinking and the course of technological and child development.

[104] Lasting from the early 1950s to the early 70s, the positive features of postwar affluence in Britain included full employment, fairly strong economic growth, and a consumer boom. While fears persisted that a 1930s-level unemployment might reappear at any moment, the number of jobless people never rose above one million between 1945 and the early 1970s. Other contributing factors in the age of affluence include: the postwar rebuilding from wartime destruction and expansion of exports, low interest rates inspired by Keynesian financial policies, and the influence of the huge American economic expansion.

[105] *Village of the Damned*. Directed by Wolf Rilla, performance by Martin Stephens, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1960. All other quotes are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

[106] Wyndham, John. *The Midwich Cuckoos*. Penguin Books, 1957, p. 11.

[107] Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation*, p. 57.

[108] Ibid. See also Hoggart, Richard. *The Uses of Literacy: Changing Patterns in English Mass Culture*. Essential Books, 1957, pp. 279, 280, 24.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid., p. 56.

[111] Pulled between the care and condemnation of the child, Gordon, like the adults in *The Innocents* and *The Night of the Hunter*, operates within a Manichean cosmology of good and evil. Consequently, the figure of the child is subsumed under a fundamental belief in original sin – the child is guilty until proven innocent.

[112] More than a decade later, body horror films like *Eraserhead* (David Lynch, 1977), *The Brood* (David Cronenberg, 1979) and *The Fly* (Cronenberg, 1986), according to Peter Hutchings, will offer more "graphic and sometimes clinical representations of human bodies that were in some way out of the conscious control of their owners." Hutchings, Peter. *Historical Dictionary of Horror Cinema*. Scarecrow Press, 2008, p. 41.

[113] For more on the relationship between postwar science fiction film and television and the sociopolitical context of alien incursion narratives see Jancovich, Mark, and Derek Johnston. "Film and Television, the 1950s." *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by Mark Bould, et al., Routledge, 2009, pp. 71-79.

[114] Sturken, Marita, and Lisa Cartwright. "Imaging the Body's Interior: Biomedical Personhood." *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, edited by Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, 2nd ed., Oxford UP, 2009, p. 364.

[115] Paradoxically, Zellaby's assessment of the dangers of radiation exposure is disregarded when Anthea receives an abdominal X-ray, a procedure that today is avoided due to the risk of high doses of radiation. By 1958, the introduction of obstetric and gynecologic ultrasonography and the Doppler fetal monitor replaced the fetal X-ray as the standard of scientific looking and listening.

[116] Sturken and Cartwright, "Imaging the Body's Interior," p. 364.

[117] Ibid., p. 369.

[118] According to William Paul, the "underlying anxiety of too-adult children . . . is the increasing sense in the postwar period of childhood as distinctly separate from adult life rather than part of a continuum (as was most evident in the advent of youth culture). Parents were losing control not just of their children but of their ability to define the culture these children lived in." Paul, William. *Laughing Screaming: Modern Hollywood Horror and Comedy*. Columbia UP, 1994, p. 282.

[119] *The Night of the Hunter*. Directed by Charles Laughton, performances by Sally Jane Bruce and Billy Chapin, United Artists, 1955. All other quotes are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

[120] The performance of religious fundamentalism, in particular the event of apocalypse, in *The Night of the Hunter* is embodied by Preacher as a description or prophesy of the complete destruction of the world in order to locate the $10,000 that Ben Harper has hidden inside of Miz Jenny. In his book, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (2014), Matthew Avery Sutton explains that the term evangelical refers to "Christians situated broadly in the Reformed and Wesleyan traditions who over the last few centuries have emphasized the centrality of the Bible, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the necessity of individual conversion, and spreading the faith through missions." Further, Sutton explains that the more specific term radical evangelicals refers to "those from both the Wesleyan holiness and Higher Life Reformed traditions who in the post-Civil War period aggressively integrated apocalyptic ideas into their faith." Building upon Sutton's description of modern evangelicalism, *The Night of the Hunter* is classified as a horror film due to the notion of religious fundamentalism as embodied by Preacher. Indeed Powell is ideally suited to "the network of white, Anglo-American radical evangelicals who in the 1910s established a distinct, definable, interdenominational apocalyptic movement." Avery, Matthew. *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*. Harvard UP, 2014, p. x.

[121] According to Terrence Rafferty, Mitchum's performance as the villainous holy man avoids the expected admixture of indolence and "a profoundly sinister kind of unctuousness." For Rafferty, Mitchum's performance is marked by "how buffoonish he allows himself to be, in between bouts of menace. His Harry Powell is a man whose composure masks the most unruly impulses – imperfectly capped wells of lust and greed and violence that tend to leak in moments of crisis, and not in attractive ways." Rafferty, Terrence. "Holy Terror."

[122] Mitchum's performance as the criminal Max Cady in *Cape Fear*, adapted from the novel *The Executioners* (John D. MacDonald, 1957), embodies the violence, lust, and greed that is personified by Harry Powell in *The Night of the Hunter*. Furthermore, Cady's relationship to fourteen-year-old Polly Bergen (Peggy Bowden) underscores the connection between the criminal adult and innocent child, a dominant theme in *The Night of the Hunter*. Preacher's tattooed hands in particular have become a cultural icon referenced in a number of films and television programs, from Spike Lee's in *Do the Right Thing* (1989) and Radio Raheem (Bill Nunn), to Meat Loaf in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman, 1975), John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd in *The Blues Brothers* (John Landis, 1980), and *The Simpsons* ("Cape Feare," Season 2 Episode 5; October 7, 1993), in which the menacing Sideshow Bob (Kelsey Grammer), who has only three fingers and a thumb, displays the tattoos "LUV" and "HĀT."

