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PROFESSOR: My intention tonight is primarily to provide you with some suggestions, framings that will help in your viewing of these two films. And we'll also, at the same time, reinforce and extend some of the things I was saying this afternoon about Hitchcock's work more generally. And about the recurring preoccupations, themes, obsessions, strategies that are characteristic of his work.

And I want to begin by adding one note to what I was saying this afternoon. You remember I began this afternoon by talking about the relationship between Hitchcock and what I call the "Genius of the System"-- borrowing on that famous passage from Andre Bazin, who said Hollywood is very interesting, and there are interesting directors, but why don't we talk about the genius of the system-- the way the system itself encourages or enables complex forms of narrative.

And we've already talked several times earlier in the course about this topic. But there's another way in which one can think about this issue with regard to Hitchcock. And I think it's helpful in clarifying, so I want to mention it again.

One way to think about Hitchcock is to think of the Hitchcock film as a kind of genre unto itself. Right? The Hitchcock. Just like the Western, or the screwball comedy. Broadly, Hitchcock belongs to the broad category of what might be-- well, of two categories-- the horror film-- although, he's a strange director of horror. He certainly is incredibly influential. In fact, when he made *Psycho*, he publicly announced, "This is my first horror film." Even though there are elements of horror earlier. And it made something of a publicity splash when he said that.

So one way to understand Hitchcock is to think of him as participating in at least two categories of genre or subgenre that are more and more widespread than Hitchcock's work itself. And we might call that the horror film and the mystery film. And even that's a bit of an oversimplification, because within the category of mystery, you can have different sort of subcategories. One of which is the sort of romantic adventure of the sort that *North by Northwest*. The chase film starring Cary Grant that Hitchcock made that ends with characters climbing across the face of Mount Rushmore.

So that's one sort of action-adventure version of a mystery story that Hitchcock makes. Another version-- other versions are examples of the films that we're seeing tonight. But my point is that although one could fit Hitchcock's film into some sort of larger category-- of mystery or mystery and adventure, something of that kind-- it's also the case that once you begin to look closely at Hitchcock's films, you can see that there's such a profound, almost obsessional coherence in them. They keep returning again and again to those dominant themes I talked about this afternoon. That one can see that they, in some sense, constitute a kind of category of their own. If we think of-- so if we think of the Hitchcock as a kind of genre, even within that category we can discover immense variation.

So that Hitchcock's example itself becomes a kind of crystallized, or distilled example of the principle I've been talking about all semester concerning the way in which a system like the Hollywood system could engender variation, even as it is also committed to giving its audience something that seems familiar, that they recognize, that they're willing to attend to week after week after week.

I think the primary point is this-- in a system in which you have any habitual, a regular, a daily, or a weekly relationship to the material, there have to be elements of familiarity, of repetition. Of a return to shared subjects and themes. Or you wouldn't do it. You would find it intolerable every time you made what was a routine or habitual connection to a text, if what it gave you was a completely new experience which forced you in some sense to begin at the beginning to figure everything out for your-- you would find that you would resist such an experience. It's one thing to go to a great overwhelming theatrical experience once or twice a year, or once or twice a month. It's quite another thing to try to watch King Lear every day, or even every week. So part of the difference has to do with the need to what it means to have a habitual, rather than an occasional, connection to the artwork. And one of the fundamental-- well, maybe the most important thing about the Hollywood studio film, and later the most important thing about American television narrative forms, is the is the intimate, regular, routinized connection that the viewer has with the material.

And in the case of Hitchcock, what we can say is, really from the very beginning of his work to the end, there are these fundamental, emotional, and strategic, or technical coherences, resemblances, that made virtually every Hitchcock film a kind of commentary on an earlier one. And the two films you are seeing tonight are a particularly rich example of this. So I hope you'll think hard about the way in which they are both profoundly different from each other,

and also at the same time, strangely, mysteriously, profoundly similar. How they circle back on the same kinds of obsessions and the same kinds of problems.

And part of our pleasure in looking at the two films is the simultaneous recognition of the difference and similarity. Well, that is an example in small compass of the larger principle of popular aesthetics that I was saying needs to apply to the way in which we understand the audience's relation to the classic Hollywood film. So as you're watching these two films and thinking about them, think both about resemblances and differences. And you'll get some sense of how much remarkable variation is possible within what remains certain familiar conventions, expectations-- not only about the content of the text. But also about the way the text is organized, about its formal features.

So what I'd like to do then is say a couple of introductory things about each of the films you're going to see. And if I'm able to keep the time right, maybe we'll pause for one clip. Maybe we won't, depending on how concise I'm able to be in my arguments.

You'll notice that *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Rear Window* are 11 years apart. And I think that's significant because one of the most interesting ways to think about comparing the two films is to think about the way in which *Rear Window* seizes on many of the preoccupations and themes that are at the center of *Shadow of a Doubt*. But deals with them in ways that one might say are even more disturbing and profound, that press more deeply into the implications that are mobilized in the earlier film.

