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The Horrifying transformation of the female monster

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THE HORRIFYING TRANSFORMATION OF THE FEMALE MONSTER

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theatre Arts

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Osiel Gutiérrez

February 2001

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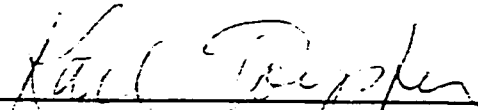
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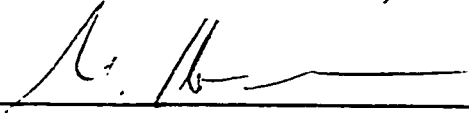
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ABSTRACT

THE HORRIFYING TRANSFORMATION OF THE FEMALE MONSTER

by Osiel Gutiérrez

This thesis addresses the female character in the horror genre and questions the representation of the female monster in horror films. This study analyzes and compares the way women are portrayed in the different horror genres by questioning sexuality, femininity, and gender mutation. The films that are analyzed in this thesis include: Alien (1979), Carrie (1976), The Exorcist (1973), From Dusk Till Dawn (1996), Lover's Vow (1986), and Species (1995).

Research on this topic reveals that although the female character has come a long way, the image of the female monster is not as equally represented as the male monster. The inequality that the female character encounters is primarily because the horror film genre remains attached to conventions that indicate a contrived perception on the part of the horror film consuming culture regarding sexual difference, sexual identity, and regarding the male anxiety associated with female identity.

Dedication:

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Idalia G. Muñoz.

Without her support, understanding, and encouragement I would have never been able to pursue or complete my education.

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Chapter 1

The Horrifying Transformations of the Female Monster

This thesis focuses on an important, but neglected subject: the female monster. The study analyzes the horrifying transformation of the female monster in the horror genre, explores the identity of the female monster in horror movies, and examines literature of feminist writers on the horror film genre. How is female identity understood in horror films? *What meanings can we ascribe to horrifying transformations of the female in horror films?* The focus of this thesis is primarily on the female monster's sexuality, femininity, and gender mutation. The study also reviews literature related to women in horror films and literature involving special effect techniques used in creating the horrifying transformation of the female monster. The study questions the representation of femininity by the horror genre and explores the meaning behind the narrative and the performance code.

The film era's fundamental period established a network of filmmakers in the United States and Europe who utilized cinematic techniques from one another. These filmmakers presented film spectators with innovative spectacles that captivated the imagination of audience. The innovations were designed to convey to the spectator the sense of narrative drive within the filmic text. The narrative tradition was established through devices such as rapid cuts between two different scenes and dissolves from one scene to another. These techniques helped establish a change of place and time. They also enabled the spectator to achieve a sense of suspended disbelief. Benjamin Rifkin, author of Semiotics of Narration in Film and Prose Fiction (1994), states that the narrative code consists of the film maker's manipulation of numerous subcodes, including those embedded in the expressive materials. The spectator must learn the narrative code for each narrative experience. The spectator may draw ideas from similar experiences of other texts or other texts of the same genre. In short, the narrative code primarily deals with the storyline of the film which has a beginning and an ending, and some fact that simultaneously distinguishes it from other texts. (Rifkin, p. 40)

On the other hand, the performance code deals with the vision of the director, the performance of the characters, and the special effects used to help create the desired visual aesthetic. The director's vision of the film can lead the film into a different realm by augmenting or eliminating specific filmic elements. The character's contribution to the film can help express different aspects of the film that otherwise would be ignored. Special effect techniques help bring to life the story and allow for greater spectacle achievement. These manipulations of cinematic performance usually involve certain signifying elements which have acquired some conventional meaning through the history of the medium, the genre, or the artistic movement. The artistic creator may choose to reinforce conventional meaning or undercut it, depending on his/her aesthetic goals. At times the narrative code and the performance code may oppose each other, but it is the combination of these two elements that may produce outstanding horror films.

Even though a substantial amount of literature has been written about horror films, a very small portion of that effort has depicted the representation of women as monsters. Instead, the

focus has been on women as casualties of the male monster character. Barbara Creed, the author of The Monstrous-Feminine (1993), states that woman-as-monster has been neglected in feminist theory and in virtually all significant theoretical analyses of popular horror films. Why have women been neglected in feminist theory and theoretical analyses of popular horror films? How is female identity understood in horror films, and what meanings can we ascribe to the horrifying transformations of the female monster in horror films? It seems that in order to understand these questions one must take a closer look at the origin of the female monster and its presence in the horror film genre.

The horror film genre has recently become populated by female monsters, many of which seem to have been manifested from delusions that haunted the dreams, legends, and artistic practices of our ancestors from previous centuries. Every human society has a perception of the female monster, of what it is about the physiognomy of the female body that is startling, frightening, or appalling. Freud believed that man's fear of woman is due to his infantile belief that the mother is castrated. Freud also goes on to proclaim that, "Probably no male human being is spared the fright

of castration at the sight of a female genital. (Fetishism, 1927 p. 154) Another supporter of Freud's theory is Joseph Campbell. In his book The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology, he gives recognition to woman as castrator and witch.

There is a motif occurring in certain primitive mythologies, as well as in modern surrealist painting and neurotic dream, which is known to folklore as "the toothed vagina" - the vagina that castrates. And a counterpart, the other way, is the so-called 'phallic mother,' a motif perfectly illustrated in the long fingers and nose of the witch. (Campbell, 1976, p. 73)

The vagina dentata is extremely prevalent in surrealist art and cultural myths. Despite contiguous distinctions, the myth mainly proclaims that women are frightening because they have teeth in their vaginas. This frightening image is also symbolic of the castration anxiety that exists among the male spectators. The mainstream media and its audience tend to feel that women are horrifying to an extent that they lose their beauty. The notion is that when females lose their physical beauty they become horrifying. The challenge remains to present a female monster who does not lose her beauty or whose beauty has horrifying

consequences. In short, movies don't represent females as horrifying for their femaleness; however, females are horrifying to the extent that they lose their femaleness. The mentality remains that in order for a female to be horrifying she must be made into a kind of monster that's infused with supernatural powers. The reality is that female monsters are horrifying because they project an image of femininity that is contrary to the way man's desire constructs them. The desirability of femaleness is altered once the female character undergoes a physical transformation of her beauty. The physical changes imposed on the female body create an undesirable woman. When women become old, fat, scared or just not pretty enough men tend to associate some kind of malignant or sinister power to them. These elements of disassociation are extremely prevalent in many female monsters.

The witch is a very familiar element in the horror film genre. This female monster is most commonly represented as an old, horrifying crone who is competent in monstrous acts. Due to the popular demand for teenage characters in the media, we are starting to see more youthful and sexually appealing characteristics, but this does not mean that the essence of the character has been lost.

On the contrary she has become more treacherous than ever. Throughout history and especially during the European witch trials, witches have been accused of the most hideous crimes, such as: cannibalism, murder, and the castration of male subjects. Witches were also believed to have power over the elements of nature, and were accused of the advent of natural disasters such as storms, fires and the black plague. The social system that transformed women into witches in New England required a convergence of belief on the part of both the townspeople and the religious and secular authorities that these women posed serious threats to society. Witches were convenient scapegoats for doctors who failed to cure their patients, for it was believed that witch-caused illnesses were incurable. Ignorant and clumsy physicians blamed all sicknesses which they were unable to cure or which they had treated wrongly, on witchery. Children pointed their finger and women were convicted. Thousands of innocent people were slaughtered because of society's fear of the unknown, and man's fear of herbal healers. (Ehrenreich, p. 6) Another myth that most societies have is that of the female vampire. The female vampire is known to suck the blood of her helpless prey. These victims are often willing to endure the

horrifying pain of transformation so that they can become immortal.



Fig. 1. The horrifying nightmare of the vaginal female vampire

(Amanda Bearnse in Fright Night)

Many classical mythology monsters were female. Some of the most popular classical mythological female monsters were the Sirens. The Sirens were depicted as mammoth birds with heads of women. In order to drive the sailors' ships into hidden reefs the Sirens cleverly used their magical voices in song to tantalize and lure sailors close to shore. Once shipwrecked, the Sirens would

devour their helpless prey. Another female monster who presented a terrifying sight was Medusa and her two sisters. These hideously horrifying female monsters had enormous heads, their glorious set of hair consisted of deadly serpents, their teeth resembled boar's tusks, and they were also able to soar through the air on their golden dragon-like wings. Medusa's special quality was the ability to turn men into stone with just one glare of her evil eye. (Creed, p. 2) If these concepts of female monstrosity are true, then why has it taken so long for the horror film genre to acknowledge the female monster, and why has it only been in recent years that women have been allowed to perpetrate main monster characters? The lack of representation and the rarity of theoretical involvement has been a great factor in keeping the female monster subdued as a sub-species. The male chauvinistic theorist as well as the male chauvinistic societal view of women has been a major component in the oppression and the deprivation of representation of the female monster. In virtually every horror film we see a male perception of female monstrosity imposed on female bodies; however, the perception of beautiful or unbeautiful is gender difference shared by both sexes and may vary from culture to culture.

Theorists such as Robin Wood and Rhona J. Berenstein have referred to the topic of the female monster by fostering one of the following suggestions: discussing the female monster as part of male monstrosity; generalizing that woman only horrifies when viewed as man's castrated other; or haggle that there are no noteworthy female monsters in the tradition of Frankenstein's monster or Dracula. (Creed, p. 3) Robin Wood has contributed a great deal to the critical appreciation of the horror genre. Wood is intrigued with gender relations in horror films, but in his numerous contributions he does not discuss the nature of female monstrosity. Creed states that to her knowledge no one has contributed substantial research on the various faces of the female monster or the 'monstrous-feminine' as is the title of her book. Gerard Lenne, in his article, "Monster and Victim: Women in the Horror Film", observes that there are insufficient monstrous and disfigured women in film. He argues that women should be portrayed only in stipulations of their 'natural' role in life. (Creed, p. 3) If this is so, why are men beyond these restrictions? Could this be due to the fact that we are living in a male driven society that assigns boundaries to those who do not fall into the privileged society?

Lenne states that it is only logical that woman who, in life, is both mother and lover, should be portrayed by characters that express the feeling of a harmonious sanctuary. He admits that there are female monsters but then discovers motives why they are not genuine monsters. He agrees that the female vampire prevails but that her role is primarily 'secondary.' In Lenne's perspective, women prevail in horror films mainly as victims of male monstrosity. He states that women are perfect as emotional tearful victims, and that what they do best is to collapse in the arms of a prevalent male monster such as a gorilla, mummy, werewolf, or a Frankensteinian creature. (Creed, p. 3) David J. Hogan, in his book Dark Romance (1986) explores the sexual perspective of the horror industry. Through his research Hogan alludes to horror films in which the monster is female, but he fails to question the essence of female monstrosity. In passages where Hogan does communicate this motif, his perception of the issue is paradoxical. In Carol Clover's opinion, more frequently women are selected as victims because they are associated with a superior spectrum of emotional delineation. "Angry displays of force may belong to the male, but crying, cowering, screaming, fainting, trembling, begging for mercy belong

to the female. Abject terror in short is gendered feminine.” How does this theory correspond to the role of Officer Ripley in the 1979 sci-fi horror film Alien? In this film the heroine, played by actress Sigourney Weaver, not only fights back against an extremely horrifying monster-- she wins. All the men are killed, but she manages to blast the alien out into space. In this case we do not witness the female character displaying the superior spectrum of emotional delineation; instead she takes on pseudo masculine angry displays of force.

The psychoanalytic research presented by Creed and other theorists is quite compelling, but why is the female character not capable of monstrous acts? Is the female body not capable of horrifying spectators without having to take on the male persona? Does the female character have to be phallicized in order to terrify? Is there not a female quality that is capable of aggressive behavior or horrifying acts? Creed turns to Freud for answers and in doing so she seems to derail from the issues. She writes that the problem is that the horror film genre remains attached to conventions that indicate a contrived perception on the part of the horror film consuming culture regarding sexual difference, sexual identity, and

especially regarding the male anxiety associated with female identity.

Although the female character has come a long way, the image of the female monster is an issue that theorists and critics have been reluctant to acknowledge. The female monster is still not as equally represented as men are in the horror film genre. Part of the reason why women have not been able to shake the stereotypical female role is because the majority of horror film viewers are young males who view these films for sexual pleasure. The horror film genre uses woman as a kind of feint, a front through which young males can simultaneously experience forbidden desires and disavow them on grounds that the visible actor is, after all, a girl.

The spectator's view of women helps rationalize the violence inflicted upon the female monster and establishes male bonding between the male character and the male spectator. In short, some men are sexually aroused when beating on beautiful women, and the fact that women are castrating monsters rationalizes their actions. In horror movies where the male character is the victim of the female monster the male spectator is clearly placed in a

defenseless situation. Creed states that through the figure of the female monster, the horror film plays on the male spectator's possible fears of menstrual blood, domination, castration and death.