[123] A new literary form developed toward the end of the seventeenth century, the jeremiad is named by Puritan ministers "for the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, who had pointed out the ancient Hebrews' evil ways." More specifically, the jeremiad was "a prolonged lamentation and complaint about the rising generation. Jeremiads foresaw a calamitous future for New England unless young people obeyed God's laws and accepted their parents' faith." Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, p. 25.

[124] Edwards, Jonathan. "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." 1741. *Jonathan Edwards: Writings from the Great Awakening*, edited by Philip F. Gura, Library of America, 2013, p. 634.

[125] Couchman, Jeffrey. *The Night of the Hunter: A Biography of the Film*. Northwestern UP, 2009, p. 32.

[126] Rafferty points out that Grubb's novel was written "in an idiom with which readers and filmgoers were still not entirely familiar: what we now call southern gothic." Although William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, and Carson McCullers had already introduced elements of the grotesque into their work, Rafferty maintains that during the mid-1950s "the southern style, redolent of strange sex, bad booze, old-time religion, and the collective regional memory of defeat, was for the general public fairly exotic stuff." Rafferty, "Holy Terror."

[127] Agee, James. *Agee on Film: Five Film Scripts*. Beacon Press, 1964, p. 264.

[128] Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" p. 226.

[129] Skal, *The Monster Show*, p. 115.

[130] Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation*, p. 56.

[131] Couchman, *The Night of the Hunter*, p. 33.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Hanged on March 18, 1932 at Moundsville Penitentiary, Dirks writes that "Powers was convicted of killing the widow Asta B. Eicher, her three children, and the widow Dorothy Lemke

of Massachusetts in the early 1930s." Dirks, Tim. "The Night of the Hunter (1955)." *Filmsite*, 27 Sep. 2012.

[134] More recent examples of true crime include the podcast *Serial* (WBEZ; Sarah Koenig, 2014-present), the documentary miniseries *The Jinx* (HBO; Andrew Jarecki, 2015), and the web television series *Making a Murderer* (Netflix; Laura Ricciardi and Moira Demos, 2015).

[135] Williams, Tony. *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film*. 1996. UP of Mississippi, 2014, p. 185. See also Sharrett, Christopher. *Apocalypticism in the Contemporary Horror Film: A Typological Survey of the Theme in The Fantastic Cinema, Its Relationship to Cultural Tradition and Current Filmic Expression*. 1983. New York U, PhD dissertation; ---. "The Idea of Apocalypse in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*." *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film*, edited by Barry Keith Grant and Christopher Sharrett, Scarecrow Press, 1984, pp. 255-276.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid., 186.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Sharrett, *Apocalypticism in the Contemporary Horror Film*, p. 22.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Sragow, Michael. "Downriver and Heavenward with James Agee."

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Rafferty, "Holy Terror."

Chapter 2

[148] Hajdu, David. "The Toys Are Us." *The New York Times*, 19 June 2010, p. WK9.

[149] "Tag . . . You're It." *Tomb of Terror*, written by Howard Nostrand, art by Howard Nostrand and Sid Check. *The Horror! The Horror! Comic Books the Government Didn't Want You to Read!*,

edited by Jim Trombetta, Abrams ComicArts, 2010, pp. 85-89. All other quotes are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

[150] Hajdu, David. *The Ten-Cent Plague: The Great Comic-Book Scare and How It Changed America*. Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2008, pp. 3-7.

[151] Nyberg, Amy Kiste. "Comics Magazine Association of Ameica Comics Code, 1954." *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code*, Kindle ed., UP of Mississippi, 1998. Unlike *Tomb of Terror*, *Mad* magazine endured the initial onslaught of the Comics Code thanks to Gaines' decision to convert the publication to a black and white magazine format, to which the Code did not apply.

[152] As an alternative to government regulation, the Comics Magazine Association of America (CMMA) opted to self-regulate the content of comic books in the United States. Similar to the Motion Picture Production Code (1930-1968), the CMAA represented a set of industry moral guidelines that limited creativity and artistic collaboration.

[153] Jack Davis began freelance work for EC Comics in 1950, contributing to *Tales from the Crypt*, *The Haunt of Fear*, *Frontline Combat*, *Two-Fisted Tales*, *The Vault of Horror*, *Piracy*, *Incredible Science Fiction*, *Crime Suspenstories*, and *Terror Illustrated*.

[154] Benson-Allott, Caetlin. *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens: Video Spectatorship from VHS to File Sharing*. Kindle ed., U of California P, 2013, ch. 1.

[155] Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow*, p. 138.

[156] Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*, p. 150.

[157] Ibid., 2.

[158] Thompson, *The Moment of* Psycho, p. 15.

[159] Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) is widely considered the father of the Italian school of criminal anthropology. The Lombrosian type of delinquent or born criminal is an atavistic throwback to an earlier evolutionary stage in which humans are more savage and animalistic. According to Lombroso, the seeds of criminality are found in childhood. The child, or born criminal, is unable to refrain from acts of delinquency; they are biologically predetermined to do so. The impetuous passions of children, such as anger, revenge, and lying, are considered by Lombroso to be early warning signs of criminality. In Lombroso's view, a lack of moral sense or the inability to differentiate between the norms of good and evil is innate, resulting in the figure of the criminal man or *Uomo Delinquente*. See Lombroso, Cesare. *Criminal Man*. 1876. Translated by Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter, Duke UP, 2006.

[160] According to Judith Flanders, the drawing room was the literal and spiritual center of the Victorian home; "it was the status indicator, the mark of gentility, the room from where the woman governed her domain." Flanders, Judith. *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003: 168.

[161] In 1975 the members of Goblin include: Claudio Simonetti (keyboards), Massimo Morante (guitars), Fabio Pignatelli (bass guitar), Walter Martino and Agostino Marangolo (drums), and Tony Tartarini (lead vocalist). Goblin are known for their soundtrack work, most notably *Deep Red*, *Suspiria* (Dario Argento, 1977), *Zombi* (*Dawn of the Dead*; George A. Romero, 1978), and *Tenebrae* (Dario Argento, 1982). CD re-releases of their soundtracks have performed well, especially in Germany and Japan. Goblin have performed a series of live concerts in Europe in 2009 and in North America in 2013 and 2014.