And maybe that sounds too general and abstract and mysterious. Let me be specific about what I mean. One example is-- one of the most interesting aspects of *Shadow of a Doubt*, if you look down to my next to the last item, is what I call the subplot. And the subplot in *Shadow of a Doubt* involves essentially a kind of subsidiary story about two very ineffectual characters.

In this subplot, the husband of the family has a kind of-- his main preoccupation when he's not working at his bank-- is he has an ongoing conversation and sort of reading group with his friend, played by Hume Cronyn. Also as a diminutive man, also a man who seems to lack masculine force. He's short, he's not aggressive. And they spend their time reading murder mysteries. And they spend their time trying to devise the perfect murder.

So part of what's funny about this, but also macabre in its own way, is that while these two sort of capon like older men-- who stand for a kind of impotent maturity, a kind of useless, unattractive maturity-- they spend their time and their diversion is to try to invent or imagine

murders and mayhem. When in fact a real murderer is living at the heart of the family. And Young Charlie herself is actually in danger, even though her father and no one around her in the world understands that that's the case. Although the viewer comes to understand it fairly early. And even Young Charlie comes to a recognition of it before the film is over.

So in this subplot, what's going on is we have two sort of characters playing at the diversion of murder, and finding stories about murder a kind of escape. And in fact, one of them is actually trying to devise the way to kill someone and get away with it. And what we're supposed to feel is that this subplot is a reminder to us about a number of things. But most disturbingly and subversively, it should be a reminder to the audience of what the audience is doing sitting and watching Hitchcock's film. Because the equivalent of the audience in the movie is-- one equivalent of the audience in the movie are these two sort of foolish people who, immersed in, and in some degree surrounded by evil and authentic danger are living out their silly diversions by reading silly magazines about murder stories.

So it's a variation on Hitchcock's obsession, or deep, deep recurring interest in the space of entertainment. And what it means to want to go to entertainments. And there's a certain sense in which every single Hitchcock film enables or is grounded upon this experience of sitting in the dark-- actually what sort of equivalent to what the Jimmy Stewart character does in *Rear Window*-- sitting in the dark, anonymous peeping watching the lives of other people. And the idea is not only that you're anonymous, but in some sense there's something sort of illicit about it. As if in the process of doing it, you're indulging what are base desires or at least not totally respectable impulses. But you're doing it in a space of comparative safety and a place of anonymity.

So the subplot in *Shadow of a Doubt*, in a certain sense, raises self-conscious questions about the nature of the entertainment that we ourselves are watching as audiences for the film. All right? And it's clearly a major dimension of *Shadow of a Doubt*. It's one of the things that make *Shadow of a Doubt* a rich movie. There's a kind of cunning, cynical complexity in it that careless viewers, or very superficial viewers won't pick up on.

And it's really possible, I could really imagine, that they were viewers who came away from *Shadow of a Doubt* fully satisfied. Thinking, oh yes, evil has been purged. What a nice mystery story! Never fully picking up on the dramatized elements of the text, which put in question the ease with which we embrace these forms of entertainment, the ease with which

we accept murder and mayhem as a form of diversion. And some of the implications of that for human nature and for our ideas of entertainment itself. So that moment when in *Strangers on the Train* when the merry-go-round goes mad and becomes an instrument of terror and murder is another example of Hitchcock's interest in the complexity and problematic nature of our connection to what we call entertainment.

And one of the things you can see when you shift to *Rear Window* which you can see how these preoccupations have been distilled and clarified. Because the entire film becomes a meditation on the nature of our voyeuristic impulses. The entire film becomes a story about seeing and not being seen, about following-- about shadowing people, about hidden impulses or potential doubles of our own respectable nature. And the way in which *Rear Window* is self-reflexive or self-conscious is much more systematic and much more deeply embedded in the experience of watching the film than was the case with *Shadow of a Doubt*. The same theme, the same self-consciousness, the same awareness of the problematic nature of entertainment, but now much more systematically and fully integrated into the formal and thematic nature of the text.

So I love *Shadow of a Doubt*. In many ways it's one of my favorite Hitchcocks. But it's early Hitchcock, and you can feel the much greater rigor with Hitchcock has begun to seize on the implications of his own problematic relation to his material. And his audience's compromised, complicit relationship to the material that Hitchcock mobilizes in his film. So *Rear Window* was more systematic in some sense, more coherently conscious of this element of its meaning.

It's almost as if by the time we get to the mature films of the '50s and beyond-- the period between, let's say, 1951 in the early '60s, when Hitchcock did all of his most powerful work-- it's almost as if we can say that the films of this era have a kind of double significance. That all of these films-- all the films after *Shadow of a Doubt* are partly about filmmaking. They're partly self-conscious attempts to be meditations on the nature of movies. And it's almost as if there's a kind of separate story, a separate plot. There's the traditional kind of mystery story that, is characteristic of many films. But then there's this meta story, this separate story. It's the story of the filming. The story of the making of the film. The story or the drama of watching-- the drama of the watching, we might call it.