The horror genre allows for an explicit representation of man's castration anxieties in relation to his own body. In some horror sub-genres, like the slasher films, the anxieties are displaced on to woman but in other horror films man must confront this terror alone. Creed conveys that in films like Sisters (1973), I Spit on Your Grave (1978) and Basic Instinct (1992) male castration fear is associated with a masochistic desire for death. So far we have viewed the male perspective of the horror genre, but what elements of the horror genre entice the female spectator? Does the female spectator associate herself with the female monster? Does the female spectator achieve a sense of empowerment when identifying herself with the female monster? Is there a sense of sadistic stimulation when the female spectator sees the male figure humiliated and punished? Creed states that the female spectator might feel empowerment from identifying with the castrating heroine of the slasher film when she finally abolishes the male murderer. The sense of empowerment can also be felt when viewing

rape-revenge films. Female spectators tend not to identify with psychotic castrating heroines such as the main character of the horror movie Sisters. Other characters such as the castrating mother of the movie Psycho do not foster sympathetic identification because some of the victims are female. The horror genre is capable of evoking our deepest anxieties and most terrifying fantasies. The process of identifying with a horrific character is extremely subjective. Creed states that the spectator is able to switch identification between victim and monster depending on the degree to which the spectator wishes to be horrified. The filmic codes also play a great factor in horrifying spectators. Subjective camera shots, special effects, and music effects are used to accent the horror film. These effects are also used to establish the castrating heroine of horror genre. (Creed, p. 155)

One view of the castrating heroine of horror films is that she represents a phallicized heroine who has been masculinely recomposed. If the female audience elicits pleasure by identifying with a violent heroine, it is due to the fact that they have been contaminated by patriarchy. The phallic male spectator should be the only one who is empowered by associating with a compelling

hero figure. This theory emanates from the belief that femininity is never violent and that only phallic masculinity is violent. The theory presumes that if the female gender functioned within patriarchal boundaries, women would never, as spectators, find enjoyment by conveying acts of aggression on the screen. The imagination of the feminine image is viewed as primarily tranquil, unaggressive and non-violent. Patriarchal ideology has controlled women with this precise argument for the past 2,000 years. (Creed, p. 155)

When reviewing the horror sub-genre slasher films we see that women are very capable of portraying aggression. Clover accentuates that the slasher film genre focuses primarily on castration vexations. In his theory of fetishism, Freud states that when a male child realizes that his mother has no penis the boy becomes horrified that he himself could become castrated. Freud claims that the fear of castration leads the male child to act in one of two ways. The child either accepts the possibility of castration, or he refuses to accept the theory. The refusal of the castration theory can have great repercussions on the male child when faced with female genitals. The shock of seeing the female genitals can

cause the child to believe that castration can occur and can cause the child to set up a fetish object that will replace the missing penis of the mother. The child is most likely to replace the missing phallus with the object that he last glanced at before seeing the female genitals. Freud's fetishism theory is brilliant, but does it really represent the true essence of women in horror films? Is the castrating factor the true element that is responsible for the horrifying female monster. (Clover, p. 116) According to Clover, very little critical attention has been given to the female castrator of the slasher film. Clover categorizes the representation of woman as castrator in two contexts: as slasher and as heroine. In this theory the heroine of the slasher film is also represented as a castrating figure. The castrating figure is a crucial point which is vastly ignored in critical discussions of the horror genre. Clover reiterates the savage nature of the castrating figure's revenge and states that in abolishing the killer, the heroine frequently engages in symbolic castration. The castration anxieties faced by the male spectator are resolved by the elimination of the earlier female victims or by reconstituting the heroine as a masculine character. The masculinity of the heroine can be accomplished by phallicizing

the heroine so that she can destroy the male predator (Clover, 1989, 117). Creed states that the slasher film does not, as Clover implies, simply “eliminate the woman”. In Creed’s opinion, a particular female victim may perish but is quickly replaced by another, sometimes male victim who may also be wounded. Slasher films do not seek to resolve castration anxieties and the extensive number of maimed victims helps keep the castration anxiety alive. Slasher films inventively seek to stimulate castration anxiety in relation to the controversy of whether or not the female character is castrated. This is accomplished mainly by personifying the female character in twin roles of castrated and castrator. In most slasher films it is the female castrating image which dominates the ending of the film. Creed also accentuates the distinction between the phallic woman and the castrating woman. She emphasizes that the phallic woman is not the avenging heroine of the slasher film but the overwhelming image found in pornography and adult films. The vindicating heroine of the slasher film on the other hand is, as Creed states, the deadly femme castratrice, a female deity who prevails in the essence of myth, legend, religion and art. The female image has been repressed in Freudian psychoanalytic code primarily because it disputes

Freud's view that man fears the castrated female genitalia (Creed, p. 127) Is this a fear of castration or is this a fear of the vaginal monster (female performance or monstrosity either by appearance or mannerism that is linked solely to the female gender). Is the fear of the female genitalia because it has no penis or is it because we fear what we can not see? According to Royal Brown, the author of Dressed to Kill, (1980) the slasher film originates from an anti-female perspective of a very American brand of the Judaeo-Christian mythology. Brown's theory states that because of the female sexual appetite, women are held accountable for man's atrophy from immaculateness. The female gender is exploited because it is blamed for the human condition.

During the 1970's Hollywood sought to respond to the women's movement in a variety of ways. Hollywood attempted to redefine existing types and traditions in order to include the figure of the independent heroine. Such films as Carrie (1976), I Spit On Your Grave (1978), and Alien (1979) centered around stories of women who were independent of men, who were sexually free and who, to an extent, determined their own destiny. Forming a recognizable sub-genre, these films were also primarily concerned with the problems

faced by the female character in achieving her independence. Creed indicates that the female monster has many faces: The amoral primeval mother (Aliens, 1989); vampire (The Hunger, 1983); witch (Carrie, 1976); woman as monstrous womb (The Brood, 1979); woman as bleeding wound (Dressed to Kill, 1980); woman as possessed body (The Exorcist, 1973); the castrating mother (Psycho, 1960); woman as beautiful but deadly killer (Basic Instinct, 1992); the monstrous girl-boy (A Reflection of Fear, 1973); woman as non-human animal (Cat People, 1942); woman as life-in death (Life-force, 1985); woman as the deadly femme castratrice (I Spit On Your Grave, 1978). (Creed, p. 2)

As we can see the female monster is not a new idea; it has haunted our predecessors for centuries, and the female monster has made an enormous contribution to the horror film genre. By examining some of the main contributions made by female characters in horror films we see that the female monster has many horrifying faces that are relevant and worthy of representation.

Women in horror films continue to be a big part of the horror genre, but what exactly is the function of the horror genre and what purpose does it serve? Does the experience of horror cause similar

sensations in the body of the male spectator? What meaning can be derived from phrases that are used by both male and female viewers? What do expressions such as: “It scared the ‘shit’ out of me”; “It gave me the creeps” mean? When viewing the female monster what is the association between physical states and bodily wastes? Does watching horror films test one’s capacity to be afraid, or more likely not to be afraid. Watching horror films seems to allow us to look at that which is horrifying to a degree; however, once that degree of tolerance is surpassed the spectator tends to tune out the horrifying elements being presented. The horror experience somehow assures us of our strength to overcome all threats or dangers to our ability to see reality. Horror films don’t appear to have much to do with increasing one’s tolerance of the supernatural; however, they do seem to be an excuse for viewing something horrifying. The spectator of horror films experiences emotions that are extremely hard to explain. The viewer is faced with emotions that he or she can not explain or is afraid to acknowledge. The emotions manifested by the horror experience establish an uncertainty about oneself, one’s identity located so maternally in the body is a source of anxiety, and to not be afraid of

those changes is a way of dealing with that uncertainty. Do the experienced emotions of the viewer serve primarily the male audience, or do they serve primarily to tap into and perhaps elevate the anxiety about castration and female identity? How are women being represented in the horror genre and how does the female monster effect the spectator? Before we dive deeper into these questions let us try to define what horror means.

In Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, "horror" is defined as a painful and intense fear. The dictionary's definition conveys an emotional state of being, yet it does not fully define what horror means in the horror film genre. On the other hand, Ivan Butler, the author of The Horror Film (1967) has established a more refined definition.

He categorizes horror films into five categories

1. Films in which horror is the only reason for the film's existence, such as monster movies, which include vampires, Frankenstein, mummies, werewolves, and zombies.
2. Films in which horror is an essential ingredient, but not the only, or chief, ingredient. These include certain

types of thriller or mystery pictures, and a number of supernatural and “realistic” science fiction stories.

3. Films which contain moments or sequences of horror, but are fundamentally “serious” --e.g. certain dream sequences.
4. Films which set out to study naturalistic subjects or situations where horror is inherent.
5. In slightly different class, documentaries or newsreels or actual events horrible in themselves.

Ivan Butler’s definition helps to categorize horror films, but it does not categorize or establish the representation of women in horror films. He mentions Frankenstein, mummies, werewolves, and zombies; however, he does not mention female monsters or what makes a film horrifying. In order to focus on the female monster, this study will redefine horror and its purpose. The definition of “horror” that will be used as a basis for understanding the word is: the mutilation and degradation of the female character, gender mutation that disfigures the female physiognomy, and graphically discloses its grotesque transformation.

Horror films rely on the physical transformation of the body in order to horrify the spectator. These transformations require the collaboration of many talented individuals. Designers, special effects technicians, make-up artistes, costume designers, producers, directors, camera operators and actors combine their talents and expertise to create a believable monster on film. With the help of talented individuals and modern technology, the human body can be transformed into animal forms, prehistoric animals, aliens, vampires, strange substances, and almost any conceivable form that the human imagination can conjure up. Some horrifying effects require fluids to secrete from the body while other effects may require images of excretion or decomposition. Whatever the effect most likely the final product will have a male perspective.

With this in mind, this study will adopt the typology that Barbara Creed has set forward in categorizing the many faces of the female monster. Emphasis will be made on the following films: The amoral primeval mother (Alien, 1979); woman as witch (Carrie, 1976); woman as possessed body (The Exorcist, 1973); woman as vampire (From Dusk Till Dawn, 1996); woman as non-human animal (Lover's Vow, 1986). This study will also analyze the following

category that Creed does not mention: woman as alien/human (Species, 1995). Each movie has been selected because of its distinctive subject matter and because it is unique to the categories it exemplifies.

The movie Aliens falls under the category of amoral primeval mother. The female monster of this movie is a horrifying creature that mutates into a full-grown alien life form. The female alien creature is viewed as the origin of procreation and does not depend on the concept of masculinity in order to horrify. She is not the maternal figure that is almost always represented in relation to the penis. The movie Carrie falls under the category of woman as witch and allows us to examine how woman's monstrousness is linked to her reproductive system. The film also represents the supernatural power of telekinesis that manifests itself through the menstrual passage of womanhood. The Exorcist belongs to the category of woman as possessed body and conveys the inability of the male order to control the female body. The film portrays the female body as a site of putrid body fluids. The films present issues of secretion, excretion, and use unique special effects techniques to represent these issues. The movie From Dusk Till Dawn represents woman as

vampire, and conveys the male anxiety over the female body. Images of women are transformed into hideous vampire monsters with the aid of technology. Modern computerized technology known as morphing aids in the transformation of the female character into a grotesque monster. The female character's face is transformed, but her body remains sexually desirable. In the movie Lover's Vow we see woman as non-human animal (gargoyle). This category represents a complete horrifying gender mutation of the female body. The female character is stripped from her feminine sexuality, and transformed into a horrifying masculine monster. The movie Species represents woman as alien/human hybrid. The character in this movie is conveyed as a sexually dominant female who is determined to procreate. The alien/human hybrid is able to detect physical imperfections in potential mates. The female alien creature's mutation takes on many forms and seems to intensify the closer she gets to womanhood. The horror movies described above are unique to the different horror sub-genres they represent. These categories will be used to help establish meaning behind the horrifying transformation of the female body.

To help focus on a new direction, this study analyzes and

compares the way women are represented in different horror sub-genres by questioning what we haven't understood to this point. The questions that will be scrutinized are: What is the vaginal monster and what evidence do we see of its presence in the representation of women in horror movies? What meanings can we ascribe to the horrifying mutational process of the female monster in horror movies and why is it relevant to the representation of the female monster? What female qualities prevail in the androgynous representation of the female monster in horror films? The study explores the female character and questions the representation of the female monster in horror films. The main goal is to represent women in horror movies and to establish meaning to their contribution in horror motion pictures. In order to distinguish what sets these female monsters apart from each other we will compare and contrast the way women are portrayed in the six horror films previously mentioned.

The six horror films have been selected because they are unique to the sub-genres that they exemplify. They provide unique opportunities for understanding female monstrosity, and they provide a good way of categorizing the female monster or at least

the transformation of the female monster. These movies have also been selected because of their popularity, and their high box-office grosses in the United States. I have distinctly selected American movies due to my familiarity with American culture and because they are coded in a way that is more familiar to me. American films have a larger audience appeal than films made elsewhere, and consequently the applicability of what is conveyed regarding the female monster in American movies will have some resonance outside of the American culture scene. I am applying the theory of the female monster in movies to an American cultural scene and do not expect it to apply to other cultures. I recognize that various cultures create female monsters, but it is solely a matter of convenience to restrict myself to American movies.

Women are a great factor within the horror film genre and need to be acknowledged. Writers need to be reminded that women are capable of being main characters and that men can be emotional. If women are erased from the action, if not the mise-en-scene, of the action narrative, where does this leave female performers? One of the pleasures of the cinema is precisely that it offers a space in which the ambiguities of identities and desires are played out.

Chapter II

The Horrifying Special Effects of the Female Monster

The art and science of special effects can be traced to the earliest days of the court magician. These artistically rooted magicians contrived intriguing illusions to astound and entertain the court's noblemen. The scientific aspects of some special effects frequently required a skilled engineer with a keen perception of practical physics.

Many of these exalted stage illusions depended on secrecy, and for centuries the secrets of special effects illusions were closely guarded. Special effects were essentially a mechanical craft, requiring a knowledge of clever carpentry and cabinetmaking in order to make ladies vanish and rabbits leap from silk hats. In the middle of the nineteenth century the perspective of the illusionist was further stimulated by the invention of photography. The use of photography enabled magicians to create new illusions that were astonishing. Trick photography made it possible to see ghosts and angels hovering in the air. The new device was used to mystify

spectators with shots of tiny people living inside of wine bottles, and it also enabled people to own a photography of themselves. (Hutchison, p. xi)

Special effects-tricks are prevalent in several of the very first movies ever made. The illusions used lured audiences into believing that they were visually perceiving something they actually weren't. In 1893 shocked viewers were bewildered as they viewed Thomas Edison's kinetoscope. A kinetoscope is a type of peep-show machine that is used in a carnival. Edison's production presented a realistic beheading of the Queen of Scots. The movie, The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots , was less than a minute long. The movie showed the queen kneeling at the chopping block, and the executioner raising his ax. (O'Connor, p. 1) The outraged spectators never stopped to consider that the head they saw fall to the ground did not belong to the queen but to a dummy which had been substituted for the live actress.

Special effects allow artistic freedom and enable movie makers to bring to life the imagination of the writer. The main objective in the use of special effects is not to ambush credulous moviegoers but to give moviemakers the means to represent the

script to its utmost potential. Writers have no boundaries on their imaginations. They describe through the convention of words whatever they want, and readers, with the use of their imagination, are able to concoct the most complex scenarios. Film makers, on the contrary, must be able to delineate every occurrence in a story on screen. With the use of special effects film makers are able to transform any story, whether fantasy or fact, into an artistic creation. (O'Connor, p. 1)

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the use of computerized special effects allowed film makers to explore realms that had otherwise only existed in the imagination of artistic creators. The uniquely new computerized phenomenon produced some of the most inspiring images of contemporary cinema. The first film production to use this technological revolution was Willow (1988). Willow was the first film to use the technique known as “morphing.” Special effects technicians combined blue-screen techniques, computer scanning, and specialized digital software to allow different images to blend seamlessly into each other. Movies such as The Abyss (1989), Terminator 2 (1991), and Dusk Till Dawn (1996) have all used morphing with spectacular achievements. (Hamilton, p. 58)

Specialized digital software allows the movie industry to animate a sequence by filling in all missing frames between a start and stop position of the intended motion sequence. The sequence can then be moved as slowly or as quickly as needed to achieve the desired effect. Such programs also allow opportunities to sketch in the background images or combine foreground and background motions. Appropriate sounds can also be linked with these animated sequences. One special animation technique used in horror movies is morphing. Morphing, which derives from the word metamorphosis (meaning the transformation of structure, shape and form), enable you to transform continuously and gradually a well-known shape into another. For example, you can morph the picture of a young girl into one that shows her as an old woman, and then have this old woman slowly transform into a grotesque monster. (Zettl, p. 175)

From Dusk Till Dawn

In the motion picture From Dusk Till Dawn (1996), images of women were transformed into hideous vampire monsters with the aid of this modern technology. The morphing technique was used in

the movie From Dusk Till Dawn to help create a smooth graphic transformation that allowed the spectator to view the transformation without the aid of cuts or edits. The camera zooms in close and stays on the subject until the morphing is complete. The morphing technique allows the spectator to come in close and examine the full transformation of the actor.