[162] In her analysis of Argento, Clover underscores the historical longevity of the female victim as a body-pattern included in the work of Edgar Allen Poe, Brian De Palma, and Alfred Hitchcock. Clover, Carol. *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton UP, 1992, p. 42. Originally published in Schoell, William. *Stay Out of the Shower: Twenty-five Years of Shocker Films Beginning with* Psycho. Dembner Books, 1985, p. 54.

[163] The amateur investigator and monstrous-feminine are not unfamiliar roles for David Hemmings and Clara Calamai. Hemmings' character in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) is a British photographer turned detective, unsuspectingly witnessing and photographing a murder committed in a London park. Correspondingly, Giorgio Bertellini writes that Marta is "the role of an aged, long-forgotten film actress, surrounded by her old once glamorous photos, wearing heavy make-up and apparently inattentive to life's contingencies," an obvious reference "to Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950)." Marta is played by the "Italian icon Clara Calamai, female lead to Luchino Visconti's *Ossessione* (1943), a film widely regarded as the precursor of neorealism." Bertellini, Giorgio. "*Profondo rosso*/*Deep Red*." *The Cinema of Italy*, edited by Giorgio Bertellini, Wallflower Press, 2004, pp. 216-217, 219.

[164] Giusti, Giulio L. "Expressionist Use of Colour Palette and Set Design in Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1977)." *Cinergie*, no. 4., Nov. 2013; Hilgart, John. "4CP | Four Color Process: Adventures Deep Inside the Comic Book." *Posthaven*, 30 Dec. 2010.

[165] McDonagh, Maitland. *Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds: The Dark Dreams of Dario Argento*. 1991. U of Minnesota P, 2010, p. 283. In addition to *Dario Argento presenta Profondo rosso*, Paul Lewis writes that "Argento's love for images influenced the publication of *Dario Argento Presenta 12 Racconti Sanguinari* in 1976 by his own publishing imprint, Edizioni Profondo Rosso. This was followed by a series of photo-illustrated comic books that were also anthologies containing illustrated short stories as introduced by the director. Argento is also known for authoring a novelization of *Quattro Mosche di Velluto Grigio*, titled *Quattro Mosche di Velluto Grigio*: Il Terzo Film di Dario Argento (1971)." Paul, Louis. *Italian Horror Film Directors*. McFarland, 2005, p. 176.

[166] According Bertellini, the Grand Guignol or "spectacle of fear is originally developed in French theater in the early decades of the twentieth century and soon exported throughout Europe." Avoiding "any direct comment on the historical and political aspect of contemporary life," the Grand Guignol turns "the newly visible modern female subject into the protagonist of dark urban mysteries and sensational, highly choreographed murders." Richard Abel points out that Méliès' interest in "multiple exposures and invisible editing produce a host of magical disappearances,

reappearances and other transformations" in early films such as *Le voyage dans la lune* / *A Trip to the Moon* (1902). In addition to exploring the technical possibilities of the motion picture camera, Méliès is fond of elaborately constructed décor. Early films such as *Cendrillon* / *Cinderella* (1899), according to Abel, generally comprise "a single, autonomous tableau or a series of tableaux/scenes, frontally framed and often static, as in photographs or on the theater stage. The objective was to present a complete action unfolding in a homogeneous space." Bertellini, "*Profondo rosso*/*Deep Red*," pp. 214-215; Abel, Richard. "Early and Pre-Sound Cinema." *The Cinema Book*, edited by Pam Cook, 3rd ed., BFI, 2009, p. 4.

[167] Subjective POV is one of the more unique, and controversial, features of the modern horror film, in which the viewer identifies with the killer and is interpellated into a world of sadistic male pleasure. See: Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, p. 166; McDonagh, *Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds*, p. 110; Williams, Linda. "When the Woman Looks." *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, edited by Mary Ann Doane, et al. U Publications of America, 1983, pp. 83-99.

[168] Michael Loren Siegel argues that the *giallo* "has never been a fixed and definable category." A series of literary texts published in the late 1920s by Mondadori, followed by the screen adaptations beginning in the 1940s, the *giallo*, according to Siegel and Gary Needham, "has always been 'a conceptual category with highly moveable and permeable boundaries that shift around from year to year.'" Siegel, Michael Loren. *Roma De Profundis: Post-Economic Miracle Rome and the Films of Dario Argento (1970-1982)*. 2010. Brown U, PhD dissertation, pp. 116-117; Needham, Gary. "Playing with Genre: An Introduction to the Italian *giallo*." *Kinoeye*, vol. 2, no. 11, 10 June 2002.

[169] Bondanella, Peter. *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*. 1983. Continuum, 2001, p. 419.

[170] Olney, Ian. *Euro Horror: Classic European Horror Cinema in Contemporary American Culture*. Indiana UP, 2013, pp. 103-104.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Bertellini, "*Profondo rosso*/*Deep Red*," p. 214.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Argento's visual and narrative emphasis on criminality and the police action film (*poliziotto*) is a dominant motif during the first half of the 1970s. With films like *Suspiria* (1977) and *Inferno* (1980), Argento departs "from the classic *giallo* mystery plot by adopting the apocalyptic tonalities of old, supernatural fairytales (religious matriarchy, Sabbath, black masses and witches) and thus resemble classic horror narratives like *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *The Exorcist* (1973)." According to Bertellini, the remainder of Argento's "productions, from *Tenebre* (*Tenebrae*, 1982) and *Terror at the Opera*, to *Trauma* (1993) and *Non ho sonno* (*Sleepless*, 2001) do not exhibit supernatural or monstrous entities. Instead, they return to the general framework of the *giallo*, but decrease the circumstantial plausibility of the murder." Ibid., p. 222.