The literary version of this would be the drama of the telling. Right? There are literary-- if you think of a novel like-- a novella like Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. I think I've mentioned this before in the class because it's such a clear example. But the story of *Heart of Darkness* is

really two stories. It's the story of the narrator's trip up the Congo River when he was a young man. But it's even more of the story of his struggles to tell the story 20 years later. And when you read *Heart of Darkness*, naive readers hate it, can't figure out why it's taking so long. And why it's taking the narrator so long to get to the point. But of course, the story is not primarily even about the adventure he's trying to talk about. It's about the struggle to tell the adventure. So that there's a kind of double plot in that novella as there is in a lot of great modernist fiction.

As there is in another way in a lot of great modernist paintings, where you are aware not only of the subject of the painting, but of the materials that go into the making of the painting. I'm thinking of the great impressionist and post-impressionist painters, right? Or of the painters who would paint-- like Monet who would paint 50 versions of a haystack in different lights. Or 32 versions of Rouen Cathedral in different lights at different times of the day. Why?

Well, one of the reasons is, he's trying to say that reality is not stable. That Rouen Cathedral changes depending upon the light, depending upon the weather, depending upon my emotion when I look at it, right? In other words, reality is much more complicated. And so that when we look at the Rouen Cathedral paintings, we're aware of paint. We're aware not just of the fact that a cathedral is being represented. We're aware of the process whereby Monet went through the terrific labor of capturing the image. And you can see there's a lot of examples even on painting of the thickness of the paint. When you look at Monet's paintings, very often the paint is so thick that if you see in reality you want to reach out and touch it. So you're aware of the materials that go in-- again, another kind of self-consciousness or self-reflexiveness.

Well, Hitchcock belongs in that tradition, I think. And a great many of his mature films have this double plot. Right? The second plot is what we might call the drama of the watching, the drama of watching. And *Rear Window* was a particularly austere ingredient instance of this topic.

Well, let me start over again with *Shadow of a Doubt*, set the context. It's World War II was going on. I already mentioned that Hitchcock had already felt ambivalent about leaving England at the end of the 1930s. And now, by 1943, this anxiety-- because the war was on, England was being attacked. Hitchcock felt ambivalence about that. His mother was tremendously ill, he kept receiving information. And she couldn't get back to England because the war was going on. You couldn't travel there. And it was said that he was afflicted by a kind of a really deep guilt and unhappiness during the filming of *Shadow of a Doubt*. And during

the filming of *Shadow of a Doubt*, his mother died.

Now there are some film critics who say, Oh well, the port-- well there's one critic who writes that the portrait of the mother in *Shadow of a Doubt* is Hitchcock's last benign portrait of a mother. But if this is a benign portrait, I'm very nervous about what is a mean portrait. And it's a very bad mistake. I mean, it can't be that Hitchcock was trying to memorialize his mother in the primary character in this film. Because as you'll see, she's a magnificent airhead. The only dumber woman in film that I know is Annabelle Lee in *The General*, who sweeps out the engine while they're trying to escape their enemies. And as you'll see, she's a figure-- she's a benign figure in the sense that she has not a mean bone in her body. But she's really a dullard. She's really silly. And she silly in ways the film is aware of. But we'll come back to that.

So there are elements in the film of autobiography, but there are skewed by Hitchcock's own sour, cynical, disturbed nature. And this portrait of a family is very far from being a celebratory portrait, as will say in a moment. So Hitchcock's in exile. He's feeling a bit sour, he's feeling alienated. So he makes a film in which-- really his first film, or one of his first films-- in which an American family is at the very center of the story, right? But he treats this family with an odd kind of comic irony or distance that careful viewers immediately see and lazy viewers might not see. But the careful viewers definitely see.

And one way to pick up on how subversive his portrait of the family is, is to compare him to his great contemporary Frank Capra. We've seen a Capra film already, of course, that standard and establishing screwball comedy. But the more characteristic Capra films-- all of these kinds of film were also coming out at the same time-- are even more fundamentally celebrations of American life. And maybe the quintessential instances of this as a film, that anyone who lives in the United States for a few months around Christmas time becomes sick of, what's the film? Starring Jimmy Stewart, who was also the star of one of tonight's Hitchcock film, *Rear Window*. What's the film? *It's a Wonderful Life*, yes. And in fact the title tells--

Capra-- although there is a dark side to Capra, too. But Capra's the great American sentimental and optimist. He celebrates small town virtues, celebrates-- and the villains in Capra's films are Big Business and people who are hostile to the values of small town America. Hitchcock-- and one way of understanding what Hitchcock is doing in *Shadow*-- so I feel like it's *A Wonderful Life*-- also, incidentally, these films often star Jimmy Stewart-- James Stewart. But when Hitchcock uses James Stewart, this upstanding, perfect example of middle American decency and American honesty is turned into a much more fearful, damaged,

impotent sometimes sexually perverted or implicitly sexually damaged adult. And it was Hitchcock's version of Jimmy-- the Jimmy Stewart that Hitchcock draws out is a much more disturbed and damaged character.