Most of the first section of From Dusk Till Dawn consists of long, tense scenes of a type that should be familiar to viewers of Reservoir Dogs (1992) and Pulp Fiction (1994): men with guns babble about whatever comes into their heads while they're threatening defenseless people with grievous bodily harm.

After "botching" a gory holdup at Benny's World of Liquor, the fugitive Gecko brothers (George Clooney and Quentin Tarantino) kidnap an itinerant preacher (Harvey Keitel) and his family and flee to Mexico. In Mexico, the characters quickly find the bar where the Geckos are to meet with a man named Carlos, and the meeting place proves to be a hilariously garish roadhouse called the Titty Twister. The set designer's unique design creates the illusion that the roadhouse is a facade to an Aztec temple where hideous creatures dwell. Once the fugitives and hostages are inside, "all hell breaks

loose,” but first they are tantalized by a beautiful exotic dancer.

An erotic Aztec dancer (Salma Hayek) called Santanico Pandemonio dramatically takes the stage. The stage is dimly lit as the Aztec Goddess stands in silhouette. She is wearing a provocative black swim suit, an outfit that leaves little for the imagination, and a cape. Her presence on stage causes silence throughout the crowd. She covers herself with her cape as flames ignite upward from the stage. Her cape falls to the floor and we see



Fig. 2. The exotic serpent dance
(Salma Hayek in From Dusk Till Dawn)

her standing with a white serpent wrapped around her exotic body. The serpent symbolizes the temptation of evil, and is a sexual

phallus for sexual pleasure. She tantalizes the crowd with her mysterious sexuality. Her moves are slow and sexually explicit. She slithers from side to side as the serpent wraps around her sensual body. It is as though she were making love to the prince of darkness himself. The serpent coils around her body as she sexually runs her hands along her curvy body. She conveys a sense of immortal power which dominates her performance. It is as if director wanted to arouse the male spectator with beautiful exotic female bodies. Salma undoubtedly was cast in this role because of her exotic beauty and vivacious body. Her physiognomy arouses the male spectator by fulfilling their erotic desires. It is as if her sensually sculptured feminine body possessed the power to extract and hypnotize the male gaze. The men gaze at her with excitement and desire as she tantalizes them with every move she makes. The serpent is removed from the Aztec goddess as she works her way into the crowd. It is as though the crowd is not worthy of being close to the serpent. Two female dancers carry the serpent off stage. The serpent seems to transmits sexual vibration that cause two dancers to become aroused. They sensually dance with the serpent as they exit the stage. By this time, Santanico Pandemonio has worked her way

through the crowd and is dancing on top of the table where the Gecko brothers are seated. She picks up their bottle of liquor and begins to drink. She then puts her foot in Riche's mouth (Tarantino) and begins to pour the liquor down her leg. In this scene we see that Santanico Pandemonio is in control. She is independent, sexually free, and determines her own actions. As the music fades out she remains



Fig. 3. Salma Hayek revealing her provocative sexual body

standing on the table in a sexual pose that conveys a sense of power and demands attention. Here we see that Salma Hayek has been chosen for this part because of her exotic beauty and voluptuous body. She has been specifically cast in this role because of her ability to tantalize the spectator. She creates an elusion of

immortal beauty that seems to thrive in our society. She represents the desire of eternal beauty that empowers people to do whatever it takes to achieve desirability.

After Santanico Pandemonio's dance, a fight breaks out between Riche and the bartender. The bartender stabs Riche in the hand. Santanico Pandemonio stares intensely at the blood that drips from Riche's hand. She pants with desire as though she were in a trance. The camera moves in close and we see her morph into a



Fig. 4. The monstrous female vampire

hideous vampire. Her face transforms into a reptilian monster. The transformation establishes the representation of woman as vampire

and is significant in understanding the female monstrosity. This category of female monstrosity seems to arouse male anxieties of the female body. Salma Hayek's face is transformed but her body remains sexually desirable. The transformation sets up an interesting contradiction between the sexiness of the body and the monstrosity of the face. It is as though the performance code has created an image that allows the male spectator to fantasize over the female body. The male spectator is able to fantasize over the sexuality that remains prevalent in the female body of the horrifying female monster. It is as though the film makers want to create tension within the spectator between the desirability of the body and the monstrosity of the face. Through this transformation we are able to establish the unity between the serpent and Santanico Pandemonio. Her transformation symbolizes the renewal of life. She sheds her mortal skin and becomes an immortal serpent that drinks from the blood of mortals.

It was a general belief in the ancient world that snakes did not die of old age like other animals, but periodically shed their skins and emerge renewed or reborn into another life. Here we see that Santanico Pandemonio has shed her skin and is reborn a hideous

blood thirsty monster. She undergoes a gender mutation that alters her facial structure and vocal qualities. Her facial transformation conveys an androgynous gender, but her body is still extremely feminine, and sexually desirable. This category of female monstrosity seems to convey that women are horrifying when they lose some portion of their facial beauty.

Santanico Pandemonio is no longer able to control her thirst for blood. She leaps on Riche's back, and devours his neck. The blood oozes out of his neck as she feeds upon her prey. Riche's brother shoots Santanico Pandemonio; she falls to the floor as the crowd becomes silent. Then suddenly the special effects come full throttle and the film becomes an all-out blood bath, as the bikers and topless dancers at the bar morph into blood-sucking monsters, and the Fullers and Geckos have the chance to battle real evil. After the blood bath battle begins, there is a cut to the exterior of the bar where we see a brilliantly huge moon shining over the Titty Twister as thousands of blood thirsty bats swarm the bar.

The idea that the moon provided vital force for both the living and the dead has persisted through the centuries, and reappeared as emphatically as ever in popular vampire literature only a hundred

years ago. Dion Boucicault's Vampire instructed his servants to carry his body to a high mountain where it could be touched by the first ray of the rising moon. When this was done, the vampire sprang back to life, saying, "Fountain of my life: once more thy rays restore me. Death: I defy thee!" The moon is the mother of all humors, and the body's most important life-giving humor is blood. (Barbara, Walker. p. 1040)

The primal notion that all life depends on the magic of menstrual blood--or "the blood of the Moon," as some primitives say--evolved a corresponding notion that the dead crave blood in order to make themselves live again. Greeks believed the shades of the dead could be recalled from the underworld by offerings of blood, which they greatly desired; therefore blood was the essential ingredient of necromancy. (Barbara, Walker. p. 1040)

In From Dusk Till Dawn we see that the moon is one of the main elements in the transformation of the female monster. When Santanico Pandemonio begins to dance, the moon is barely reaching its peak, but when she morphs into a hideous monster the moon is at its fullest. It is as though the moon's energy helped create the horrifying transformation of the Aztec goddess. When the Gecko

brothers arrive at the Titty Twister, the moon is almost at its peak. This conveys that while the Gecko brothers were entering the bar, the moon's rays were being absorbed by their bodies. If their bodies absorbed the moon's rays, then their blood would be a much more potent drink for the blood thirsty vampire. Santanico Pandemonio confirms this when she says to Riche's brother, "Lets see if you taste as good as your brother." This conveys that Riche's blood was desirable and that she hungers for blood that has been tainted by the moon's rays. These grotesque actions of blood thirsty monsters are what keep horror film fans captivated.

In From Dusk Till Dawn we see morphed female monsters chopping off the heads of male victims, tearing at their flesh, and sucking their blood. We also see women that are beaten and killed by men. Is this type of violence appealing? Does it represent male sexual anxieties and frustration, or is it an escape from their inner castration fears?

From Dusk Till Dawn conveys the male anxiety over the female body. The film arouses castration anxieties in the male spectator by symbolically representing male castration throughout the film. The female characters morph into grotesque monsters, but their bodies

remain sexually desirable. The male character is able to justify his violent actions over the female character because of her grotesque facial features. The male character beats and kills the female monster while the male spectator is able to cheer him on. This type of action enables both the male character and the male spectator to relieve their sexual frustration and achieve a form of catharsis that enables him to feel a sense of power over the female species.

On the other hand, during the blood bath battle of From Dusk Till Dawn we see that the morphed female monster is a castrating demon. She represents man's inner fears and anxieties of castration. The beautiful topless dancers who are now hideous from the neck up battle against the men in a fight to the death. In this scene we see male heads rolling and flying through the air. This symbolizes the liberation of the oppressed female, and conveys the fear and sexual anxieties of the male spectator. The morphed female monster is expressing her long awaited revenge on a male dominated society. She is purging herself of the dominating male figure by drinking his blood as a symbol of liberation and immortal life. The morphed female monster symbolizes women throughout the world who have suppressed their true feelings by living a double life. Some women

throughout history have mentally worn masks to comply with societies expectation of their actions, and the morphed female monster in From Dusk Till Dawn are no exception. Although the morphed female monster is capable of standing alone in the spotlight she is still only a foil to the male narrative. The morphed female monster is used to advance the male narrative. She is not a part of the main story line, but a sub-plot that helps drive the narrative forward.

Lover's Vow

In the movie Lover's Vow (1986) the character Caroline undergoes a complete horrifying gender mutation. She is stripped of her feminine sexuality and mutates into a horrifying gargoyle. The grotesque transformation leaves the female monster sexually undesirable, masculine in her appearance, mannerism and vocal qualities. In Lover's Vow we see that the female monster is the main essential element that drives this movie forward, conveying the grotesque imagery of the female monster.

In the opening shot of Lover's Vow, we see the back of a gargoyle statue. The camera moves over the back of the statue and reveals the character Preston working on an art project. It is as though we were viewing him through the eyes of the gargoyle. Preston is a washed-up artist who has not been able to sell his work. He meets with his agent at a bar to discuss business. Preston's agent informs him that his work is not doing well in the gallery. His agent also informs him that he can no longer represent him. The bartender tells Preston, who by this time is very drunk, that the bar is closing. Preston and the bartender exit the bar through the alley. They are confronted by a horrifying gargoyle. The hideous monster attacks and amputates the bartender's hand and head. Preston tries to run, but is stopped by the grotesque monster. The gargoyle makes a pact with Preston, and Preston vows never to tell a single soul that he saw the grotesque monster. Preston flees the alley and runs into the character Caroline. Caroline and Preston fall in love. Caroline introduces Preston to her friend who owns an art gallery, and Preston becomes a great success. They get married and have two lovely children. On their tenth anniversary, Preston tells Caroline the truth about what happened the night they met.

He shows Caroline the statue he made that represents the gargoyle that killed the bartender on the night they met. Caroline holds the statue in her hand as Preston begins to explain what happened that night. Caroline begins to cry and says, "You promised you'd never tell!" Preston stands back in complete shock as Caroline begins to mutate into a horrifying gargoyle. Caroline's mutation is quite different from the morphing technique used in From Dusk Till Dawn. The computerized morphing technique used in From Dusk Till Dawn allows the spectator to view the entire transformation as one shot without cuts or edits. The morphing technique shields the spectator from having to view the graphic disfigurement of the person being transformed. Although the structure of the physiognomy is being altered, the transformation does not submit the spectator to blood and gore. The transformation achieved by the morphing technique establishes a smooth transition that helps present a less grotesque monster. The spectator has viewed the transformation, but the image created has not left the spectator distorted. On the other hand, the technique used in Lover's Vow allows the editor the freedom to select and edit what is appropriate for the desired transformation. In Lover's Vow the spectator is subjected

to a much slower and more graphically horrifying transformation. Caroline's skeletal structure is altered by mechanical means that allow the spectator to view the inner structure of the monster. The spectator views the ripping of the epidermis layer of flesh and also is able to see the inner dermis subcutaneous layers of tissue that cushion layers of skin and muscle. The mutation technique used in Lover's Vow is an engineered mechanical process that involves special effects makeup and post production editing. The mutation begins with an engineered effect that transforms Caroline's hands into grotesque gargoyle hands. Caroline is holding in her hands the statue that Preston made of the gargoyle. The camera zooms in close and we see the grotesque transformation begin. The creature's claws rip through Caroline's hands and emerge with cartilage and slime surrounding them. It is as though the gargoyle's claws were emerging from the depths of hell and establishing a new form of immortal life. This is followed by a mechanical effect that creates hoofs which protrude and expand the knees and heels of the monstrous female gargoyle. We see hoofs rip through the upper part of her thighs and proceed to rip apart her flesh down to her knees. This exposes the gargoyle's flesh and releases the creatures rigged

physiognomy which is masculine in structure. The camera tilts down and reveals the creature's feet which are now hooved and resemble the feet of a prehistoric bird. She then rips her scalp open by pulling her hair apart with her claws. She exposes her transformed face which is androgynous at this stage of the mutation. A series of latex masks and foam latex masks are applied to help create a complete gender mutation that hides Caroline's feminine qualities and establishes a masculinely androgynous



Fig. 5. Rae Dawn Chong undergoes a complete gender mutation

creature. The transformation is complete when the wings of the mutated gargoyle slowly emerge out of the shoulder blades of the once beautiful Caroline. She is stripped of her sexuality and has

mutated into a hideous monster. Her physiognomy is completely altered and she is unable to reverse the transformation. She embraces Preston as they stare into each other's eyes. He tells her that he loved her, and she replies in a masculine voice, "And I loved you too, but you broke your promise and that sealed our destiny." Caroline bites and rips the flesh from Preston's neck, and then she lays him on the floor to die. Her children who have also been transformed into gargoyles embrace her legs. She picks her children up and flies through the ceiling window of their apartment. The camera then cuts to the building that faces Preston's apartment and we see Caroline and her children sitting on the top of the building. They have turned to stone and will remain there until their next opportunity to become mortal.

The special effects used in Lover's Vow help create a horrifying female monster that empowers the female spectator and intimidates the male spectator. The female viewer is able to identify with the female monster because of the element of betrayal that is present in the film. Woman who have been betrayed by men might be compelled to cheer on the female monster in the final scene of Lover's Vow. On the other hand, the male spectator may

sense anxieties toward the female monster. These anxieties may stem from the fear of castration, and may cause the male spectator to question his honesty in a relationship. The film tends to evoke many human emotions related to monogamist relationships. The film Lover's Vow represents woman as reptilian monster (gargoyle) and helps us understand the androgynous female monster that will be subsequently discussed in chapter four. The unique gender mutation achieved by the special effects team is graphically horrifying and is intended to evoke fear into the spectator. The transformation scene is the element of surprise that leads the female character beyond the realm of femininity and into the light of female monstrosity.

In Lover's Vow we see that Caroline is the main subject of the movie. She is in control of the narrative, and it is her actions that move the narrative forward. She is the one who makes the pact with Preston, and she is also the one who helps Preston become a successful artist. Caroline symbolizes the matriarch female throughout the world. She is independently in control of her family. The signifying practices that are presented in the transformation scene do not depend on the narrative. It is as though someone envisioned the image of the woman transforming into a gargoyle and

decided to make a movie of it. When the transformation scene is viewed separate from the narrative we see that the scene has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The transformation scene can stand alone and contains enough information to allow the spectator the understanding of what is being conveyed. The transformation scene reinforces the independence of the female character by establishing the separation of the female gender from the stereotypical female character. In this scene we see that Caroline is no longer the obedient house wife. She is independent of the male character, and it is her monstrous inner self that is in control.