[175] Stockton, *The Queer Child*, pp. 2-4.

[176] Some of the contributing factors to the *anni di piombo* include widespread labor unrest and the cooperation between countercultural student activist groups, working-class factory workers, and pro-labor radical leftist organizations such as Potere Operaio and Lotta Continua. In the so-called "Hot Autumn" of 1969, a massive series of strikes in factories and industrial centers in Northern Italy became increasingly common, often deteriorating into clashes between the police and demonstrators composed largely of students, workers, activists, and left-wing militants.

[177] Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow*, p. 138.

[178] Annarumma, a Milanese policeman, was killed during a riot by far-left demonstrators on November 19, 1969. He was the first civil servant to die during the Years of Lead. The Piazza Fontana Bombing was a terrorist attack that occurred on December 12, 1969 when a bomb exploded at the headquarters of Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura in Piazza Fontana in Milan, killing seventeen people and wounding 88. The same afternoon, three more bombs were detonated in Rome and Milan, and another was found unexploded.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Siegel, *Roma De Profundis*, p. 2.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Ibid., p. 121.

[183] Ibid., p. 122.

[184] Argento was born September 7, 1940 in Rome, Italy. Regarding Italian youth culture between the end of the Second World War and late 1960s see Gundle, Stephen. *Between Hollywood and Moscow: The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943-1991*. Duke UP, 2000, pp. 106-112.

[185] Siegel, *Roma De Profundis*, p. 157.

[186] Examples of monstrous puberty in the horror film include: *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973), *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976), *Martin* (George A. Romero, 1977), and *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978).

[187] Siegel argues that Argento's decision to film the opening of *Profondo rosso* in the form of shadow play suggests "a kind of literal embodiment of the Freudian notion of 'screen memories,' in which the traumatic kernel of a memory is never given in its full force but is instead displaced onto associated elements, in this case the literal screen that the far wall of the room becomes." According to Siegel, "the fact that this scene is presented in a sequence shot, the unusual, tight and low framing of which strips the event of its particulars (who has been murdered by whom) and leaves intact only its bare, Technicolor intensities (bourgeois domestic space and trappings,

violence, childhood androgyny, the bloody knife, and, of course, the psychotic lullaby) suggests the participation of cinematic framing in the act of repression." Siegel, *Roma De Profundis*, p. 137.

[188] Arguably *Profondo rosso* is the culmination of Argento's examination of the child as a figure that exists between the concepts of innocence and criminality. In *L'uccello dale piume di cristallo* / *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970), the killer is identified as Monica Ranieri (Eva Renzi). Having repressed the childhood memory of being violently attacked as a young girl, a painting unlocks Monica's past and catalyzes a "bizarre psychological transfer" that makes her both a victim and a killer. In *Il Gatto a nove code* / *Cat O'Nine Tails* (1971), Franco Arno's (Karl Malden) young niece Lori (Cinzia de Carolis) assists in the investigation of the nefarious Terzi Institute of Genetic Research. The representation of Lori and the concept of innocence contrasts with the film's interpretation of criminality as a heritable trait. When the killer Dr. Casoni (Aldo Reggiani) threatens Lori, Franco intervenes and pushes Casoni down an elevator shaft. Rounding out The Animal Trilogy, the killer in *4 mosche di velluto grigio* / *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* (1971) is identified as Nina Tobias (Mimsy Farmer). Nina's character incorporates both the themes of childhood trauma and sexuality, a point that Argento will return to with Carlo Ricci in *Profondo rosso*. Abused by her father as a child and forcefully raised as a boy, Nina later marries Roberto (Michael Brandon), the protagonist of *Four Flies on Grey Velvet*, because he physically resembles Nina's father. Ultimately Nina's marriage to Roberto represents the desire to relive her dysfunctional relationship with her father and destroy the source of patriarchal oppression with Roberto as proxy. Gracey, *Dario Argento*, p. 29.

[189] Later in the film it is revealed that Marta kills her husband after discovering that he plans to have her re-institutionalized.

[190] Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" p. 226.

[191] Gallant, Chris. "Threatening Glances: Voyeurism, Eye-Violation and the Camera: From *Peeping Tom* to *Opera*." *Art of Darkness: The Cinema of Dario Argento*," edited by Chris Gallant, FAB Press, 2001, p. 15.

[192] *Profondo rosso* / *Deep Red*. Directed by Dario Argento, performance by Gabriele Lavia. Rizzoli Film and Seda Spettacoli, 1975. All other quotes are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

[193] Benshoff, Harry M. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film*. Manchester UP, 1997, p. 1.

[194] Bertellini, "*Profondo rosso* / *Deep Red*," p. 215.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Sanderson, *Don't Look Now*, p. 33.

[198] Gracey, *Dario Argento*, p. 22.

[199] Ibid., p. 60.

[200] Ibid.

[201] Ibid.

[202] Neale, Steve. "Halloween: Suspense, Aggression, and the Look." *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film*, edited by Barry Keith Grant and Christopher Sharrett. 1984. Scarecrow Press, 2004, p. 357.

[203] Ibid., pp. 357-358.

[204] Ibid., p. 358.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Ibid.

[207] Ibid., p. 357.

[208] For example, the look on six-year-old Michael's face after being confronted by his parents clearly indicates a child that is shocked and horrified by the murder of his sister Judith. Clutching the murder weapon in his hand, the monstrous male child is guilty of homicide, but he is also unaware of the seriousness of the situation.