And part of what makes Stewart's performances in Hitchcock's films so powerful-- there's some people say Hitchcock and Stewart's collaboration was one of the great collaborations between a director and an actor in the history of movies. And you could see one great example of it in *Rear Window*. But the primary thing to recognize is that what Hitchcock is doing something so subversive, because Jimmy Stewart was already a kind of American icon. He stood when he-- except in Hitchcock's films-- he stood for a form of American decency and openness and honesty and sincerity, goodness and even heroism. Which Hitchcock undermines in all kinds of-- I don't mean that he makes Jimmy Stewart an evil character, he doesn't! And he him his outwardly heroic lineaments.

But then we discover that there are things wrong with him, as you'll see in *Rear Window*. And he does this again in *Vertigo*, an even more dramatic example of Jimmy Stewart playing an impaired or a damaged character. In *Rear Window*, Jimmy Stewart has one leg that's broken, right? In a cast for all the film. As you'll see. At the very end of the film-- one of the outcomes of the film is what-- in the denouement-- we see Jimmy Stewart after the action has occurred and now he has two broken legs. So he's back where he was in the beginning. He's even more damaged, and impaired, and immobilized than he was before! And we'll come back to this, because there's something very disturbing about this ending in a certain way. Even though it purports to be a kind of survival tale and in that sense, a kind of happy ending.

But the important point for the moment is that Hitchcock was certainly fully aware of the fact that what he was doing was juxtaposing his much more sour, unsentimental, even cynical vision of American life against Capra's more sentimental one, right? So it's as if he's against Capra. Or he's against Capricorn. The corniness. Get the pun? I'm stealing it, I'm stealing it. But the corniness, the sentimentality of a characteristic Capra film. And the characteristic attitude in the Capra film towards small town American life. And one of the ways to recognize this is to recognize a kind of recurring trope of his that I've mentioned before. Let's show it, Kristen.

So here is the opening *Shadow of a Doubt*. I'm giving you a chance to watch it and then savor it the second time when you see it again, in 20 minutes, half an hour or so. And it dramatizes a scene, a version of which occurs in many Hitchcock films. Watch what happens. In which the

effect of the opening is in some sense to implicate the viewer right at the beginning in an act of voyeurism.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PROFESSOR: See? A benign scene. A benign cityscape.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PROFESSOR: We go up to the window. In *Psycho*, it's even more dramatic. The film actually crawls under a window shade that's almost all the way down. But you see what the camera did?

[KNOCK ON THE DOOR]

CHARLIE: Come in.

PROFESSOR: OK, stop. When we first see Young Charlie in the film many, many scenes later, what we've just looked at will be replicated, shot by shot. It's an example of what I call rhyming scenes. And I'll come back to that in a moment.

So behind any door or window is potential evil. And the way that we go out in the street, that then the camera looks up at a window, then it goes implicitly through the window. And as I say, in some Hitchcock films, the slithering through the window is actually even more explicit. And you actually feel that the camera has slid in, as if it's a kind of unwelcome and unobserved witness to the event. And the implication is that you are watching something that you shouldn't be watching, or that you have access to worlds that normally you would never have access to. So behind any door window in Hitchcock's world can be evil, danger, fright.

An American town, an American family. I've already mentioned that one of the things that's going on in this film is a portrait of an American family that has a kind of ironic undercutting built into it. We can feel almost from the very beginning when we first go to Santa Rosa. Our first shots of Santa Rosa-- which will occur shortly after the scene you've just seen. You'll see, there will be a more elaborated scene in which we learn a little bit more about Uncle Charlie, and then we shift to Santa Rosa. And the very opening scene in Santa Rosa shows a sort of fat, jolly policeman in bright sunlight directing traffic. As if nothing could be more wonderful than the job of directing traffic in a small American town in sunny California. What could be more noble?

But there's something excessive about it. I mean, you almost feel, even before you fully realize that what the film is going to be doing, you sort of feel that this is too much. And this is characteristic of Hitchcock as well. Almost as if there's an excess of brightness and an excessive jolliness. As if it's more than we could possibly believe. And then, as the family's nature begins to unfold to us, what we begin to see is these children are horrible, insipid children. They're hardly admirable. The daughter's a nasty little bitch who is more interested in reading her books than in speaking civilly to her parents. Not long Charlie, but Charlie's younger sister. There are three children the family. Charlie's the oldest, right? And then, she has a sister and a younger brother. And the younger brother and the sister are insipid, nasty little children. The boy when we see him is constantly saying, what-- when he first sees Uncle Charlie, he says, "What have you got? What present have you gotten for me?"