Lover's Vow represents female independence and conveys the message that women no longer will allow men to break promises. The character Caroline does not allow any lead way in her pact with Preston. When Preston makes his vow with her, he sets in motion his destiny. Although Caroline loves Preston dearly, she can not control her actions and is no longer able to conceal the monster within her. Preston must pay the price for breaking his vow, and his children will also endure the pain for his mistake.

Lover's Vow is largely about how women find their own channels of power, and what men fear about women. Caroline finds

her channel of power through her grotesque monstrous gender mutation. The mutation allows Caroline to push aside her feelings for Preston and to advance to a higher realm where she is able to uphold her dignity as a liberated woman. Caroline's grotesque gender mutation represents and releases centuries of suppressed female feeling. Caroline is able to channel these forces by upholding her pact with Preston.

Preston finds out the hard way that Caroline is not a feeble woman. He learns that she is a strong and determined woman who will not allow herself to be betrayed. Preston is a victim of love. He loves Caroline so much that he tells her the truth about what happened the night they met, and in doing so he seals his destiny. He is unable to reverse his mistake and must endure his fate which is to be killed by the one he loves the most.

In this film it is the mutilated male form that evokes castration anxieties while the female monster is represented as the avenging castrator, the central protagonist with whom the spectator is encouraged to identify. The female castratrice controls the sadistic gaze, and the male victim is her object. Caroline is an avenging castrator who releases the fury of hell upon Preston.

The Exorcist

The Exorcist (1973) was written in 1971 by William Peter Blatty, and the horrifying motion picture was directed by William Friedkin. The novel was based on the most widely publicized demonic possession case of American 20th century history. When Blatty was a scholar at Georgetown University, he learned of the unusual case from a series of articles published in 1949 by the Washington Post. The phenomenon involved a fourteen-year-old adolescent who lived in Mt. Rainier, Maryland. The articles claim that the adolescent's possession was first observed by his parents. The parents noticed a series of strange manifestations occurring and became extremely concerned. The adolescent was haunted by disturbing sounds that manifested from under his bed. Furniture slid across his bedroom, and objects also levitated around him. When red welts appeared on the adolescent's body his parents consulted various medical authorities. The medical physicians had no scientific explanations for the bizarre occurrences. A local priest was brought in to examine the situation. The priest performed nearly thirty rites of exorcism in two months.

The adolescent responded to the rites of exorcism by cursing and lashing out to anyone near him. On numerous occasions the youth spoke in Latin, a language he had no knowledge of. After further research the priest stumbled upon a similar case that occurred in Wisconsin seventy-five years earlier. The boy was forced to hold a crucifix and wear religious medals during what would be his last rite of exorcism. The child became ballistically out of control during the exorcism, and five more priests were called in to help restrain him. During the religious rite the “demon” announced itself through the boy’s lips and then mysteriously departed. The boy was left with no recollection of his frightening experience.

Blatty’s novel was believed to be unfilmable because of its profanity and graphic scenes of sacrilege. Insiders felt that the demon child’s masturbation scene would surely land the film with an “X” rating. They also felt that the wrath of churches and churchgoers would diminish the movie’s box office potential. The movie also faced enormous technical problems. Writer-producer Blatty in his first screenplay draft cut an enormous portion of his novel and altered its structure considerably. After reading Blatty’s adaptation, director William Friedkin urged Blatty to do a second

draft that followed the book more faithfully. It was Blatty's second draft that was filmed.

Despite the vulgar language and potentially offensive images The Exorcist was surprisingly released with an "R" rating. The controversy that the film inspired was an asset at the box office. The \$10 million Warner Brothers production grossed over \$100 million at the box office and earned 10 nominations from the Motion Picture Academy Awards, including best screenplay. Today, The Exorcist still reigns as one of the highest grossing horror films ever made, according to Variety. There have only been a few other movies before or since The Exorcist that have had a major influence on the horror genre. (McCarty, p. 135)

In the 1970s, the horror genre was tremendously boosted by the release of The Exorcist (1973). The movie's success was primarily due to the brilliance of special effects makeup artist, Dick Smith. The makeup effects used by Smith to make Linda Blair, playing Regan, appear as though she were possessed by the devil were straightforward and brilliant. Regan's unworldly appearance was achieved by the use of yellow-tinted contact lenses. Smith also devised other techniques that were more elaborate. One of the more

complicated effects of the movie required that Regan's throat swell hideously. The effect was achieved by fitting Regan's neck with an inflatable latex apparatus that could be inflated by pumping air through a concealed tube. Concealed tubes, disguised by makeup, were also used to accomplish the vomiting that was discharged from Regan's throat. The two most enthralling special effects techniques used in the The Exorcist were when Regan's head appeared to rotate 360 degrees and when the words "Help Me" miraculously appeared on the child's stomach in the form of blisters.

The 360 degrees rotation effect was achieved by making a mold of Regan's body. The mold was cast in fiberglass, carefully painted, and dressed so that it appeared completely realistic. Smith then created a remote controlled replica of Regan's head that fitted onto the shoulders of the fiberglass body. The head's facial features and eyes were manipulated by remote control.

Smith used latex foam to construct a false torso for the blister effect. He then used commercial cleaning fluid to paint the words "Help Me" on the synthetic flesh. The desired blistering effect was achieved, but the effect could not be photographed due to the pace of the process.



Fig. 6. Regan's trapped spirit cries out

After numerous attempts, Smith discovered that by blasting the letters with hot air he could manipulate the blisters to melt back into the latex. The effect was filmed, but in order for the blisters to appear as if they were materializing on their own accord the film was run in reverse. Finch conveys that from an effects point of view, succeeding horror films have rarely been as creative as The

Exorcist. The advance of latex foam made by Dick Smith has revolutionized the art of special effect make up. (Finch, p. 167)

The Exorcist represents, through a male point of view, woman in the category of possessed body. The film's unique special effects and sound effects help horrify the spectator. The special effects used in the film create a horrifying portrayal of the female body as a dumping ground for putrid bodily fluids and disgusting barbaric demeanor. The film also conveys the power of possession and the inability of the male order to control the female body.

Carrie

Historically and mythologically, the witch has been an icon of inspiration and has dreadfully haunted our predecessors' imagination. All unexplained magical powers In ancient societies, regardless of the fact that it was used for sanctimonious or evil purposes, aroused the deepest dismay amongst the devotees of the cult. The avocation of healer is one of the foremost intriguing aspects of the witch in earlier centuries. In some cultures, young girls in their time of menarche (the first menstrual period of an

individual) who had prophetic dreams were usually chosen as an imminent shaman or witch. The witch's condemnation was also believed to be associated with menstruation. The controversial theory of menstruation blood was explored in the (1976) motion picture Carrie. (Creed, p. 74)

One of the roles in horror films that rightfully pertains to women is the atrocious witch. The horrifying witch joined the ranks of popular horror film monsters in the 1960s. Although the female character was acknowledged, emphasis appeared to be geared around the male authoritarian figure or the hung-witch or the coven rather than on the witch as a monstrous creature. This form of representation was challenged with the release of the horror picture Carrie. Carrie depicts the category of woman as witch and allows us to examine how woman's monstrousness is linked to her reproductive system.

The movie was based on a novel by Stephen King and directed by Brian De Palma. It conveys the story of a young girl named Carrie White, the abused daughter of a radical religious extremist. Carrie's bizarre attire and shy mannerisms create a vortex that establishes her as the butt of every classroom joke. She is the social outsider

in every situation. The torment that Carrie endures is primarily due to the humiliation encountered during her first menstruation. Carrie receives her first encounter with menstruation in her school's locker room shower. The child's lack of knowledge with the situation hurls her into a hysterical frenzy. Her colleagues pelt her with tampons and sanitary pads as they chant with laughter "Plug it up! Plug it up Carrie!" The cause of her anguish promptly becomes the source of her power because as the audience soon learns Carrie has a mild telekinetic ability that intensifies after her first menstrual cycle. She ultimately utilizes her power to destroy her mother's house, but not before causing an intense social catastrophe at her high school prom. The devastation in question begins as a practical joke that manipulates Carrie to believe that she has been elected queen of the senior prom. Carrie's encounter with deception leads to the devastation that she endures when a bucket of pig's blood is dumped on her at the moment of coronation. She unleashes the forces of hell through her telekinetic powers, causing an inferno to consume the gym and the entire high school class.

An analytical analysis of the film's main elements, menstrual periods, worries about clothes and make-up leads one to believe that



Fig. 7. Carrie uses her telekinetic powers to reek havoc

Carrie is a feminine movie. Stephen King, the author of Carrie, also believes that the story is a feminist one:

If The Stepford Wives concerns itself with what men want from women, then Carrie is largely about how women find their own channels of power, and what men fear about women and women's sexuality . . . which is only to say that, writing the book in 1973 and only out of college three years, I was fully aware of what Women's Liberation implied for me and others of my sex. The book is, in its more adult implications, an uneasy masculine shrinking from a future of female

equality. For me, Carrie White is a sadly misused teenager, an example of the sort of person whose spirit is so often broken for good in that pit of man-and-woman-eater that is your normal suburban high school. But she's also Woman, feeling her powers for the first time and, like Samson, pulling down the temple on everyone in sight at the end of the book.

(Clover, p. 3)

The ideas expressed above have originated from a male point of view. Mr. King expresses his perspective of what he believes women's liberation represents; however, what is the essence of the true female experience? If the fear is women's liberation and if Carrie is its symbolic monster, who is the victim and who is the hero?

If we analyze the film, we see that Carrie represents all three of these categories. Throughout the film, she is victim of monstrous pranks and a fraudulent mother; however, at the end of the film she becomes an unmerciful hero. She ascends against her oppressors and conquers the forces of monstrosity, but in the process she herself becomes excessively demonic. (Clover, p. 4).

Carrie's demonic transformation is not achieved through the use of special effects, but nonetheless it is a horrifying transformation that slowly unleashes the undeclared menstrual monster. Although special effects techniques are used throughout the film to achieve Carrie's telekinetic abilities, special effects are not the initiator of her physical transformation. The origin of Carrie's horrifying transformation into witch or female devil is the onset of menarche. Carrie develops supernatural powers at the threshold of puberty, and it is because of her menstrual cycle that she is ridiculed. Carrie is forced to unleash the horrifying monstrosity that lies dormant, and once Pandora's box has been unlocked, there is no turning back.

Some horror films link the witch's supernatural powers to the female reproductive system, particularly menstruation. Menstruation is not one of the subjects covered in the maternal melodrama or woman's films. Researchers must turn to horror films for any direct reference to woman's monthly cycle. (Wood, p. 83)

Species

Homo sapiens have manipulated their world since their onset. The capability of the mind to rationalize, the physical proficiency of the human body, the sensation of being alive elevated humans beyond instinct to a new evolutionary plane. The human regime ruled superior on the planet Earth. It monopolized and eluded its predators. Humans dominated the chain of life which they thought could never threaten them, but nothing in the universe lasts forever. In 1974, the government used the world's largest radio telescope, located in a jungle basin near Arecibo, Puerto Rico, to transmit a message to the rest of the galaxy. The message contained data about Earth and its inhabitants. The message conveyed what we physically looked like, our astrological location and most significantly, the DNA sequence that makes up the human cell. (Movieweb, "Species" par. 1)

Twenty years later, the inconceivable occurs, the message was answered by some kind of alien life force. Some form of life knows where to locate us. The reply contained a DNA sequence and the friendly directions on how to combine it with our own DNA sequence.

It was perhaps the government's inviolable dominance that allowed their curiosity to overcome their fear. The government believed it was in control, and presumed it could control the results. It assumed mankind would always be dominant, but it was wrong. (Movieweb, "Species" par. 4)

Species was directed by Peter Medak and is a sci-fi/horror movie about a female alien/human who tries to reproduce with human males. The Canadian super model Natasha Henstridge plays the character Sil, an alien/human, who tries to procreate with the human species for the sole purpose of taking over the Earth. Sil is an extremely beautiful alien/human hybrid who is able to detect impurities in humans. Her unique attributes help insure that her offspring will be healthy specimens. After numerous unsuccessful encounters Sil encounters a male that suffices her high reproductive standards. An hour succeeding insemination Sil gives birth to a one part alien and three parts human male infant. Although she seems to be invincible, Sil and her child are destroyed.

The alien creature was designed by Oscar Winner H.R Giger (Alien); four-time Academy Award winner Richard Edlund handled visual effects, with special make-up and creature effects being

devised by Emmy Winners XFX, Inc. Sil's transformations were never duplicated in the movie. She spontaneously evolved throughout the movie allowing spectators to experience a unique metamorphose encounter. Her first substantial transformation involves the use of a chrysalis that establishes a rite of passage from adolescence to maturity. The special effects used for this transformation was extremely impressive and horrifying. Latex masks were used to help create the effect of tentacles emerging from Sil's face. The tentacles were enhanced with the use of computerized technology. The effect created the illusion that Sil was being consumed by tentacles which formed a huge cocoon. The cocoon represented a vaginal port that was used as a recomposing chamber that rearranged Sil's genetic makeup. After a period of molecular reconstructing Sil was reborn fully prepared for her unsurpassed purpose, the reproduction of her species.

Sil's ultimate transformation accrues after she gives birth to her alien child. She evolves into a reptilian creature who is determined to protect her newborn child at any cost. The reptilian sequence begins with a tight close up of Sil's face. Sil is instantly morphed into a horrifying reptilian alien. This sequence is further

enhanced with software that allows the creators a more flexible and creative arena. The female monster is now capable of achieving the ultimate in commands. The use of technical enhancing seems to deprecate the powerful demeanor of the human physiognomy. It obscures the virtuous essence of the female monster and strips various elements of its horrifying presence, but nonetheless the female monster is uniquely represented with the creation of this uniquely designed female alien monster.

The movie Species represents woman as alien/human hybrid and conveys the determination of procreation. The horrifying transformation of the female character depicts female independence and enables women to undergo transformations that allow them to express themselves in ways that society would otherwise deem unacceptable. Through these transformations the female character is able to express years of oppression in which the male character has been the central focus. Women are now able to portray female characters in ways that would have otherwise never been accepted.

Chapter III

The Vaginal Monster

Throughout history women have received very little recognition regarding any aspects of their accomplishments or social equality. The lack of equality is prevalent in all cultures throughout the world. In archaic times women who practiced medicine were believed to be witches. In many Asian countries women are expected to walk behind their male partners. Some African tribes still practice vaginal mutilation. Middle Eastern women are subjected to cruel and barbaric customs if they are not submissive to their spouses. Women have been oppressed throughout history and, to a degree, continue to be oppressed by the dominant male society. Although gender equality seems to be evolving with a more positive outlook for the female species, it has yet to fully break down all boundaries of inequality. Women have been forced to exist as a sub-species for the male dominate society.

The exclusion of the female character in performance can be dated as far back as the ancient Greeks. As a society we would like to believe that we have come a long way with the issue of equality, but the reality remains that there are still various areas of performance that women do not have equal access to. If we look at the horror genre we see that it is a male driven industry that has barely started to acknowledge female characters. In fact, Gérard Lenne the author of the article, "Monster and Victim: Women in Horror Film" (1979), argues that women are incapable of portraying horrifying monsters. He states that a female character is not capable of horrifying monstrosities and that her role should convey her submissive feeble qualities. These ethic codes have been around since the beginning of film, and although we have seen some changes they still continue to haunt female actors.