[209] Murray Leeder writes that *Halloween* is "one of the earliest horror films to depict characters *watching* horror films. In this case, the children (and, briefly, Laurie), watch *The Thing from Another World* (1951) and *Forbidden Planet* (1956), showing as part of a Halloween marathon hosted by 'Doctor Dementia', presumably one of the TV horror hosts who were such a key part of the rediscovery of Golden Age horror by the children of the 1950s." According to Leeder, Carpenter belongs to a generation of horror fans who saw "the older works principally through television; it seems significant that he puts children in front of the television watching classics." Leeder, Murray. *Halloween*. Kindle ed., Auteur, 2015, intro.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Michael Meyers, not unlike Mark Lewis and Norman Bates in *Peeping Tom* and *Psycho*, complicates the distinction between the active male villain and passive female target. In *Halloween*, Meyers is defined by a childhood trauma that has profoundly affected his ability to function as an adult who has reached sexual maturity. Deprived of the joys of childhood and adolescence, Michael is a child(ish) monster who lashes out at the middle-class values of Haddonfield, Illinois. Regarding the gender dynamics of the male killer and female victim, see Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, Autumn 1975, pp. 6-18; Clover, Carol J. "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film." *Representations*, no. 20, Autumn 1987, pp. 187-228.

[212] Lowenstein, Adam. "A Reintroduction to the American Horror Film." *The Wiley-Blackwell History of American Film*, edited by Cynthia Lucia, et al., Wiley, 2011, p. 271.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Neale, "Halloween," p. 25.

[215] Lowenstein, "A Reintroduction to the American Horror Film," p. 271.

[216] Ibid. See also D'Emilio, John, and Estelle B. Freedman. *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. HarperCollins, 1988, p. 331.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Corbett, Ken. *Boyhoods: Rethinking Masculinities*. Yale UP, 2009, pp. 21, 19.

[220] William Paul argues that the shock effect of the killer's identity in the opening sequence of *Halloween* is disturbing because it "undercuts any coherent motivation that we may have originally attributed to the point-of-view shot – especially any sexual motivation." Contrary to the dominant reading of the opening of *Halloween* as a sexually motivated crime, Paul is correct to observe that "reading sexual desire into this without accounting for the age of the child seems to me only slightly less perverse than the sequence itself." Paul, *Laughing Screaming*, pp. 321, 485.

[221] With a production budget of $325,000, the domestic total gross of *Halloween* was $47 million. "*Halloween* (1978)." *Box Office Mojo*, 13 May 2014, http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=halloween.htm.

[222] Zinoman, Jason. *Shock Value: How a Few Eccentric Outsiders Gave Us Nightmares, Conquered Hollywood, and Invented Modern Horror*. Penguin Books, 2011, p. 178.

[223] Ibid., pp. 178-179.

[224] Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*, p. 150.

[225] Ibid., p. 147.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," p. 10.

[228] Ibid.

[229] Lowenstein, "A Reintroduction to the American Horror Film," p. 271.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," pp. 24-26.

[232] Ibid., 26.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid.

[235] Oates, p. 611. See also Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," pp. 23-24.

[236] Creature Features was a generic title for a genre of horror TV format shows broadcast on local U.S. television stations throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The movies broadcast on the various shows were generally classic and cult horror movies of the 1930s to 50s, the horror and science-fiction films of the 50s, British horror films of the 60s, and the Japanese monster movies of the 60s and 70s.

[237] *Tales from the Crypt: From Comic Books to Television*. Directed by Chip Selby, American Movie Classics, 2004. All other quotes are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

[238] One of the original taglines for *Halloween* is "The Night *He* Came Home!"

[239] Newman, Kim. *The BFI Companion to Horror*. Cassell, 1997, p. 68. One of Aesop's Fables, "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" is numbered 210 in the Perry Index, a guide to Aesop's Fables or Aesopica. "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" is one of the better-known fables credited to Aesop, the story-teller who lived in ancient Greece between 620 and 560 BCE.

[240] According to Peter Hutchings, the initial slasher cycle, including *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* (Sean Cunningham, 1980), and *Prom Night* (Paul Lynch, 1980), "faded away in the early 1980s and was replaced by the post-1982 *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween* sequels and, most of all, . . . the *Nightmare on Elm Street* films that commenced in 1984." Hutchings points out that "the original slashers had avoided or marginalized supernatural elements, but these later films, while maintaining an emphasis on the teenage experience, were more willing to entertain the idea of their characters returning from the dead." Hutchings, *Historical Dictionary of Horror Cinema*, p. 294.

[241] Notably: Grant, Barry Keith, and Christopher Sharrett, editors. *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film*. 1984. Scarecrow Press, 2004; Wood, Robin. *Hollywood from Vietnam To Reagan*. 1986. Columbia UP, 2003; Carroll, Noël. *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart*. Routledge, 1990; Clover, Carol J. *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton UP, 1992; Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. 1993. Routledge, 2007; Halberstam, Judith. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. 1995. Duke UP, 2006; Williams, Tony. *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film*. 1996. Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2014; Grant, Barry Keith, editor. *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*. 1996. U of Texas P, 2015; Gelder, Ken, editor. *The Horror Reader*. Routledge, 2000; Jancovich, Mark, editor. *Horror, The Film Reader*. 2002.

Routledge, 2007; Lowenstein, Adam. *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*. Columbia UP, 2005; Spadoni, Robert. *Uncanny Bodies: The Coming of Sound Film and the Origins of the Horror Genre*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2007; Worland, Rick. *The Horror Reader: An Introduction*. Wiley, 2007; Hantke, Steffen, editor. *American Horror Film: The Genre at the Turn of the Century*. UP of Mississippi, 2010; Smith, Angela M. *Hideous Progeny: Disability, Eugenics, and Classic Horror Cinema*. Columbia UP, 2011; Benson-Allott, Caetlin. *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens: Video Spectatorship from VHS to File Sharing*. Kindle ed., U of California P, 2013.

[242] Dixon, Wheeler Winston. *A History of Horror*. Rutgers UP, 2010, p. 168.

[243] Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," pp. 7-28.

[244] Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," pp. 23-24.