And if we don't think that the children are very attractive, wait till we look more closely at the fact the parents. I've already mentioned the father, who spends most of his most of his time with Hume Cronyn trying to talk about ridiculous diversions in murder mysteries. Meanwhile, his family is in danger around him and he doesn't have any sense of it. But the wife, as I've mentioned also, comes across as one of the supreme airheads in American movies. There's a certain moment when Uncle Charlie is under suspicion, so some FBI agents come to town in disguise. And they suspect him but they don't have evidence yet. So they claim they're from a magazine, and they come into the family and they say, "What we want to do is we want to do a story about a typical American family."

And the mother of the family is very proud. "Oh, isn't it nice to be a typical representative American family?" Well, who would want to be the mean, right? We're the mean, we're the norm, right? We are the typical-- but she loves this idea. And then, not only does she love the idea, she's really rather a silly person. So at one point when they're getting ready to sort of-- I don't know whether they're getting ready to do still photography in the house-- she insists on completing her cooking because she wants to finish the pie before the photographer gets there. As if completing her cooking has something to do with what the photographer would find. And you find repeatedly that she's kind of a little askew. She certainly has no possible intimation that her brother is a murderer and in fact a cynical nihilist that has no respect for anything in life. And she never learns any better, and that's part of what makes the film so disturbing.

So what happens in the course of the film essentially is that this American family is

systematically shown to be sort of silly and foolish, banal in its ordinariness. Hardly something that we might fully-- I don't mean to say that we come away in horror thinking, Oh! How disgusting this family is! Just that we think how ordinary, banal, silly, foolish it is.

One of the ways I've talked already about the way in which Hitchcock is obsessed by doublings. And by the idea of a self divided. And one of his richest treatments of that theme is in the treatment of Uncle Charlie and Young Charlie. And you'll see how explicit the film is about that. One of the ways it's explicit about it is that Hitchcock uses particular visual strategies to reinforce the connection. And I've already mentioned the rhyming scene in that opening scene. Watch it, because it's quite exciting. Later, in our first introduction to Young Charlie, the camera behaves identically to the way it behaved when we saw Uncle Charlie. And so even before Uncle Charlie has entered the story, even before we're fully aware of what the relationship between Uncle Charlie and Young Charlie is, the camera has told us that they are linked.

And we can say then that in the doubling Young Charlie represents a kind of innocence and part of her night-- one way to understand the film is to see it as a Bildungsroman, as a growing up, as an initiation story in which Young Charlie learns something about the evil and difficulty of the world. She has a naive and simplified view of the world, and before she's done, she comes face to face, not just with murder, but with the possibility of murder. And in fact, Uncle Charlie actually tries to murder her, because he realizes she knows the truth about him. So she's in danger for part of the film, and knows she's in danger. And part of the issue is that she can't really talk about it. Why not? Well, it's her uncle!

Have you ever heard this kind of thing? There are actually critics who say that although that it's never made explicit in the film, that one of the ways to understand the film, and at least in the subtextual way is to think about the relation between Uncle Charlie and Young Charlie as that between the sort of perverted uncle man who manhandles his young niece when his family isn't watching, right? And there actually is in the film what is a scene sometimes called a betrothal scene in which we see Young Charlie come down a staircase, like a traditional bride down a staircase, and Uncle Charlie gives her a ring.

So that's the film does insinu-- and that's really perverted. The film doesn't actually say anything sexual is going on between uncle and niece. That's not-- but there are these suggestions of illicit or disturbing connections that are part of the subtext with which we experience the film and with which we recognize the tangled, disturbing quality of the

connection between Young Charlie and her uncle. So the naivete on Young Charlie's part is her failure to understand or to even to be able to imagine the extent of evil and duplicity in the world. And we could say that what happens as she comes to recognize what Uncle Charlie really is, and what Uncle Charlie really stands for, she is educated into the ways of the world.

But it is in many ways a very terrible and very serious initiation. And one of the climactic instances of this occurs toward the end of the film when Young Charlie and her uncle meet together in a bar called the-- think it's called the Till Two because it closes at 2:00, which is very late. In the universe of the film, 2:00 AM is very late in Santa Rosa, California. They meet in this place, and this is where Uncle Charlie realizes he can no longer hide the truth. And he talks openly to Young Charlie, and he says at one point this.

"We're old friends, Charlie. More than that, we're like twins. You said so yourself. You think you're the clever little girl who knows something. There's so much you don't know, so much. You're just an ordinary little girl living in an ordinary little town--"

You hear the contempt for ordinary there? Hitchcock shares some of this, even though his villain is saying it, right?

"You go through your ordinary little day at night and you sleep your untroubled, ordinary little sleep, filled with peaceful, stupid dreams. You live in a dream--"

This is a direct quotation.

"You live in a dream. You're a sleepwalker. Blind. How do you know what the world is like? Do you know the world is a foul sty? Do know that if you rip the fronts off houses you'd find swine? The world's a hell. What does it matter what happens in it?"