David J. Hogan the author of Dark Romance (1986) spotlights the sexual perspective of the horror genre. He focuses on films that present female monsters, but he reluctantly does not address the essence of female monstrosity. Hogan conveys that the phenomenon of female monsters as central characters in the horror genre has developed because of the women's movement in the United States

and Europe. (Hogan, p. 19) During the 1970's the movie industry sought to accommodate audience awareness of gender differences promoted by feminism. Movie makers of different genres were urged to examine ways of representing femaleness. The demand to incorporate femininity alerted male authors to new possibilities and new opportunities. Authors and film makers were able to expand their imagination of femaleness.

The changes that have allowed women to portray central characters has transpired as a result of social and cultural events. These cinematic changes were designed to attract a more complex and larger audience including women who wanted to enjoy horror movies. The newly acclaimed audience wanted to examine the extent to which women had powers that were capable of disrupting the social order. We can't escape the idea that these characters are a product of male imagination that is expanding its understanding or willingness to represent areas of female experience that he doesn't understand that well. In the works we are about to examine we will view the way the male imagination has opened up to new understandings of female identity.

This chapter will attempt to establish gender identity and terminology that will acknowledge the female monster. I titled this chapter the vaginal monster due to my personal feeling that there are many elements of the horror genre that genuinely belong to the female monster. Women are a great factor to the horror genre and need to be acknowledged and applauded for their contributions.

The definition that I have established to represent the vaginal monster is the performance or monstrosity either by appearance or mannerism that is linked solely to the female gender and not manipulated by masculine elements of the male gender. With this in mind we will venture out to explore some of the most horrifying female monsters ever to appear on the big screen.

We will begin our exploration by examining one of the roles that belongs to women and that is the role of the witch. The witch as we know today was not always an image of monstrosity. The silent film era primarily used this topic to utilize the trick properties of the cinema. Movies such as The Witch's Revenge (1903) and The Witch (1902) used the topic to present their special effect techniques. Numerous films adopted a documentary profile in order to present an unflinching exploration of the subject.

Documentaries such as Witchcraft through the Ages (1922) and Day of Wrath (1943) are products of this subject. In the 1930s Universal was reluctant to deal with the subject of witchcraft. The lack of representation was prevalent until the children's film, The Wizard of Oz (1939). The Wizard of Oz was one of the first films to present a terrifying witch. In the early 1940s Hollywood explored the subject of 'woman as witch.' The topic was not used in the horror genre, but rather as a form of humor in comedies. It was not until 1943, with the filming of the Seventh Victim, that the representation of woman as witch became a true figure of the horror genre. By the early 1960s the representation of woman as witch had merged with the high ranking monsters of the popular horror film genre. The representation of woman as witch, however, tended not to be the witch as a monster, but rather the male leader of the coven or the witch-hunt. The 1962 release of Burn Witch Burn is perhaps the first horror film that represents the witch as the central monster. (Creed. 1993, 73)

The representation of woman as witch has become a highly respected image of the horror genre, and the witch has become a central figure to films such as the 1976 motion picture Carrie.

The movie Carrie is a great example of the vaginal monster because it represents the female gender in its stereotypical martyr role, but as the movie evolves Carrie slowly unleashes the horrifying vaginal monster that literally brings the house down. At first we see that Carrie White, who is played by Sissy Spacek, is the shy feeble girl from next door. She is withdrawn from society and painfully shy. Her emotional characteristics create a complex character that allows the audience to sympathize with her, and it is also these characteristics that help create a sense of catharsis that justifies her horrifying actions. Carrie White conveys the pure virtue of femininity, and it is her female essence that unleashes her monstrous persona.

The reproductive system, especially menstruation has been linked to the witch's supernatural powers, and theorists have turned to the horror film genre for reference to woman's menstruation cycle. In the movie Carrie, and The Exorcist we see that the young girls' supernatural powers are awakened during the onset of puberty. The supernatural powers achieved through the menstruation cycle are elements that link directly to the vaginal monster. In some cases, the dormant female monster is channeled through the female

reproductive system, and is fully manifested when puberty is reached. In the movie Carrie we see that Carrie White is transformed into a witch subsequently after the inception of menarche. Carrie provides a uniquely interesting representation of woman as vaginal monster.

Most critical articles on the movie Carrie denote the way in which the film presents a critique of the family and middle American values. In some cases the character Carrie White is referred to as a terrible adolescent whose diabolic possession has connections with Satanism and the Antichrist. Wood states that the monster's aggression stems from the sexual and emotional repressions within the familial setting: "The child monsters are all shown as products of the family, whether the family itself is regarded as guilty or innocent." Creed addresses the issue by exemplifying that the representation of Carrie as witch and menstrual monster has been largely ignored. She also goes on to say that the only critic to her knowledge who has addressed the issue of menstrual blood in the movie Carrie and The Exorcist is Vivian Sobchack. Sobchack states that the menstrual blood of the two female protagonists, Carrie and Regan, represents 'an apocalyptic

feminine explosion of the frustrated desire to speak.’ (Sobchack, 1978, 193) Creed believes that the female voice has been “hushed” because of the rigid structure of a patriarchal society.

Menstrual blood is a symbolic element and is crucially important to the representation of the vaginal monster in the movie Carrie. The blood is symbolically represented in various forms throughout the film. By analyzing the film we see that the many symbolic forms of blood include: menstrual blood, pig’s blood, birth blood, the blood of sin and the blood of death. We also see that it is blood that binds Carrie and her mother together in their struggle for survival. Carrie’s mother was played by the remarkably talented Piper Laurie whose character name was Margaret White. Margaret White is a dominant religious bigot who believes that female sexuality is responsible for the evil set upon mankind. Carrie’s attempt to resist her mother’s prevalent influence is what creates the conflict that sets the wheels in motion. Carrie’ lack of social skills and her mother’s lack of parental guidance leaves Carrie in a socially bizarre situation. Carrie is a painfully shy girl who is naive to sexuality issues, but like every other teenager she just wants to live a normal life. Her desire for normality is unattainable because

of environmental factors, and her power of telekinesis enables her to transform into an avenging vaginal monster. Carrie is a monstrous child who is ultimately depicted as the procreation of a demented, dominating mother. (Creed, p. 78)

Carrie's relationship with her mother is extremely abnormal and she is unable to escape her mother's monopolizing influence.



Fig. 8. Carrie at her most vulnerable

Although she desires her own independence she is unable to go against her mother's religious mania. Her mother abuses her

physically and mentally, but Carrie is obedient and follows her mother's eccentric orders. She vainly tries to reason with her mother over various matters but is met with disillusionment. Mrs. White's desire to control Carrie seems to emanate from a religious perspective rather than a maternal sense of responsibility. Her intentions are to save her little daughter from the sins that have fallen upon mankind. Creed conveys that Mrs. White is represented as the patriarchal stereotype of the sexually unfulfilled woman. Is Mrs. White sexually unfulfilled or is her obscure behavior due to her religious conviction? It seems that after Carrie's birth, Mrs. White adheres to a life of celibacy, and her decision seems to stem from personal religious psychosis rather than sexual deprivation. Mrs. White's religious conviction and her lack of communication with her daughter is what sets a chain of events in motion that leads to the awakening of the vaginal monster. (Creed, p. 79)

An analysis of the events in the movie Carrie will enable us to see how woman's monstrousness is linked to her reproductive function. By examining Carrie's first encounter with her menstrual cycle we see that it is this event that breaks the seal and awakens the horrifying vaginal monster. It is during her menarche that she

also awakens her telekinetic powers. Mythologically and historically woman's blood has been linked to the possession of supernatural powers, powers that have been associated with the representation of woman as witch. Carrie's first menstrual encounter happens when she is at school. The scene takes place in the girls' locker room where Carrie is taking a shower. She is seen intimately caressing her body while passionate music plays in the background. The scene is sensual and somewhat erotic. The director sets up a series of sensual shots that conveys a sense of normality. In these shots we see that Carrie is not awkwardly shy, but rather significantly in tune with her feminine side. The scene appears to create confusion between the narrative code and the performance code. The narrative code appears to convey that Carrie is awkwardly shy and incapable of releasing emotion; however, the performance code indicates that Carrie is capable of expressing emotion. The camera zooms in and gazes at Carrie's sensual gestures. It is as if the production crew were trying to convey to the audience that there is much more to Carrie than what meets the eye. The camera tilts down and reveals the flow of blood that sends the scene into a frenzy. The mood of the scene is abruptly altered when Carrie looks

down and realizes that she is bleeding from her vagina. Carrie who has never been versed in the female's reproductive system is horrified by the menstrual blood that is running down her thighs. She hysterically begins to scream and runs out of the shower, but is met by her colleagues with relentless laughter. Sissy Spacek who plays the character Carrie demonstrates her unique control and understanding of the character she portrays. She displays a versatile range of emotions that adds to the development of the character Carrie. Sissy brings to the production a unique range of talent that enables the spectator to experience the bizarre and disturbing behavior conveyed in this scene. The scene escalates when Carrie's peers respond to her situation with cruel obscenities and bombard her with tampons and sanitary napkins. It is as though Carrie is being brutally punished for pleasuring herself. Carrie is stripped of all dignity and is left unable to defend herself from the ruthless mob.

Carrie is sent home after the horrible incident is under control, but only to be met by her hysterically unsympathetic mother. Carrie's mother brings to the performance a unique sense of chaos. Her presence conveys a sheer madness that drives the

performance forward. She captivates the audience with her compulsive gestures and constant pacing. The combination of Piper's performance, hair and make-up design, and costume design help personify the unstable character that she portrays. Her physical appearance and performance are exquisite and demands attention. It is as though she is a time bomb ready to ignite. Mrs. White refuses to listen to Carrie's explanation and begins to rave hysterically about the wicked sins that have been bestowed upon the female species. Carrie tries frantically to convey to her mother the damage she has afflicted upon her by keeping her in ignorance, but Mrs. White tells Carrie that because Eve was weak God punished Eve with the curse of blood. Here we see that Carrie's mother is relating to the situation at hand as a female problem that has been imposed upon women since the beginning of human existence. Carrie is seen through the eyes of her mother as one of Eve's descendants who has undoubtedly inherited the sins of woman. Carrie is forced into a dark cupboard by her mother and is ordered to pray for forgiveness. The structure of the house and the way that it is lit create a sense of an evil sanctuary. Shadowy hallways and dark rooms create the mood of the scene.

The ambience of the scene is correlated by the use of many artistic elements that work as an ensemble in creating a horrifying haven of destruction. It is as though Carrie is trapped in an asylum with no escape from her psychotic mother. Mrs. White by this time has worked herself into a religious frenzy and is uttering sexist remarks. She associates all human evil with woman and states that the curse of humanity is generated through woman's bloody womb. Here we see that the ultimate form of destruction is associated with the female reproductive system. It is as though women are a universal scapegoat that enables us to reach a sense of catharsis by knowing that they are sacrificial victims. (Creed, p. 79)

Carrie unknowingly is used as a sacrificial victim during the prom scene. Tommy Ross invites Carrie to the Prom after promising his girlfriend who is trying to make up for the cruelty of her colleagues. Sue Snell's act of good faith literally turns into a hideous blood bath when a bucket of pig's blood is intentionally dumped upon the newly crowned Prom Queen Carrie White. The pig's blood symbolically represents woman's blood, and the cascading pig's blood over Carrie's body echoes the earlier shower incident where her own blood flows down her body. (Creed, p. 80)

Mythology and language also link women to pigs. Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove, the authors of The Wise Wound, state that In Greek and Latin the female genitalia is referred to as 'pig', and the cowrie shell which was said to symbolize the female organs was called 'pig'. Even today, 'Sowishness' is used in German as a slang expression for menstruation. (Shuttle and Redgrove, 1978, 37)

Although the significance of pig's blood is indecisive, and the thought of relating woman to pig's blood perpetuates negative views



Fig. 9. Carrie is doused with pig's blood at the prom

about women and menstruation, it does work in favor of creating a horrifying persona of the vaginal monster. Through this disgusting

representation we see that Carrie's coronation and anointment with pig's blood is what sparks and awakens the horrifying vaginal monster. The ritual that Carrie endures is what sets her demonic



Fig. 10. The vaginal monster has awakened

female powers free, and helps her to wreak devastation upon her tormentors. Covered in blood, Carrie stands and faces her tormenting crowd. Her eyes protuberate with ferocity as she wreaks destruction upon the defenseless crowd. In this scene we see the versatile range of Sissy's talent as a performer. Sissy's unique control over her physical movements and the brilliant use of cinematic special effects creates a hair raising experience.

Her robotic movements combined with spilt screen effect and slow motion filming establish a horrifying blood bath. It is as though she were in a hypnotic trance that reveals the sheer force of her powers. Through this form of psychological metamorphosis she takes on the appearance of the avenging vaginal monster.

After the horrifying massacre Carrie returns home. She draws a bath, removes her bloody dress, and sits in the tub in a fetal position. The water represents a cleansing purification process in which the soul is rejuvenated and the individual is reborn. It is as if she is being baptized and her sins are being washed away. Her feeble posture and appearance creates a sympathetic mood that contradicts with the young girl we first saw enjoying her body in the shower. Carrie is now once again reduced to a trembling child.

Carrie develops the powers of telekinesis after she first bleeds. This conveys that her blood is both powerful and magical. Woman's blood is depicted in the film as a vile ingredient that aids in establishing Carrie as a horrifying female monster. Creed states that by linking Carrie's supernatural forces with blood, the film draws on superstitious perceptions of the terrifying powers of menstrual blood. (Creed, p. 83)

Carrie becomes once again childlike and turns to her mother for protection and solace. Carrie's mother appears dressed in a white nightgown that conveys her purity and innocence. Here we see that the narrative code and the performance code oppose themselves. The narrative code establishes that Mrs. White is psychotic; however, the performance code is presenting her as a white angel of virtue. The costume designer's choice of garment for Mrs. White in this scene establishes a sense of friction between both codes. It is as though Mrs. White is a wolf in sheep's clothing waiting for her chance to murder her only child. Carrie reaches for the comfort of her mother arms and begins to sob deeply. Mrs. White embraces Carrie and begins to talk about her relationship with Carrie's father, but after a while Mrs. White's tone gradually becomes lascivious. She unsuspectingly stabs Carrie in the back. Carrie's mother attempts to stab Carrie once again but is met with Carrie's powers of telekinesis. Carrie discharges a burst of knives that literally pins her mother to the wall. Mrs. White dies in a pose which imitates that of Christ on the cross. The special effects used in this scene help convey Carrie's powers of telekinesis. Carrie's concentration is focused on the knives in the kitchen. After a few

seconds the knives being to fly through the air like poison darts piercing the flesh of her mother's body. Her mother is pinned to the walls by the supernatural power of the vaginal monster. Then a



Fig. 11. Mrs. White bears her cross

second round of knives forcefully levitate toward Carrie's mother leaving her shredded. Without the aid of special effects the

spectator would not be able to view Carrie's supernatural powers.