[245] Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," p. 23.

[246] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[247] Hutchings, *Historical Dictionary of Horror Cinema*, p. 294; Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists*, pp. 47-48, 77.

[248] Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists*, p. 47.

[249] Ibid., p. 77.

[250] Ibid., p. 66.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, pp. 27-28.

[253] Dalbrante, Daniele Velo. "In Search of the Lombrosian Type of Delinquent." *The Cesare Lombroso Handbook*, edited by Paul Knepper and P.J. Ystehede, Routledge, 2008, p. 215.

[254] Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke UP, 1991, p. 2.

[255] Ibid., 2-3.

[256] Coined by Charles Michelson, the Publicity Chief of the Democratic National Committee, "Hooverville" was first used in print media in November 12, 1930 when the *New York Times* published an article about a shantytown in Chicago, Illinois. "Chicago Jobless Colonize." *The New York Times*, 12 Nov. 1930, p. 12, http://nyti.ms/29DZsJh.

[257] "Reagonomics or 'voodoo economics'?" *BBC News*, 5 June 2004.

[258] "Voodoo Economics, the Next Generation." *The New York Times*, 6 Oct. 2014, p. A23. Ultimately it was interest-rate cuts, not tax cuts, that fueled the recovery from the 1981-82 recession.

[259] Berlant, Lauren. *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Duke UP, 1997, p. 3.

[260] Ibid., p. 1.

[261] Ibid., p. 1.

[262] Ibid., p. 1.

[263] Ibid., p. 3.

[264] Ibid., p. 8.

[265] Thanks to Jacqueline Reich for her insight regarding Karen Barclay's black market experience in *Child's Play* as a teachable moment in consumer culture.

[266] In books like David Rieff's *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World* (1991), the paradox of increasing homelessness and rising prosperity in Los Angeles is dismissed as a fact of modern-day existence within an "immigrant Babel" populated by brown faces, a "breathtaking mix of languages," and a lower-middle-class that has failed to assimilate like "the last great wave of immigration to the United States at the turn of the century." In the words of Governor Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, whose parents emigrated from India, "immigration without assimilation is . . . invasion." Rieff, David. *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World*. Kindle ed., Touchstone, 1991, pp. 121-122, 22; Jindall, Bobby (@BobbyJindal). "Immigration without assimilation is not immigration, it is invasion." *Twitter*, 6 Aug. 2015, 3:27 p.m., https://twitter.com/bobbyjindal/status/629415923947044864.

[267] Tobar, Héctor. "How Los Angeles Is Becoming a 'Third World' City." *The New York Times*, 6 July 2015, p. A17.

[268] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 5.

[269] Ibid., p. 9.

[270] Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. 1976. Oxford UP, 1983, pp. 78-79.

[271] Ibid., p. 79.

[272] Formanek-Brunell, Miriam. "The Politics of Dollhood in Nineteenth-Century America." *The Children's Culture Reader*. Edited by Henry Jenkins, NYU Press, 1998, p. 375.

[273] Newman, *The BFI Companion to Horror*, p. 98.

[274] Connor, Steven. *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*. Oxford UP, 2000, p. 8.

[275] Hajdu, "The Toys Are Us," p. WK9.

Chapter 3

[276] Wells, Paul. *The Horror Genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch*. 2000. Wallflower Press, 2004, p. 3.

[277] Harrison, Robert Pogue. *Juvenescence: A Cultural History of Our Age*. Kindle ed., U of Chicago P, 2014, pref.

[278] "Baby Bitches from Hell," in addition to Creed's book *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993), is widely recognized as one of the definitive analyses of the figure of the female child monster through the lens of women's and gender studies.

[279] Creed, "Baby Bitches From Hell," sec. 1, para. 1.

[280] The "Scary Women" symposium played an active role in helping to illuminate the figure of the female child with regard to media, gender, and genre studies. Celebrating the "multifarious image of the evil girl-child" or monstrous-feminine, Creed traveled from Melbourne, Australia to the University of California, Los Angeles in January 1994 to take part in a daylong symposium titled "Scary Women." Including presentations by Rhona Berenstein, Linda Williams, and Vivian Sobchack, the "Scary Women" symposium, immediately following the Northridge Earthquake (January 17, 1994), heralded a tectonic shift in horror studies, boldly redefining the location of gender and sexuality within the horror genre. Today, "Scary Women" is a treasured archive for feminists, cinephiles, and filmmakers. The "Scary Women" symposium's website is located at http://old.cinema.ucla.edu/women/ default.html.

In a recent e-mail correspondence, Creed informed me that she "was invited by Andrea Kalas from the UCLA Film & Television Archive on August 11, 1993 to take part in the day long symposium. Other speakers were to be Rhona Berenstein, Linda Williams, Carol Clover and Vivian Sobchack. Carol Clover was unexpectedly called way and couldn't attend. The symposium was set for Saturday, January 29, 2004 – just after the Earthquake as it turned out! Also very scary!" Creed, Barbara. "Re: Query: 'Scary Women' symposium at UCLA, January 1994." Received by Hans Staats, 23 Sep. 2013.

[281] I asked Professor Creed if, with films and TV shows like *Insidious* (James Wan, 2011), *Sinister* (Scott Derrickson, 2012), *The Conjuring* (Wan, 2013), *The Walking Dead* (AMC, 2010-present), and *True Blood* (HBO, 2008-2014), it appears that the horror genre has become more conservative after the progressive horror film of the 1970s and 80s. Creed replied:

No, I don't believe that the horror film has become more conservative – if it ever was in the first place. Three recent horror films are very upfront about their representations of the monstrous-feminine. These are: *Teeth* (2007) a black horror comedy about the vagina dentata, *Ginger Snaps* (2000) in which a young girl metamorphoses into a werewolf when she first menstruates, and *Splice* (2009) a sci-fi horror film in which the Sphinx is reborn. *Ginger Snaps* was so popular with young women it was followed by *Ginger Snaps Back* and *Ginger 3* (2000-2004). I don't believe that these three films, which self-reflexively engaged with female monstrosity, could have been made without earlier feminist writings on horror. Creed, "Re: Query: 'Scary Women' symposium at UCLA."