Now what an extreme nihilistic statement. That's what Uncle Charlie stands for. That's the full ugliness and disturbance that Young Charlie-- and, of course, a murder is speaking to her. This is also implicitly a confession to her. "Yes, I have killed people." So it's a tremendously disturbing moment in the film, and it represents in a certain way Young Charlie's coming of age. But the irony, or one tremendous irony of this tale, of this story, is that when we get to the end of the film, there is a profound kind of ambiguity. Yes, the evil has been purged. I won't go into the details of the plot so as not to spoil your experience of the film, but Uncle Charlie is eliminated from the scene in a-- and Young Charlie survives. It's a kind of reassuring or happy ending.

But what undercuts it? As all, remember all, of Hitchcock's endings are undercut, they're never really happy. They're never really reassuring. They go through the motions. They're conventionally reassuring, but they're not. The moral ambiguity on which this film ends is maybe it's most disturbing aspect. Because what it says-- because Young Charlie never tells her mother, never tells her father, never reveals to the community that Uncle Charlie was this evil figure, was the Merry Widow murder. Why not? Well, maybe she sparing her mother. Uncle Charlie's no longer there, what's the difference? There's no discussion of this.

But what does it mean? It means that when the film is over, the idea that evil might lurk at the heart of the American family remains a reality that no one has acknowledged. In other words, it's as if the implications of the story are denied by Charlie's silence. And we're left in the situation at the end of the film in which the implications or meaning of Uncle Charlie's life has been suppressed. And therefore, the significance of his pervasive nihilism and of what it means that such nihilism could exist at the heart of a typical American family is never acknowledged or known by anyone inside the film. Even though it's a disturbing knowledge that we take away from the film.

So to conclude on this film, one of the things to think about as you're watching the film is how remarkably Hitchcock is able to give us what might be thought in many ways to be, and what is in many ways, a light entertainment. A humorous and very well put together mystery story about an American family full of the wit and scene by scene richness and complexity. A film that even naive film goers can enjoy fully. And yet the full implications of it, the moral ambiguity with which the film ends, and the moral ambiguity that's a really implicit all the way through the film, the sense of the ominous and the sense of disturbance remains with the viewer after the film is over. It's a characteristic way for Hitchcock to end films.

Rear Window, as I've suggested, is an even more rigorous exploration of some of Hitchcock's deepest preoccupations and obsessions. Let me remind you to really savor the opening scene of the film. It starts under the titles, and you get the title sequence, and onto the title-- it's a sequence that lasts three or almost four minutes. And it's completely wordless. There is no dialogue. Watch how much what happens. It's a complicated moment in a certain way. But if you are attentive to it, you can see what's happening. Essentially, what we see the camera do-- first, we see the blinds go up on two open windows. And then we realize that they're open windows, they're encasement windows that are open unscreened. And after the blinds-- the camera is stable, it doesn't move-- three separate blinds go up one time. They reveal the

other side of an apartment complex being seen through the window of another apartment.

And then, what we see-- the camera then goes on and sort of elaborate journey. You're caught in the camera's gaze, as a viewer. Once the shades go up, then the camera begins to move. It moves toward the window, then it moves out the window, and then it looks down and it does a kind of circuit of the-- essentially, it shows you what can be seen from this window. It does a kind of circuit of the physical spaces that are open if it looked at this world from this window. And you see it might make a kind of circle, it's not a 360 degree turn but it's more than 180. The camera turns like this, it pans, it turns around, and then it comes back into the room.

And when it comes back into the room-- it goes out of the room and it looks around, and then it comes back into the room, through the same windows, backs up further, and then you see Jimmy Stewart lying there, sweating in the heat. The camera then looks up a wall at a thermometer, and you see the thermometer is hovering in the mid 90s someplace, explaining why Jimmy Stewart is sweating so much. But then, the camera moves outside again and does another circle of the space that you just looked at. It's almost as if it wants you to look at a second time, to remind you of the space of the action in the film.

And of course, we don't fully realize it at the time, but this is a rehearsal for the whole movie, because we are going to be confined in exactly this way for the entire film. We're never going to get out of this room. Everything we see will be seen through this window. Then the camera come pulls back in again, we see Jimmy Stewart again-- so it's almost as if that opening sequence does the same thing twice.

What it mostly does, of course, is trap the viewer in an act of voyeurism. It traps the viewer completely in an act of spying. And then, almost the very first words of the film, the camera pulls back, it looks at a few items to tell us a little more about the fact that Jimmy Stewart is a photographer who works for a magazine, who was injured taking one of his action photos. He can't wait to till he's out of his cast, but he has another week to go and he's going stir crazy. And then he has a conversation on the telephone with his editor. And at the same time engages in various acts of voyeurism, including especially a young woman who is scantily clad across the courtyard in her room wearing shorts and a very revealing brassiere doing sort of exercises and so forth while she's eating her breakfast. And you see the Jimmy Stewart character voyeuristically savoring her as he's talking to his friend.