The movie Carrie represents woman as witch and allows us to examine how woman's monstrosity is linked to her mystical menstrual cycle. Sissy Spacek portrays a unique character that represents the vaginal monster as woman with supernatural powers. The character Carrie depicts the essence of femininity, but nonetheless she is also a lethal element of destruction. Carrie is unique to the category of vaginal monster because the film represents the supernatural power of telekinesis that manifests itself through the menstrual passage of womanhood. The film allows us to analyze the essence of the female monstrosity without the gender elements of the male species.

The Exorcist

The main character of The Exorcist (1973) is Regan who is played by Linda Blair. Regan is an adolescent who becomes possessed by the devil. During her possession Regan is transformed into a monstrous figure that speaks a series of languages including Greek, Latin, French, and gibberish. She kills two men, tries to

castrate a priest, masturbates with a crucifix, and causes inanimate objects to fly. The movie's opening scenes take place in northern Iraq where we see Father Merrin, who is played by Max Von Sydow, in an archaeological site overseeing an excavation. The artistic choice to link the story to a third world country adds to the mystical ambience of the film. The story of demonic possession is established in the first few minutes of the movie. After the opening scene, the camera cuts to the MacNeil's house where we see Regan an ordinary happy adolescent who lives with her mother Chris MacNeil. Linda's youthful appearance and mannerism help establish a bond between the character Regan and the spectator. Regan's gentleness and tenderness toward her mother is the premise which will later draw the spectator's sympathy. Regan and her mother seem to exist in what appears to be a normal happy family situation. The only tension that seem to prevail is that between Regan's mother and father. Her parents seem to have an unresolved relationship that causes them to argue perpetually. The Exorcist conveys the message that mankind is so fraudulent that the forces of darkness are able to take possession of the vulnerable with the greatest of ease. The lack of family values and the absence of a

father figure creates a gateway that enables the forces of darkness to easily evoke the prince of darkness. The Exorcist revolves around the issue of spiritual decline, but the film's main theme is that of the vaginal monster and the perversity that is channeled through her seditious body. The film also conveys the inability of the male order to control the female body.

As the movie moves forward we begin to see gradual signs of Regan's possession which at this point are non-sexually motivated. She begins to draw pictures that convey the image of the devil, and she uses her Ouija board to communicate with a spirit that she calls Captain Howdy. Regan experiences strange activity in her bedroom



Fig. 12. Regan's mother rescues her from the bouncing bed

and becomes extremely restless. During one of her sleepless nights Regan wanders downstairs and is met by a crowd that her mother is entertaining. She urinates on the carpet and proceeds to prophesize the death of an astronaut who is present at her mother's social gathering. Regan is later taken to the hospital, but the doctors are unable to diagnose her condition. (Creed, p. 34)

Regan's condition worsens and by this time her possession is extremely out of control. Regan's mother and doctor enter Regan's room and find her being violently abused by an unseen force. The special effects used in this scene allow the spectator to use his/her imagination in creating the force that abuses the helpless child. The special effects team rigs the bed to shake and rattle frantically while the talented Linda Blair creates the movements that allow the viewer to disengage from reality and let themselves believe that something is physically abusing her. In the middle of her outburst, Regan suddenly stops and utters a savage snarl, "Keep away! The sow is mine! Fuck me! Fuck me!" The doctors forcibly inject her, and Regan is subjected to another round of exhausting examinations. The examinations conclude that there is nothing wrong with Regan, and a psychiatrist is recommended.

Regan's possession now takes on a new form as she tries to force a sexual encounter with her mother. Regan's mother enters her room and finds her daughter's face covered in blood. Regan is viciously masturbating with a crucifix and uttering obscenities in a horrifying androgynous voice, 'let Jesus fuck you!' Regan savagely forces her mother's face into her bloody vaginal womb. Although Regan has just entered puberty it is still uncertain if the blood is self inflicted or menstruation blood. The ambiguities of the situation leave many question unanswered. Is her power augmented because of her passage into womanhood? Does her menstrual cycle create a gateway of vulnerability that enables demon possession? Creed states that Regan's transformation from angel into devil is clearly sexually rooted, and that the family home is built on a foundation of repressed sexual desires including those which flow between mother and daughter. Creed conveys that sexual desire is disguised as possession and not expressed through a symbolic exchange of objects, but is spoken out loud in the daughter's bedroom. The sexual elements of the novel were followed extremely close in the making of The Exorcist. (Creed, p. 35)

The film moves in a different direction after Regan's sexual confrontation with her mother. Regan's outburst of power goes beyond her telekinesis abilities after her verbal abuse of incest. It is as though the spirit that possesses Regan is tearing down the walls that have held back the power of darkness. Regan has now reached a higher level of monstrosity that enables her to commit physically impossible acts. Dick Smith, the master special effects technician, was able to astound the spectators with his unique technical effects. He used his unique talent to transform Regan into a horrifying vaginal monster. In order to stay true to the narrative Smith had to create illusions that would convey that some evil force was nested deeply inside Regan. He achieved the script's demands by creating the illusion that Regan's eyes are tinted yellow and creating the means that would allow Regan to vomit profusely on demand. He also created the illusion of Regan being able to completely rotate her head and levitate above her bed. These elements combined with other special effects create the illusion that Regan is possessed by the devil. It is as though the film tries to exonerate Regan of her incestuous deeds by making it crystal clear that she is possessed by the devil. The film reinforces the notion that the devil is among



Fig. 13. Regan after her complete horrifying transformation

them when a priest from a nearby church discovers a statue of the Virgin Mother with two large phallic breasts and an extremely large penis. It is as though the film makers believe that by phallizing the situation it miraculously intensifies the horrifying elements of the film. (Creed, p. 35)

By this time Regan's physical appearance is atrocious. She has undergone a horrifying transformation that has left her face covered

with sores and almost animal like in appearance. Here again we see the unique talent of Dick Smith and his crew in creating the



Fig. 14. Regan's possession transforms her into a vomit-spewing hellion

horrifying vaginal monster. It is as though the evil force from within Regan is seeping through her skin and exfoliating on the surface. The special effects make-up used in this scene helps create the illusion of sores that appear to look like scabs and that are able to manifest at will when Regan is blessed with holy water. The combination of special effects and sound effects used in this scene establish a horrifying artistic perspective that leaves the

spectator bewildered. At this point in the film it is as though Regan is trapped inside her own body and suppressed by the evil force that has surfaced. Regan's mother unbuttons Regan's nightgown and reveals a message that seems to be written on the inside of her stomach. The message 'Help Me' appear through Regan's skin. The scene conveys that Regan is trapped inside her own body and is reaching out for help.

Father Merrin is brought to aid with the exorcism. He is greeted by Regan with horrid obscenities. Her sexual obscenities seem to be directed at the sexual desires of men, especially homosexual tendencies. Here we see that Regan is in control of the scene as she causes Father Merrin to have a heart attack. Linda Blair's performance in this scene is of extremely high caliber. Her body language and facial expressions taunt Father Damien profusely and create terminal friction between good and evil that enables Father Damien to frantically lash out at Regan. Father Damien furiously drags Regan to the floor and beats her repeatedly until the devil enters his body. He then commits suicide by jumping out the window and falling to his death. The camera leads us to the street where we see Father Damien lying in a pool of blood.

The blood shed by Father Damien symbolizes Regan's rebirth and conveys the pain endured for the deliverance of evil. At the end of the film Regan and her mother are reunited. (Creed, p. 36)

The Exorcist uses the female body to represent the conflict between good and evil. Regan's body is used as a medium that channels the forces of the devil. Some articles on this subject seem to assume that the possessor is male, while others don't even question the identity of the possessor. Andrew Tudor, the author of Monsters and Mad Scientists, states that The Exorcist has marked a critical transition in the modern horror genre by introducing the possession of a young girl as its main theme (Tudor, 1989, 176). Creed states that the possessing devil of The Exorcist is female and far from virtuous. The fact is that although the voice of the possessor resonates as masculine it is nonetheless feminine.

The voice that speaks through Regan has been described by some critics as masculine, but the fact remains that the voice actually belongs to Mercedes McCambridge. Although some critics are aware that the voice belonged to Mercedes McCambridge, they still propose that the voice represents a male devil. When Father Damien plays backwards a tape of the devil's voice, he discovers

that the voice is in fact Regan's. One must also take into account that different sound effects were added to the soundtrack in order to horrify the spectator. The sound effects used included the intense humming of bees, and the sound of pigs being lead to the slaughter house. (Creed, p. 39)

Creed states that part of Regan's possession is due to the happy, caring, and intimate relationship that is shared between Regan and her mother. The relationship turns bitter after Regan becomes possessed. She begins to express her emotions for her mother with perverse and crudely sexual innuendo. Regan's horrifying excursion ultimately seals her bond with her mother. The bond between mother and daughter is conveyed through their parallel behaviors. Regan's obscenities are linked to her mothers swearing and her mother's sexual frustrations become Regan's lewd suggestions. Regan's power seems to be fueled by her mother's anger, and it is as though Regan's mother's presence evokes the demonic force that controls Ragan's actions. (Creed, p. 39)

Regan and her mother share an unusual intimate bond. It is as though the lack of a father-figure has downplayed a crucial part in Regan's social rearing. Regan and her mother tend to be very caring

and loving toward each other and it is this intimacy that the host feeds upon. These actions of intimacy are augmented and distorted during Regan's possession. Regan's possession takes place while she is on the threshold of puberty. Her adolescent sexual expression dramatically increases because of her demonic possession. It is as though her passage to womanhood makes her vulnerable to possession invasion and allows her body to become a target of lewd and lascivious eruptions.

Taking these considerations into account it is no wonder that Regan's possession is sexually aggressive. Creed states that Regan is possessed by a snake goddess and that it is these qualities that are the key factors of Regan's ambiguous gender mutation. Her voice gradually becomes guttural and all forms of childlike behavior is altered. She shrieks obscene blasphemies and inflicts terror into the hearts of men. She becomes an avenging vaginal monster that lashes out with her bodily waste.

Regan is seen as a horrid monster because she breaks down the natural norm of a clean and proper body. Regan's body becomes the site of struggle. Regan's defense tactics include: vomit, urine, blood, and excrement. The elements of secretion were achieved by

the special effects team and run parallel with the demands of the script. Here we see that the narrative code and the performance code are in cahoots with each other. They play off each other and create a unique ensemble that leaves the spectator spellbound. It is as though Regan is not possessed by the devil but by her own putrid body. She seems to be breaking down the social wall that have held woman submissive for decades. The desire of liberation is exuded through the physical body expression that seems to convey incestuous undertones. It is as though Regan is drawn toward her mother's chaste qualities. Regan's mother is ethical, clean, and proper unlike the mothers of some horror films. Regan's regression into the arena of evil empowers her to proclaim her desires but her mother remains physically out of reach as long as Regan is possessed. In the movie Psycho (1960), Norman Bates's passion for his mother is also represented as a breakdown of bodily relations; however, in the movie Psycho Norman's mother's body does become accessible. (Creed, p. 41)

Creed states that woman is viewed as possessed when she threatens the symbolic order of our society by highlighting its weaknesses or playing on its vulnerabilities. These fears are

especially amplified when the female character demonstrates that the symbolic order is a sham built on sexual repression. The Exorcist clearly demonstrates the argument that a reconciliation with the maternal body, the body of our origins, is only possible through an encounter with horror. Horror emerges from the fact that woman has broken with her proper feminine role, and she has put her unsocialized body on display. (Creed, p. 41)

The Exorcist is unique to the category of vaginal monster because the film exemplifies the power of femininity. The film conveys the achievement of the female character to go beyond the stereotypical female role. The Exorcist represents woman as possessed body and reveals the inability of the male order to control the female body. The vaginal monster is a monstrosity that is defined in terms of female experience, female relation to the supernatural and natural world, and is perceived to be possessed when she threatens the symbolic order of our society. The film also conveys the progress that the female character has achieved in the film industry due to the support of the female movement in the 1970s.

Alien

The female monster in the movie Alien is a horrifying creature that changes shape as it metamorphoses into a full-grown life form. The monster is virtually impossible to kill due to the fact that it is highly intelligent. The film presents the image of the mother as sole origin of all life. It is as though we are viewing the creator of life itself. Throughout the movie we are exposed to scenarios that convey the symbolic birth of human life. The first procreation scene takes place at the beginning of the movie. The camera guides the spectator down a corridor of the mothership that leads to a womb-like chamber. Here we see that the chamber represents the vaginal walls of life, and it is through these walls that a crew of astronauts are wakened by the tantalizing voice of the mother-ship. The performance code seems to portray images of the female genitalia throughout the structure of the ship. It is as if the set designer was trying to symbolically recreate the female anatomy. The astronauts emerge from their sleep pods oblivious to what lies in store for them. In this scene the narrative code establishes the awakening of the astronauts, but the performance code on the other

hand seems to take it a bit further by linking the scene to the female physiognomy. The correlation between the setting of the scene and the female anatomy are evident in the structure and design of the mothership. Creed implies that the well controlled, clean antiseptic atmosphere conveys the primal fantasy of a painless birth where no blood, trauma or terror is endured. (Creed, p. 18) The birth scene convey the ultimate power of the A-sexual vaginal monster whom needs no male assistance to procreate a devastating army of destructive alien life form. The alien mother is sole parent and sole life-support. She is the primordial abyss, the point of origin and of end. Although the alien mother, the monster who laid the embryos, is never seen, her existence is encountered in numerous ways. Her essence represents the darkness and blood shed that is encountered throughout the film. The alien mother depicts the image of birth and death.

Although her physical presence is not seen she is nonetheless a major factor in the enactment of all events. Her presence is felt in the images of birth, and the vaginal imagery that is encountered throughout the film. The long winding tunnels symbolically represent her female reproductive system. The chamber where the

alien eggs are nested symbolically represents the female uterus. Her presence is also sensed in the voice of the life-support system, and the birth of her horrifying offspring. Creed conveys that the mother alien represents the pre-phallic mother, the entity who prevailed prior to knowledge of the phallus. Here we see that the female alien monster needs no phallus to horrify the spectator. She is capable of horrifying acts and is able to create her own alien army without the aid of a male counterpart. (Creed, p. 20)

The alien mother is the original parent and the origin of procreation. She is able to conceive all by herself and is the godhead of all fertility. Creed states that while the distinct figures convey individual aspects of the female monster, as established in the horror genre, each one is primarily only a component of the whole. The horrifying essence of the female monster can at times be a by-product form fusing all the faces of the horrifying images of woman as archaic mother, phallic woman, and castrated body. Creed states that the horrifying perspectives are sometimes represented as a single figure, but that the archaic mother is without doubt present in the horror genre. She is viewed as negative force in many horror texts particularly the sci-fi horror genre. She is also presented as

the mystic black hole that foreshadows the female genitalia which threatens to bring forth equally horrifying offspring.