[282] Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*, p. 156.

[283] Nowell, "There's Gold in Them There Chills," p. 2.

[284] Raymond Williams coined this phrase in his book *Preface to Film* (1954) to discuss the relationship between dramatic conventions and written texts. In later works, particularly *The Long Revolution* (1961), Williams would develop this concept further, using it to problematize (though not refute) Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. According to Williams, structure of feeling refers to the different ways of thinking vying to emerge at any one time in history. It appears in the gap between the official discourse of policy and regulations, in addition to the popular response to official discourse and its appropriation in literary and other cultural texts. In other words, Williams uses the term "feeling" rather than "thought" to signal that what is at stake may not yet be articulated in a fully worked-out form, but has rather to be inferred by reading between the lines.

[285] Ngai, Sianne. *Ugly Feelings*. Kindle ed., Harvard UP, 2007, p. 209. See also Bloch, Ernst. *The Principle of Hope, Volume I*. 1954. Translated by Neville Plaice, et al., MIT Press, 1995.

[286] Ibid., p. 210. See also Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton UP, 1971, p. 127.

[287] Oates, *The Accursed*, p. 611.

[288] Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, p. 210. See also Laplanche, Jean, and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*. 1967. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, W.W. Norton, 1974, p. 349.

[289] Hulbert, Ann. *Raising America: Experts, Parents, and a Century of Advice About Children*. Knopf, 2005, p. 3.

[290] *By the Light of the Moon*'s melody is commonly taught to beginner music students, as it provides an easy way to become comfortable with how notes are played on the piano. However, *By the Light of the Moon*'s lyrics are open to interpretation with regard to cruelty, death, and mortality.

[291] *The Bad Seed*. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy, performance by Patty McCormack, Warner Brothers, 1956. All other quotes are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

[292] Anderson's play, which ran between 1954 and 1955 for a total of 334 performances, received a Tony Award and was shortlisted for the 1955 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

[293] Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, p. 275.

[294] Ibid., p. 276.

[295] Sheer light muslin ornamented with evenly spaced raised pixels, Dotted Swiss was originally hand-loomed in Switzerland in the mid-eighteenth century. A popular material for summer dresses, blouses, aprons, curtains, bedspreads, wedding apparel, and baby clothes, Dotted Swiss was frequently pictured in Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalogs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

[296] Oates, Joyce Carol. "Killer Kids." *The New York Review of Books*, 6 Nov. 1997.

[297] Belle Gunness (1859-1908) was a Norwegian-American serial killer whose victims, estimated between twenty-five and forty, included most of her suitors and boyfriends, in addition to her two daughters, Myrtle and Lucy. Gunness' apparent motives involved collecting life insurance, cash and other valuables, and eliminating witnesses. Jane Toppan (1857-1938), born Honora Kelley, was an American serial killer. She confessed to thirty-one murders in 1901. Toppan's motive involved the desire "to have killed more people – helpless people – than any other man or woman who ever lived." Frei, Andreas, et al. "Female Serial Killing: Review and Case Report." *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health*, vol. 16, no. 33, 13 July 2006, pp. 167-176. *Wiley Online Library*, doi:10.1002/cbm.615.

[298] Lennard, Dominic. *Bad Seeds and Holy Terrors: The Child Villains of Horror Film*. State U of New York P, 2014, p. 21.

[299] Kincaid, *Erotic Innocence*, p. 17.

[300] Ibid., p. 18.

[301] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[302] Creed, "Baby Bitches From Hell," sec. 2, para. 4.

[303] Gurel, Perin. "A Natural Little Girl: Reproduction and Naturalism in *The Bad Seed* as Novel, Play, and Film." *Adaptation*, vol. 3, no. 2, 18 June 2010, p. 132.

[304] Ibid., pp. 133-134.

[305] Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, p. 35.

[306] See Wylie, Philip. *Generation of Vipers*. Rinehart, 1942; Plant, Rebecca Jo. *Mom: The Transformation of Motherhood in Modern America*. U of Chicago P, 2010, pp. 19-54.

[307] Plant, *Mom*, pp. 21-22.

[308] Menand, Louis. "Freud, Anxiety, and the Cold War." *After Freud Left: A Century of Psychoanalysis in America*, edited by John Burnham, U of Chicago P, 2012, p.189.

[309] Ibid.

[310] Ibid.

[311] Ibid. See also Nathan Hale Jr., *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans, 1917-1985*. Oxford UP, 1995, p. 276.

[312] Smith, Daniel. "It's Still the 'Age of Anxiety.' Or Is It?" *The New York Times*, 14 Jan. 2012.

[313] Ibid.

[314] Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation, Vol. 1*. Scribner, 1941, p. 182.

[315] Menand, "Freud, Anxiety, and the Cold War," p. 193.

[316] Ibid., p. 192.

[317] Ibid., p. 195.

[318] Ibid., p. 197.

[319] Paul, *Laughing Screaming*, p. 267.

[320] Ibid.

[321] Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, p. 403.

[322] Studlar, *Precocious Charms*, p. 2.

[323] Mitchell, *Carrie*, p. 39.

[324] As I have mentioned, Donaggio's compositions have appeared in a number of American and European horror films, including: *Don't Look Now* (Nicholas Roeg, 1973), *Trauma* (Dario Argento, 1993), *Due occhi diabolici* / *Two Evil Eyes* (Dario Argento and George A. Romero, 1990), *Tourist Trap* (David Schmoeller, 1979), and *Piranha* (Joe Dante, 1978). In addition to *Carrie*, Donaggio has provided the score to De Palma's *Home Movies* (1979), *Dressed to Kill* (1980), *Blow Out* (1981), *Body Double* (1984), *Raising Cain* (1992), and *Passion* (2012).