And then he hangs up the phone, a knock comes on the door, a woman enters. It's his cleaning lady played by the great actress-- what's her name?-- Thelma Ritter. And Thelma's almost first words are, "We've become a nation of peeping Toms." And I mention this just to show you how aware the film is, how much the film wants us to be aware of the fact, that voyeurism is one of its deep subjects, right? Why do we have this desire to watch the illicit? What is it about us that wants to make us sort of look through key holes and peep at people and watch the intimate lives of people?

So they saw the opening scene is a scene that dramatizes the confinement and the voyeurism that are at the very heart of what the movie is about. We can say that the whole essay, the whole film in some sense, is a kind of essay on seeing. And in that three or four minute sequence in the beginning without dialogue, the camera is the star, in a certain sense. We become aware of the camera, as Hitchcock wants us to be, in a way we would never be in another kind of film.

There are other forms of elegance in the film. And I hope you'll watch the way the camera behaves, because it's a marvel of complexity and intelligence. But there's another way in which there's an elegance of structure in the film. As the camera in the very beginning makes its tour of the building, what begins to emerge in a very elementary way at first, and then as the film precedes becomes more fleshed out, is that there are three or four basic stories about people who live in the apartments that Jimmy Stewart is looking into. And each of them tells a separate kind of story. There's a Miss Lonely Heart story about a woman who was pining for a boyfriend and who feels very lonely and maybe toying with the idea of suicide. Then there's a story about a composer who's having trouble with his work. They're a series of sort of subplots, mostly trivial ones. Except for the primary one-- what's the primary one? A murder may have been committed in one of the apartments to Jimmy Stewart has been prying into. And he begins to investigate the murder and that puts him in danger himself. And the people involved with him, including his girlfriend Grace Kelly, get involved in the danger as well because he's a immobile. And Grace has to be the one who walks across the way, and does--

So the elegance of the structure of the film has partly to do with the way in which these subplots work themselves out. And at the end of the film, each of these little subplots that we'd seen being played out in these different apartments-- only watching them through the windows of the apartments-- each of them is resolved in some way. And I want to suggest that their resolution, while from one angle is very satisfying-- there's a kind of elegance of structure.

We're very satisfied by this sense of completion. But at the same time, I think the very fact that these stories are all tied up in such neat knots makes us feel that there's something a little too neat, a little too perfect about it. In other words, the very perfection with which these subplots are tied up at the end suggests a kind of excess that Hitchcock wants us to be suspicious of. As if of this is just too perfect. And of course, there are other ways in which the ending of this film is deeply ambiguous. And I'll come back to that in a moment.

I also ought to mention the way in which, in a quiet, subtle way, this film is an exploration of both class and gender issues. Because there's a kind of little sort of contest going on. Grace Kelly, who's this elegant upper class woman who gets her clothes at the fanciest fashion stores and has food catered from the fanciest restaurants in the city and who reads magazines like Vogue and so forth-- she stands for sort of moneyed elegance. And there's a kind of tension between them. She wants to marry Jimmy Stewart and Jimmy Stewart's resisting. One reason is that he doesn't belong to her class. He's more of a working class type, right? He's a down to earth sort of guy, and he's worried about that. And he's also nervous because like many American males, especially in the movies, he's nervous about being entrapped by marriage, as if he isn't already entrapped in all kinds of ways.

And in an odd kind of way, we could say that the Thorwald marriage-- that's the name of the murderer and the wife he supposedly murders and chops up, at least that's what Jimmy Stewart comes to suspect. We could say that the Thorwald marriage is a kind of double of the marriage that the Jimmy Stewart character fears he will have. That his resistance to Grace Kelly is partly a class resistance. He feels uneasy around this aristocratic woman because her tastes seemed to him banal and trivial. In any case, they seem to him to involve values and commitments that are at odds with a sort of rough and tumble life of a traveling photographer who goes to war zones and other dangerous places. But that's his image of himself.

So his resistance to her is partly a desire to maintain his freedom, right? And it's partly a class issue. So that both issues of class and gender are involved. The gender issue has to do with how men and women, especially in the stereotyped way of the '50s and '60s, regarded the question of marriage. And there are other marriages or relationships that are alluded to in the film, and we can say that those marriages and relationships also double the relationship between Stewart and Kelly. So there's a kind of low level, not exactly hostility, but a low level badinage and argument going on between Kelly and Stuart all the way through the film. Which is in some sense resolved, but not fully resolved. Or resolved in a typically unsatisfying

Hitchcockian way at the end of the film.

So the very ending of the film. There is the tradition-- the murderer is caught, is exposed. The danger to which the Jimmy Stewart character was exposed is purged by the end. Again I won't go into details if you've not seen the film, but I need to say this much in order to explain the ending. And at the end of the film, as I said, there's a moment where we see him-- the murderer finds out that he's watching him. And after a while, he comes to Jimmy Stewart's apartment apparently to try to murder him. Because he thinks he's going to reveal that he's a murderer himself.