It is the devouring womb of the alien mother which provokes horror and not the the images of the womb shaped in relation to the penis of the father. Creed points out that the womb signifies fullness or emptiness and that it is not the site of castration anxiety. The alien mother does not depend on the concept of masculinity in order to horrify. She is not the maternal figure that is almost always represented in relation to the penis. In the movie Alien there is an attempt to preempt the procreative function of the alien mother. A male astronaut is orally raped by the alien creature.



Fig. 15. The birth of the embryonic alien

The alien implants its embryo in the astronaut's stomach and uses the astronaut as a host rather than a father. At the time of deliverance the infant alien creature murderously gnaws its way through the astronaut's abdomen. The special effects used in this scene create the illusion that the astronaut is giving birth to an alien. The latex abdominal used in the scene allow the electronically animated alien to appear as if it were bursting through the astronaut's stomach. The excruciating birth leads to the male mother's death. (Creed, p. 24)

The movie Alien is an important aspect to the vaginal monster because it represents the origin of prehistoric life. It conveys the power behind the female species and establish the fear of the self reproducing vaginal monster. The amoral primeval mother is beyond moral order because she lies outside the sphere to which moral judgments apply. The vaginal alien monster in the film Alien is a complex creature that mutates into a mature alien life form. She does not depend on the concept of masculinity in order to horrify, nor does she need to be represented in relation to the male penis in order to horrify.

Species

The film Species represents a female vaginal monster that conveys dominance, strength, sexuality, and determination. The main character of the movie is Sil who is played by Natasha Henstredge, a Canadian super model. Sil is the liberated entity of the female gender that provokes the male gaze and like the black widow desecrates her mates after conception. She is determined to procreate and will stop at nothing to insure that her offspring prevail. Her determination to multiply is confirmed in a scene that takes place in a discotheque. She enters the disco and encounters a young man sitting at the bar. In a split second another female character swoops in and dazzles the young male. Sil pursues the young lady into the restroom. Sil enter into the neighboring stall. The camera cuts, and we see the young lady sitting on the toilet. In a blink of an eye Sil's reptilian claw pierce through the female's chest and brutally annihilates her. The special effects used in this scene help establish the avenging vaginal monster. Here we see that Sil will stop at nothing to procreate, and that she is capable of horrifying acts. She is the ultimate vaginal monster that dominates

the male presence and who will not be intimidated by feeble competition. Natasha's performance adds a unique perspective that helps establish the deviant actions of the character she portrays. Her cold mannerism and blank expressions create an void that leaves the spectator uncertain of what she is capable of doing. Her physical beauty draws the male gaze, but her deviant actions create an anxiety amongst the male spectator. The male spectator is left with the notion that beauty can be very dangerous and deceiving.

The beautiful alien/human hybrid dominates the male gaze with her erotic presence. She is in control of her destiny and is determined to procreate. She controls the flirtatious process and is able to detect impurities in potential mates. Sil leaves the disco with a potential mate, but after a closer examination she detects his physical imperfections. She realizes that he is not a healthy specimen and begins to leave his apartment. He becomes angry when she rejects him and resorts to violence. She is left with no other alternative but to defend herself and in so doing she abolishes him. Her physical strength conveys the message that not all beautiful things are feeble. We observe that Sil will not be the obedient victim. It is as though she is retaliating for the pain that has been

inflicted on women throughout history. Sil is the ultimate vaginal monster who is capable of reproducing hundreds of horrifying alien/human hybrids. She is also a mutating female monster who is in control of the action and who will not be a sub-species to the male gender.

Sil's mutation takes on many forms and seems to intensify the closer she get to womanhood. She undergoes a major transformation during puberty that parallels a butterfly's metamorphic transformation. The transformation begins on a train where Sil is trying to escape the secret service. Sil finds herself with an insatiable appetite and begins to consume everything in site. It is as though she were storing food for the dormant stage of her mutation. After she has stored sufficient food her body beginnings to transform into what appears to be a chrysalis. The transformation symbolizes her passage into womanhood. The artistic designer and the special effects used in this scene help establish a unique experience for the spectator. Sil's transformation into womanhood begins with a series of latex masks that create the illusion that her facial skin is pulsating in isolated areas. After a while the pulsating areas spawn what appears to be

tentacles. The tentacle engulf her entire body as she literally transforms into a chrysalis pod. The chrysalis represents a vaginal sanctuary that conveys the rebirth of the horrifying vaginal monster. She emerges stronger, sexually full grown, and eager to copulate.

Sil's strength increases succeeding her metamorphic mutation, and after the birth of her alien child she fully mutates into a reptilian monster who is determined and physically capable of protecting her newborn alien child. The special effect that establishes Sil's reptilian appearance also enables her to accomplish breath taking feats. Computerized digital effect used in Species enable Sil in her final scene to physically appear as if she is able to leap enormous heights. The advanced technology used enables the artistic team of the film to push the vaginal monster to her ultimate limit and bring to life the scrip writer's vision of the reptilian vaginal monster. Sil conveys the dominance and strength that the female species has been denied throughout centuries. She is the protective mother who will stop at nothing to insure the survival of her child, and it is because of her motherly premonitions to protect her child that she is ultimately destroyed.

Species is a fascinating film that represents the vaginal monster in her essence as alien/human. The film is substantial to this category because it represents the dominance, strength, sexuality, and determination of the female monster. The female character in this film is unique in the sense that she is not a foil to the male character, but rather the main character that moves the narrative forward. She conveys the affinity and courage of the female species and represents the dominant backbone of the female gender.

Chapter IV

The Androgynous Female Monster

In today's American culture the awareness of androgyny seems to be widely expressed. The recognition and popularity of this topic is largely accredited to the feminist movement. Alexandra G. Kaplan the author of Psychology & Sex Roles states that some feminists argue that the female root of the word *androgyny* should come first, as in *gynandry*. Several feminists also argue against the idea of merging female and male traits. The flourishing concern in androgyny has derived from the feminist struggle to vanquish sex stereotypic personality traits and social roles. Kaplan conveys that the concept of androgyny is not endorsed by the majority of our society. (Kaplan, p. 56) The concept of androgynous images has boggled the minds of our predecessors and has obstructed people's philosophical views regarding gender roles. Androgynous images have appeared in myths about the creation of the world. They have also played a part in religious enlightenment, classical Greek mythology, Western literature, and in twentieth-century novels.

Androgynous images have prevailed for centuries and have played an important role in shaping major religious systems. When comparing Eastern and Western religious teachings, we see that androgynous images have been a major component of both beliefs. Eastern religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, have used androgynous images in myths about the creation of the world. Androgynous images have also been used to teach the paths to enlightenment. The Judeo-Christian heritage of the West does not focus on androgynous images but rather on patriarchy. Kaplan states that androgynous issues do exist in the Old and New Testaments, but that they are elaborated on primarily by those who have practiced esoteric, mystical, or heretical forms of worship. (Kaplan, p. 56)

June Singer, author of the book Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality (1977), conveys that myths about the creation of the universe have prevailed wherever people have questioned their origins. These creation myths yield themes that repeat themselves endlessly throughout the world (Singer, 1977). Carolyn Heilbrun, author of Toward a Recognition of Androgyny (1973), touches upon androgynous issues in literature that have been neglected by substantial literary critics. Heilbrun acknowledges four eras where

androgynous issues were prominent. The four eras are: the classical Greek era; the medieval era; Elizabethan England; and the modern era.

According to Heilbrun androgynous people in literature are often portrayed as being at odds with their society. They exemplify infamous modes of existence. Androgynous mannerisms of behavior strive to emancipate the individual from the confines of society (Heilbrun, 1973, P.x). The crossing over of social boundaries can often lead to conflict with social acceptance. The longing for androgynous characters has often been expressed through the portrayal of heroes.

The juxtaposition between androgynous motifs in literature and the non-androgynous world is represented in the classical Greek period. Women of this era were subjected to severe restraints and were looked upon as peasants of Athens. Although Athens was thriving as a civilization, their women were a subspecies of their culture. Women were locked into a culture that had little value for the female gender; however, some literature of this era discloses an astonishing number of vigorously powerful female heroes. These heroines include: Clytemnestra, Medea, and Teiresias whose sex in

undetermined. Teiresias is an oracle who is believed to be a hermaphrodite. Teiresias' dual sexuality establishes him/her as a unique androgynous character of this era. The heroines of this era are acknowledged for their courage and bravery. They are exemplified as forceful heroines who did not hesitate to react in ways that they felt were appropriate.

Heilbrun states that androgynous issues are represented in classical Greek literature primarily in two ways. One of the ways is as a powerful central character. The role as central character is seen in many of the Greek dramas. Main female characters convey the conflicts of human emotion by portraying issues of love, revenge, loyalty, and betrayal. In essence the androgynous female character represents humankind, not "femininity." Heilbrun conveys that, "They fulfill their destiny by being altogether human rather than merely ladylike" (Heilbrun, p. 10).

The second way that androgynous issues were represented in classical Greek literature was by having the female character reflect sensitivity and affection while she displayed decisiveness and direct action. In order for the female character not to be dissociated from compassion and caring she must demonstrate her

power and strength. This form of performance is what Heilbrun calls the “celebration of the feminine impulse. The Greek female character’s demeanor is a unique representation of the androgynous female character. Her orchestration of strength and compassion and her ability to make knowledgeable decisions about her future are pertinent literary examples of androgyny. It is as if the female character in Greek drama personified one form of the integration of female and male qualities.

Plato’s scholarly writings also represent images of androgynous characters. “The Symposium” describes the creation of civilization in a way that parallels the Greek androgynous myths. Plato states that in the beginning of creation there were three sexes. There was man, woman, and a physique personifying the solidarity of the two. Plato describes this solidarity:

First of all, there were three kinds of men, not two as now . . . but also a third containing both . . . /The androgenes/ were shaped like complete spheres. Their backs and sides made a circle. They had four hands, with the same number of legs and two faces-completely the same-on top of a circular neck. These two faces were set on opposite sides of one head, with

four ears. And there were two sets of sexual parts, and whatever else goes along with these arrangements. (Plato, in Bretlinger, 1970, p. 61)

The androgynous figures were believed to be extremely powerful. They were so powerful that the gods felt threatened by their presence. In sheer spite, the gods split the androgynous figures in half. It is said that each half yearns for the other because they long to become one. Plato states that the pursuit for the other half of oneself conveys the passionate love that can prevail among a couple, as individuals search to encounter their missing elements in another human being.

In the medieval romances androgyny was a civilizing force of the feminine principle. The symbolism of androgyny was not exemplified by a quest for wholeness; however, it was mirrored by the congruent merger of male and female traits. The characters represented in medieval literature were not androgynous, but the underlying meaning of numerous works indicates that both male and female attributes were essential for a society to achieve a state of unity.

Kaplan states that even if the characters portrayed in the medieval era were not androgynous, the degree to which these messages were androgynous can be conveyed by analyzing the androgynous writings with the non androgynous writing of the medieval era. Kaplan states that the romances were the androgynous writings and the epic poems were the non androgynous writing of this period.

In the epics, men flourished and the significant things of the world were portrayed by male characteristics. The epic mentality revolved around the nation and the hero character. Heroic men existed to glorify the nation, but women reluctantly had no place in the scheme of things.

After a period of time the focus shifted to the integration of personal love and societal necessities. The writings during this period were called the romances, and it was during this period that writers allowed the female character to come into view. With the change of writing style came individual awareness, empathy, sensibility, and romantic love. The integration of male and female attributes did not manifest effortlessly, but nonetheless both aspects of human qualities were acknowledged and validated.

Heilbrun indicates that during the Elizabethan era Shakespeare was “as devoted to the androgynous ideal as anyone who has ever written” (1973, p. 29). When analyzing Shakespeare’s writings one sees that some of Shakespeare’s female characters can and were portrayed by boys. In Shakespeare’s time the audiences had greater toleration for androgyny as embodied by male bodies allowing boys to play female characters. Shakespeare’s works convey an authentic sense of humanity that can be achieved solely by a proportional balance of male and female attributes.

Kaplan states that the physical portrayal between male and female roles in Shakespeare’s plays is most obvious when the female or male character successfully masquerades as a member of the opposite gender. The character must assume the appearance of the opposite sex in order to fully and convincingly behave as though he or she is a member of the opposite sex. Kaplan goes on to say that, “What differentiates the sexes is appearance rather than more fundamental and enduring personality characteristics.” (Kaplan, p. 69)

If we analyze Shakespeare’s play The Merchant of Venice (1600), we see that Portia disguises herself as a male lawyer, and

in doing so she is able to attain authoritative status. The male traits that she acquires ultimately allow her to monopolize the events that are to determine her destiny. Portia's female attributes do not reveal her true identity but rather make her more influential than any real man. Portia exemplifies an androgynous quality that enables her to portray male and female characteristics. Kaplan argues, "Shakespeare's underlying message is not that one must be a man to be masculine, but rather that one person, Portia, is fully capable of being masculine or feminine, as warranted by situational needs."

In Shakespeare's play Twelfth Night (1623), we see that female and male twins are so alike that they can easily exchange roles. Viola disguises herself as her twin brother Cesario and finds herself in a predicament while Olivia unknowingly falls in love with Viola whom she believes is Cesario. Viola is not just manly in this situation, as was Portia, but rather extremely successful. She radiates male characteristics, and this causes another woman to fall in love with her.

Shakespeare's work conveys the similarities between male and female twins which creates an interchangeable persona that truly

implies that they both possess androgynous qualities. Here we see that male and female qualities can be truly integrated. The transformation of gender suggests that both have transcended the stereotypes of sexuality that could have not been achieved without the harmonious balance between men and women. Portia's androgynous qualities represent the flexibility between the physiognomy of men and women whereas the twins of Twelfth Night seem to represent a hybrid stage that has blended male and female traits. (Kaplan, p. 69)

We have viewed some writers' ideas on what they believe androgyny entails, but what exactly is androgyny? This chapter attempts to define the word androgyny by focusing on physiognomy as the key to understanding androgyny, not socially construed modes of behavior that we call masculinity and femininity, but primary sex characteristics that we associate with maleness and femaleness. The examples of horror films used in this chapter are primarily focused on the male/female dichotomy and not the masculine/feminine dichotomy. The focus is primarily on the way we read bodies and the confusion that emerges when androgyny defines the body of the performer. The questions that we will

attempt to answer are: How can we identify androgynous characters in horror movies? What physical characteristics make a horror character androgynous? These questions will be analyzed through the female monster's perspective and will be used to ascribe meaning to the androgynous female monster.

In order to begin an analytical analysis of the horrifying androgynous female monster we must clarify and define the word androgyny. The word "androgyny" refers to a being that incorporates male and female qualities to an ambiguous degree in so far that one can not determine the sex of the being. Androgyny is a holistic way of thinking about the totality of a character's demeanor. (Kaplan, p. 25) When viewing the full spectrum of an androgynous character, one must consider the character's personality, physiognomy, and mannerisms. Androgyny will be considered to mean the combined presence of male and female characteristics. This analysis, however, does not imply that we can define the horrifying androgynous female character's personality, conduct, or life style. The concepts conveyed are not meant to be used as a diagram for decoding androgynous characteristics, but rather as an analytical discourse to help establish a base for analyzing the horrifying

androgynous female perspective. We must also keep in mind that in the beginning of this chapter we see the positive nature of androgyny; however, the horror genre seems to challenge the positive feminization of androgyny by questioning the mythic construction that appears to have emerged from a largely feminine dimension of culture. The horror film seems to upset the expectations that are set forward by positioning androgyny in a different relation to sexuality than the myths do or even the scientist like Singer. It seems that the function of the androgynous horror film is not to create a positive image but rather to provoke anxieties and to lure audiences to the extent that they are horrified. With this in mind, we will begin our analysis of the androgynous female monster by analyzing the motion picture From Dusk Till Dawn.

