

Hitchcock's Movies 'The Birds' and 'Vertigo'

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Good and Bad Women in Hitchcock's Movies 'The Birds' and 'Vertigo'

Alfred Hitchcock produced various movies such as *Spellbound*, *Rope*, *Dial M for Murder*, *Rear Window*, *North by Northwest*, *Psycho*, *The Birds*, *Marnie*, and *Vertigo*, which have been the basis of this course. In the first place, the movie *The Birds* was produced in 1963 and its plot majorly focuses on unwarranted bird attacks on a society based in Bodega Bay, California (Hitchcock, 01:30:00). Apparently, this movie was culturally, historically, and aesthetically essential to any society in that it embraced the role of change and impacts of love and violence especially for women. At the same time, the movie *Vertigo* was produced in 1958 and it explores the story Scottie who was a police officer forced into early retirement owing the development of acrophobia and vertigo (Hitchcock, 00:11:12). The choice of the two movies is because they reflect on different social themes such as male chauvinism, gender segregation, and violence in love. Apparently, the expression of rot in the society from the social perspective seems to be the function of the movies. Even though most of Hitchcock's movies present almost similar themes like love, violence, and male chauvinism, they are unique in that in each movie, there are bad and good women which shall be discussed in this context basing argument on the movies *Vertigo* and *The Birds*.

To begin with, the statement that in all Hitchcock's movies there is always good and bad women is valid. This is because in the movie *The Birds*, Hitchcock presents the character Melanie Daniels who is irresponsible, spoiled, or generally some type of a jerk; thus, presenting one example of a bad woman. At the start of the film, Melanie is shown strolling the streets of San Francisco while dressed poorly as she seeks the attention of men (Hitchcock, 00:25). However, this is not enough to qualify her a bad woman. The truth comes out in the bird shop when she first lies to Mitch Brenner that she was a saleswoman who understood everything about the birds. Further, after realizing that Mitch had discovered her true identity, she rudely calls him a "louse" (Hitchcock, 00:07:25). Moreover, as the film proceeds, it becomes evident that she had appeared in all newspapers for jumping in an Italian fountain while naked. Apparently, this shows that Melanie had earned all her wealthy through immorality which is one of causes of sexually transmitted infections, low birth rates, and high divorce rates in any society. Even though she is quite useful when birds attack the town, her actions do not outwrite the fact that she is a bad woman who does not despair in catastrophic moments.

Different from that, in the movie *The Birds* Hitchcock presents hope that good women still exist through the character Annie. Apparently, Annie was a down to earth woman and the exact opposite of Melanie; she is brunette while Melanie is blonde, and the fact that she is a serious and focused lady while Melanie is a flirtatious and witty lady. Moreover, for the first time she appears in the movie, Annie is full of dirt due to gardening showing that she does not depend on immorality for survival (Hitchcock, 00:59:00). Comparatively, as Mitch's ex-girlfriend, she respects his new lover, Melanie, to the extent that after moving to Bodega Bay, she was open to Melanie that she respected their love. In the same token, after the birds attacked the city, Annie works with the other characters to save their children from danger (Hitchcock,

01:26:47). According to Cathy, when the birds overwhelmed them, Annie pushed her inside and she sacrificed to die just to save her. Honestly, she is one of the best characters I have ever watched in a movie.

At the same time, in the movie *Vertigo*, Hitchcock presents the character Judy who is a saleswoman in San Francisco desperately looking for love (Hitchcock, 00:18:23). Undeniably, what makes Judy a bad woman is that she takes part in Madeleine's murder by impersonating her under the stewardship of Elster (Hitchcock, 01:41:23). Apparently, it is in order to assume that she impersonated and took part in Madeleine's murder to win the love of both Elster and Scottie. However, she pays the price since she is forced to impersonate Madeleine by wearing too much makeup and having to put on expensive and quite elegant clothes. The two men take advantage of her and afraid that she could not keep on impersonating Madeleine, she opted to write to Scottie revealing the murder of the former and run away. However, as a bad woman, she tears up the letter and keep the secret to herself ((Hitchcock, 00:41:40). Consequently, she pays the price of Madeleine's death by being disowned by Scottie and Elster and ends up committing suicide by jumping from a tower (Hitchcock, 02:07:08).

On the other hand, the character Midge in *Vertigo* is the exact opposite of Judy given she is down-to-earth, independent, smart, and willing to help her ex, Scottie. In other words, even after being heart-broken by Scottie, Midge is such a nice friend that she aids him with acrophobia and gathers intelligence to warn him against prevailing dangers. Moreover, even though Scottie is busy chasing Judy who is not real and mysterious, Midge stands with him during moments of depression and guilt especially after Madeleine's death (Hitchcock, 00:56:17). She tries all possible strategies to help cheer up Scottie and accept the reality that Madeleine was gone. As if that is not enough, she even sacrifices to take Scottie to a psychiatrist

and provide important information about his love for the deceased Madeleine. However, the audience can easily agree that if Midge would have witnessed Madeleine's murder, she would have reported to Scottie and the authorities.

In conclusion, the statement that each of Hitchcock's films has a good and bad woman is very true as portrayed in the two films analyzed in this context; *The Birds* and *Vertigo*. In *The Birds*, Melanie is presented as a bad woman who would undertake any mission just for money. She is irresponsible, spoiled, or generally some type of a jerk given she earns money from immorality. However, Annie is the exact opposite of Melanie given respects her as Mitch's lover meaning that she is not vengeful; she wishes the best for her ex-boyfriend. Similarly, in *Vertigo* Judy is a perfect example of bad women since she takes part in Madeleine and fails to inform anyone about it. She does all the best to win Scottie's heart; therefore, ending up committing suicide after all her evil plans failed. Midge contrasts Judy's character given she is independent, smart, and willing to help her ex, Scottie. Apparently, Midge stands with Scottie during all the trying moments and even sacrifices to take her to the hospital just to ensure she is okay. From the analysis, it is also evident that men tend to choose bad women with the reason being they are more fashionable and are easily misused.

Works Cited

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