And it's a terrifying scene. The great climax of the scene-- Stewart-- his physical limitations some critics have seen as a symbolic embodiment of what might be seen as a form of impotence. Both a sexual impotence and sort of broader kind of impotence, an incompetence because he's crippled, he can't fight, he can't defend himself. He can't behave like a traditional man in a traditional movie. And again, remember, this is characteristic of Hitchcock. His men are almost always like this. It's amazing, in fact, how weak, vulnerable, damaged, fearful, frightened his protagonists are.

So there's this climactic moment at the end where Thorwald, the murderer, is trying to kill Jimmy Stewart, and he pushes him. And Jimmy Stewart is holding on. He's on the second story window. He's holding on like this, looking up. The camera's looking down at him. You see the fear and horror in his face. He lets go.

There's a critic, a brilliant critic, a French critic, who talks about the idea of letting go, of losing your grip as central action in Hitchcock's films. You lose your gripping. You fall into a void. And that moment that is, as I said this afternoon, could be said to be an iconic moment in Hitchcock's movie. So when Jimmy Stewart actually lets go and falls. You see his face as if he's falling to his-- you think he might be falling to his death. But of course, he's not. He just breaks his other leg. And at the end of the film then we have a final scene. And this is where the ambiguity comes in.

We see him with both legs, now. He's back where he was. But the Grace Kelly character is sitting happily in the room. She pretends that she's reading material that would please Jimmy Stewart. But in fact, if you look closely, she has a copy of Vogue hidden inside the material that she's reading. And there's a very deep sense that in this gender conflict between Grace Kelly-- and also we discover at the end but they're now engaged. So Jimmy Stewart has become

engaged to this woman, right? So it's almost as if he's sort of lost the battle. Or at least he's agreed to marry. But what we feel that the end is that his agreement to marry her is still full of the same ambiguities that were present before.

And many people watching the film have said, you know the Grace Kelly character is very beautiful and very elegant, but she's not a very attractive person morally. She tries to manipulate the Jimmy Stewart character. She doesn't seem fully to appreciate him. She doesn't see why he wants to run around the world in corduroys and sneakers instead of living the high life in New York and go and going to Le Cirque for dinner. She can't really understand that. So the conflict between them is a kind of lifestyle conflict.

At the end of the film, none of those things have been resolved. And there's the sense that he's more entrapped than ever at the end of the movie. Now, I don't want to make too much of this. This is a light entertainment at one level. But these subjects that I've been talking about, the sense of losing your grip, of being caught in a confined space and being terrified by forces far larger than you, that you're too weak or damaged to resist. Those moments of horror and terror are dramatized with profound authority in this remarkable film.

So what Hitchcock repeatedly does, and especially in these two films, and if you can see them in a conversation with each other you'll understand more fully, the fascination of Hitchcock's career and the fascination of his work. Because he keeps returning with these remarkable variations again and again to the same set of problems and of subjects. So there's even more ambiguity and uncertainty at the end of *Rear Window* than there was when it began.

And one final point and then I'll stop. One of the things that we notice in the course of the film is there's one moment in the movie where the Jimmy Stewart character responds to Grace Kelly with a kind of excitement and allure. It's almost the moment where you see suddenly really desires her, really sees her as a possible partner. And it's the moment in which she has entered the voyeuristic drama. It's the moment in which he's watching her through his lens when she's gone across to try to do some detective work in the murderer's apartment. And there's a kind of excitement and adventure that goes on there.

And it's actually the moment when they bond. When they realize-- and there is some sense that they're both engaged in a morally exciting, in a mutually exciting adventure. But there's also the sense, very disturbing in a way when you reflect on it later, that the moment in which Grace Kelly became truly attractive to the Jimmy Stewart character was the moment in which

he had entered the voyeuristic drama. In which Kelly was now distant from, which he was attracted to her because he was seeing her as if he were a peeping Tom.

So now this is a subtext. I don't mean that I don't mean that the film is using a megaphone to remind us of these implications. But the number of them build for the course of the film. And as with *Shadow of a Doubt*, what seems on the surface to be a kind of light diversion, once we begin to press its details becomes a much more disturbing and powerful meditation on our human impulse to watch what we're not supposed to watch, to participate in illicit activities without being punished for it, especially if we, like Jimmy Stewart, are able to do so in the dark.

And in that sense, when we step away from *Rear Window*, one of the things we might recognize is that we in the audience have been engaging in the same activity that Jimmy Stewart is engaging in the movie. That we are complicit as viewers in the immorality and in the murderous tendencies of these forms of entertainment. So it's not possible if you're an alert and self-conscious film goer to watch these apparent light entertainments without recognizing their deeper and more disturbing implications.

[NO SPEECH]