[325] Creed, Barbara. "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection." *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 1996, U of Texas P, 2015, p. 39.

[326] Ibid., p. 38. See also Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. 1980. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. Columbia UP, 1982, p. 4.

[327] Ibid., p. 40.

[328] "Tag . . . You're It." *Tomb of Terror*, written by Howard Nostrand, art by Howard Nostrand and Sid Check. *The Horror! The Horror! Comic Books the Government Didn't Want You to Read!*, edited by Jim Trombetta, Abrams ComicArts, 2010, pp. 85-89.

[329] Stossel, Scott. *My Age of Anxiety: Fear, Hope, Dread, and the Search for Peace of Mind*. Knopf, 2014, p. 31.

[330] Ibid.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Mitchell, *Carrie*, p. 60.

[333] Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine," p. 39.

[334] King, Stephen. *Danse Macabre*. 1981. Gallery Books, 2010, p. 171; Kael, Pauline. "The Curse." *The New Yorker*, 22 Nov. 1976, p. 177.

[335] Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine," p. 42.

[336] Mitchell, *Carrie*, p. 39.

[337] Studlar, *Precocious Charms*, p. 2.

[338] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[339] Ibid., p. 235.

[340] Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine," p. 39.

[341] Barthes, Roland. *Writing Degree Zero*. 1953. Translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, Hill & Wang, 2012, p. 5.

[342] Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, p. 3.

[343] Stockton, *The Queer Child*, pp. 1, 12-13.

[344] Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. 1993. Routledge, 2007, p. 77.

[345] Ibid., p. 77; Wood, *Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan*, p. 83.

[346] Ibid., p. 77; Wood, *Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan*, p. 84.

[347] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

[348] Ibid.

[349] Ibid., pp. 78-79.

[350] Ibid., p. 77.

[351] Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, p. 3.

[352] Williams, Linda. "When the Woman Looks." *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 1996, U of Texas P, 2015, p. 18.

[353] Ibid.

[354] Ibid., p. 20.

[355] Ibid.

[356] Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, p. 20.

[357] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[358] Ibid., p. 8.

[359] Ibid.

[360] Dargis, Manohla. "New Kid in the House, Clearly Up to Something." *The New York Times*, 23 July 2009, p. C8. SPECTRE (Special Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, and Extortion) is a fictional global terrorist organization featured in the James Bond novels by Ian Fleming, the films based on those novels, and James Bond video games.

[361] Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*, p. 150.

[362] Žižek, Slavoj. *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*. Verso, 2009, p. 1.

[363] Dargis, "New Kid in the House, Clearly Up to Something," p. C8.

[364] Ibid.

[365] Stockton, *The Queer Child*, p. 5.

[366] Ibid.

[367] Lee, Nathan. "An 'Orphan' with Issues (And a Big, Bad Secret)." *National Public Radio*, 23 July 2009.

[368] Ibid.

[369] Ibid.

[370] Greene, Melissa Fay. "The New Movie Parents Hate." *Daily Beast*, 15 July 2009.

[371] Ibid.

[372] Ibid.

[373] Ibid.

[374] Ibid.

[375] *Orphan*. Directed by Jaume Collet-Serra, performance by Isabelle Fuhrman, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2009. All other quotes are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

[376] In *The Innocents*, the final confrontation between Miss Giddens and Miles begins in the greenhouse. In the following scene, Miles collapses in Miss Giddens's arms and dies.

[377] Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists*, p. 77.

[378] Ibid.

[379] Briefel, Aviva, and Sam J. Miller, editors. *Horror After 9/11: World of Fear, Cinema of Terror*, Kindle ed., U of Texas P, 2011, intro.

[380] Ibid.

[381] Huet, Marie-Hélène. *Monstrous Imagination*. Harvard UP, 1993, p. 1.

[382] Ibid., pp. 1, 6-7.

[383] Briefel and Miller, *Horror After 9/11*, intro.

[384] Ibid.

[385] Ibid.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Ibid.

[388] Ibid.

[389] Ibid.

[390] Ibid. See also Goldstein, Richard. "The Naked and the Undead." *Nation*, 11 Aug. 2005, http://krogers-dev.thenation.com/doc/20050829/goldstein.

Conclusion

[391] *The Others* is not an adaptation of *The Turn of the Screw* but has some themes in common with James's novella.

[392] Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," p. 10.

[393] Williams, *Hearths of Darkness*, p. 3.

[394] Heffernan, Kevin. "Risen from the Vaults: Recent Horror Film Remakes and the American Film Industry." *Merchants of Menace: The Business of Horror Cinema*, edited by Richard Nowell, Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 62. Heffernan is referring specifically to films like *The Ring* (Gore Verbinski, 2002) and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Marcus Nispel, 2003). See also Klein, Amanda Ann, and R. Barton Palmer, editors. *Cycles, Sequels, Spin-offs, Remakes, and Reboots: Multiplicities in Film and Television*, Kindle ed., U of Texas P, 2016; Roche, David. *Making and Remaking Horror in the 1970s and 2000s: Why Don't They Do It Like They Used To?* Kindle ed., UP of Mississippi, 2014.

[395] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[396] Mitchell, *Carrie*, p. 39.

[397] Gubar, *Artful Dodgers*, p. 4.

[398] Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation*, p. 162.

[399] Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*, p. 150.

[400] Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," p. 10.

[401] Gledhill, Christine, "Rethinking genre." *Reinventing Film Studies*, edited by Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, Arnold, 2000, p. 221.

[402] Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*. Translated by Graham Burchell, Picador, 2010, p. 6.

[403] Bronfen, Elisabeth. *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and Its Discontents*. Princeton UP, 1998, p. 7.