

Hitchcock Meets Freud: Voyeurism in Postwar America

My project aims to re-analyze the film *Rear Window* by director Alfred Hitchcock in relation to its historical period. *Rear Window* is an illustration of a cinema by which, through the act of viewing, an audience is aroused and manipulated into eliciting an emotional response. The film negotiates an America in turmoil due to the paranoia caused by the Second Red Scare, the Cold War, and the emergence and popularization of Freud's theories of psychoanalysis. The act of observation is Hitchcock's means of navigating between the domesticated private and the omnipresent public. Many sources keep Hitchcock within the 1950s. But I will argue that the act of voyeurism, specifically the separation of object and subject, is essential to understanding the purest form of cinema and is not limited to postwar America. This logic can be applied to contemporary American society where an ever-advancing technological landscape increases voyeuristic surveillance practices. An increase in surveillance activity gives rise to ethical questions that Hitchcock explores through his characters that reflect the collective obsessional behaviors of the American people. Additionally, I will be analyzing certain "Hitchcockian" directorial techniques and contextualizing them as aesthetic choices that exemplify the divide in a post-event American society.