From Dusk Till Dawn (1996), conveys images of women who are transformed into hideous vampire monsters with the aid of modern technology. Female characters physically undergo a gender mutation that transforms their feminine facial features into hideous androgynous reptilian creatures. The combination of masculinity and femininity achieved by the special effects team creates a unique

sub-species of monstrosity that enables the androgynous female creatures to dominate feeble mortals. The union of femininity and masculinity creates a superior species. This distinct species is able to surpass single gender beings. This new breed of monstrosity allows the character and the production team to take these works of monstrosity to a higher level of creativity. The horrifying female monster of this genre seem to be stronger and more aggressive. Her physical appearance dominates the screen and creates an erotic conflict between the horrifying character and the spectator. The special effects team of From Dusk Till Dawn helped make all of this possible by using a unique computerized technique known as morphing. Morphing helps establish a smooth graphic transformation that allows the gender mutation to build on feminine characteristics by superimposing masculine attributes. This technique also enables the spectator to view the transformation without the aid of cuts or edits. The camera zooms in close and stays on the subject until the morphing is complete. The morphing technique allows the spectator to come in close and examine the full transformation of the female character.

The spectator is able to experience the morphing effect when the beautiful Salma Hayek is flawlessly transformed into a hideous androgynous vampire monster. Hayek, who portrays an exotic female dancer called Santanico Pandemonio, dramatically enters the scene. Her titillating presence overpowers the crowd and incites silence. Her mysterious sexuality leaves the crowd speechless, and her physical feminine presence conveys a sense of immortal feminine power. It is as if her physiognomy possessed the stamina to extract and captivate the male gaze. She manipulates the male gaze with every tantalizing move she makes. Santanico Pandemonio is a nonconformist who is sexually free and determines her own actions. After her intriguing performance, she remains on the table in a hedonistic pose that conveys a sense of dominance. Salma Hayek seems to have been chosen to portray the character of Santanico Pandemonio because of her provocative beauty, erotic body, and her ability to tantalize the spectator. Her exoticism creates an illusion of immortal beauty that seems to thrive in our society. She symbolizes the desire for eternal beauty that empowers people to do whatever it takes to achieve desirability. Her sexuality conveys the essence of femininity, and when her face is morphed she becomes a

symbol of the androgynous monstrosity. Her transformation conveys the fear that most females encounter when faced with the reality that one day their beauty will be a thing of the past. On the other hand, the male spectator views the transformation as an ordeal that threatens his understanding of the female body. He is unable to relate or deal with the grotesqueness of her physical transformation. This in turn creates an acceptance, by the male spectator, of the violence afflicted on the female character. Santanico Pandemonio's transformation leaves her stripped of her beauty; however, her gender mutation enables her to reach a higher level of monstrosity. The new plateau that she reaches enables her to exhibit physical feats that would otherwise be impossible for her to achieve. Her transformation empowers her with strength that normally would be impossible for her to exhibit. The union of femininity and masculinity enables Santanico Pandemonio to reach higher boundaries. It is as if the best of both genders has been extracted and combined to create the ultimate form of androgynous monstrosity.

Santanico Pandemonio's gender mutation begins after the bartender stabs Riche's hand. She stares intensely at the blood and

begins to pant with desire. The camera moves in close and we see that Santanico Pandemonio is in a hypnotic trance. It is as if her contrived state of mind is biologically rearranging her internal molecular structure. The camera zooms in closer and we see her face morph into a grotesque reptilian vampire. The aid of computer technology enables the special effects team to transform Santanico Pandemonio's face into a hideous reptilian monster. Her transformed face personifies androgynous qualities, but her body remains exotically feminine. Her dual appearance sends out mixed messages that enable her to distort the spectator. The spectator is left with a distorted image of gender sexuality which in turn creates a diverse spectrum of perceptions. It is as if the director and his creative team deliberately plotted this form of creative diversity in order to allow the spectator to achieve a greater range of tolerance and acceptance for violence against women. The notion that the women are part monster allows for a greater acceptance among the spectators when the women are beaten by the mortal male characters. The spectator is given the choice of either focusing on the female monster's androgynous face or on her erotic body. This allows film makers to tap into a greater range of horror film

viewers and enables the viewer to experience a broader range of female monstrosity. Santanico Pandemonio's gender mutation establishes the representation of woman as vampire and is significant in understanding the androgynous female monstrosity. Santanico Pandemonio is unique to the subject of androgyny because of her partial transformation. She is gender transformed from the neck up, but her body remains femininely unimpaired. The combination of elements seems to arouse male anxieties that are associated with the female body's gender stability. The possibility of a dual sexuality when conveyed by an androgynous female character can lead to uncertainties that can cause some spectators to feel uncertain of their own sexual preference. The gender mutation establishes an interesting inconsistency between the sexuality of the body and the monstrosity of the face. The performance code creates an icon that enables the male spectator to fantasize over the sexuality that remains dominant in the horrifying female monster's body. The film makers create tension by counterplaying the desirability of the female body with the monstrosity of the transformed female face. The two elements are combined to create a unique male perspective of the androgynous

female monster.

Her transformation symbolizes the unity of the female and male genders. She mutates into a hideous androgynous immortal bloodthirsty reptilian vampire who drinks from the blood of mortals. Her gender mutation alters her facial structure and vocal qualities, but her body is still extremely feminine, and sexually desirable. This category of female monstrosity seems to convey that women are horrifying when they lose some portion of their facial beauty.

The film From Dusk Till Dawn arouses male anxieties over the female body by symbolically representing images of male castration throughout the film. The beautiful, morphed androgynous female monsters chop off the heads of male victims, tear at their flesh, and suck their blood. The grotesque facial features of the androgynous monster empowers the male character to rationalize his violent actions towards the female character. This form of rationalization enables both the spectator and the male character to confront their sensual anxieties and enables the male gaze to manipulate a sense of dominance over the female species. The spectator views the annihilation of the androgynous female monster by the male character with admiration. This type of action enables both the

male character and the male spectator to become allies and create a male bond that aids in their justification of their actions. On the other hand, the androgynous female symbolizes the castrating vaginal monster who personifies man's innermost apprehensions and anxieties of castration. The androgynous castrating demons wage war against the mortal men in a battle to the death. Male heads roll and fly through the air as the androgynous demons unleash the fiery fury of hell upon the mortal men of Earth. This form of decapitation symbolizes the emancipation of the oppressed female species, and conveys the dismay and sexual anxiety encountered by male species. The androgynous female monster is manifesting her long anticipated retaliation on a male dominated society. As a symbol of liberation and immortal life the androgynous female monster purges herself of the dominating male figure by consuming his blood and decapitating his head. She symbolizes women throughout history who have psychologically disguised themselves to comply with society's expectations and demands. These women have suppressed their true feeling by living a double life that has stripped them of all dignity and self respect. The androgynous female monster claims that which has been forbidden to women for centuries.

From Dusk Till Dawn is unique to the category of androgynous female monster because it allows the female character to maintain her feminine body while her face undergoes an androgynous mutation. The extent of the female character's transformation insures the spectator that the monstrosity he is viewing is in fact a female monster. The film's bizarre representation of the androgynous female monster enables the genre to attract a large audience. From Dusk Till Dawn enables spectators who are intrigued by sensually beautiful bodies to gaze upon a vast array of feminine physiognomy and also enables horror fans, who are intrigued by the unique uses of special effects, to marvel at the modern technology used in the film.

Another excellent example of the androgynous female monster can be seen in the movie Lover's Vow (1986). In this film we see the main female character Caroline undergo a completely terrorizing gender mutation. Her gender mutation leaves her stripped of her feminine sexuality. Caroline's grotesque androgynous transformation leaves her sexually undesirable, masculine in her appearance, mannerism and vocal qualities. She loses all physical attribute of her femininity and is unable to reverse her process. She is bound for all eternity as an androgynous female monster.

The transformation technique used in Caroline's mutation is quite different from the morphing technique used in From Dusk Till Dawn. The computerized morphing technique used in From Dusk Till Dawn safeguards the spectator from having to view the graphic disfigurement of the person being transformed. The transformation does not submit the spectator to the blood and gore, but rather creates a smooth transition that helps present a less grotesque physiognomy transformation. On the other hand, the gender mutation technique used to transform Caroline in Lover's Vow allows the film makers the freedom to select and edit what they feel is appropriate. The spectator is subjected to a much slower and more graphically horrifying transformation. Caroline's physiognomy is altered by mechanically robotic means that enable the spectator to view the internal structure of her androgynous female being. The mutation technique used in Lover's Vow is an engineered mechanical process that involves special effects makeup and post production editing. Caroline's androgynous features become prevalent when she rips her scalp open and exposes her transformed face which is androgynous at this stage of the mutation. With the aid of special effects makeup Caroline's feminine qualities are hidden and a more

masculinely androgynous creature is created. The gender mutation is complete when the wings of the mutated androgynous gargoyle emerge from the shoulder blades of the once beautiful Caroline. Caroline's hideous androgynous mutation leaves her stripped of her feminine sexuality. Her masculine qualities appear to have overpowered her feminine attributes. Her physiognomy is completely altered, and she is unable to reverse the transformation. The performance code creates the illusion that Caroline is completely masculine. The sense of masculinity is prevalent in her appearance, mannerism, and vocal qualities; however, the narrative code reminds us that although Caroline has undergone a gender mutation: she is still the mother of two children who have also been transformed because of their father's unkept vow. Her female attributes are seen and heard when her children call out to her and run to her side. She picks her children up and flies through the ceiling window of her apartment.

The androgynous female monster in Lover's Vow empowers the female spectator and intimidates the male spectator. The element of betrayal that is present in Lover's Vow enables the female spectator to identify with the androgynous female monster.

The final scene of Lover's Vow may compel female spectators who have been betrayed by male lovers to cheer on the androgynous female monster. The male spectator, on the other hand, may exhibit anxieties toward the androgynous female monster. The male spectator's anxieties may derive from the fear of castration, and may impel the male spectator to question his sincerity in a monogamist relationship.

The androgynous mutation achieved by the special effects team is graphically horrifying and is intended to evoke fear. The mutilated male form evokes castration anxieties while the female monster is represented as the avenging castrator who symbolizes the matriarch female throughout the world. The mutation scene is the element of surprise in the movie that leads the female character beyond the realm of femininity and into an androgynous state of being. Lover's Vow represents the female character as an androgynous reptilian monster (gargoyle) and helps us to understand the androgynous female monster.

Lover's Vow is unique to the category of the androgynous female monster because the film presents a complete gender mutation that remains female driven. The female monster is the

principal character of the film who is in control of the narrative. In Lover's Vow we see that Caroline is the one who sets the wheels in motion. She appears to Preston and makes a pact with him. She helps him establish himself as an artist. She ultimately kills him after she learns of his deception. Caroline establishes herself as the essential element that drives this movie forward. Her actions move the narrative forward and help create a sense of androgynous dominance. Her androgynous demeanor is prevalent in her actions and her physical appearance. She is independent and in control of her destiny. The androgynous transformation reinforces the independence of the female character and establishes the separation of the dominant female gender from the stereotypical feeble female character. In the androgynous transformation scene we see that Caroline achieves independence from the male character and it is her androgynous persona that is in control.

Lover's Vow represents female independence by conveying the message that women will no longer allow men to betray their trust. The female character achieves her independence by channeling her feminine power through her androgynous gender mutation. She purges herself of her stereotypical feeble feminine qualities by

adopting a more masculine form of being. Her androgynous gender mutation enables her to set forth the consequence of her husband's betrayal. Her transformation enables her to reach a profound aggressive estate of monstrosity that allows her to set aside her emotions and to advance to a higher realm where she is able to uphold her dignity as a liberated women. The female character's grotesque androgynous gender mutation represents and releases centuries of suppressed female emotions that the female species has been reluctant to express.

Chapter V

Conclusions

The images of females have been used to horrify people for centuries. Great images of women have been conjured up in order to distort and mystify the imagination of the human race. Historical horrifying myths have been based on monstrous female characters such as: the Sirens and Medusa. These chilling stories captivated our predecessors and are still a great factor of classical mythology. The horrifying female legends of ancient time have paved the way for contemporary monstrous female characters. Although the evolution of the female monster has been extremely slow, it nonetheless has gained recognition in the horror genre.

It seems that there are many factors that have contributed to the slow acknowledgement of the female monster. One of the major components seems to be the influence that men have had on what our society views as appropriate gender edict. Male ethics seem to be adopted by every aspect of the popular entertainment culture. The chauvinistic male perspective has created norms that have hindered the female character's achievement and stereotyped

her performance. Female characters have been stereotyped as emotional tearful victims who are incapable of horrifying acts. Theorists such as Robin Wood and Gerard Lenne state that displays of force are emotions that only men can portray, but crying, screaming, and begging for mercy are emotions that belong strictly to the “feminine” character. Chauvinistic male views such as these have also hampered the creativity of scriptwriters who have in return diminished the chances for women to portray horrifying monsters. The lack of representation and the negative acknowledgements of theorists have made it very difficult for female characters of the horror genre to rise above anonymity.

The changes that have allowed women to portray central characters have transpired as a result of social and cultural events. If not for the courageous women who fought for equal rights in the 70's, the horror genre would have never known the many horrifying faces of the female monster. The female movement of this era had a great impact on Hollywood. Hollywood sought to respond to the women's movement by redefining existing types and traditions, in order to include the figure of the independent heroine. This change of perspective brought about such movies that centered around

women who were independent of men, and sexually free. These films were also concerned with the problems faced by the female character, but one must keep in mind that these horrifying transformations of the female body are projections of male fantasies and not evidence of female empowerment. We are looking at an era in which women are allowed to be horrifying in ways that they were not allowed before. Hollywood's endeavors to incorporate the female character helped create the many horrifying faces of the female monster. Movies such as The Exorcist (1973), Carrie (1976), and Alien (1979) have enabled spectators to experience the horrifying capabilities of the female monster. These films also portray the power of the vaginal monster and convey to the spectator that the female monster does not have to be phallicized in order to terrify. The horror genre reinforces the male perception that woman's power lies within her physical attributes, and the extent to which she loses her desirability is the degree to which she is horrifying. The destruction of her beauty is the horrifying transformation of femaleness into something monstrous. These male perceptions of the horrifying transformation of the female body refer to some castration anxiety or horror of female identity

that operates on an unconscious level. These horror films in spite of their technical innovations work to uphold conventional male perspectives on female identity. The extreme levels of mutation in female bodies have become a source of pleasure for men especially when related to castration anxieties. Men seem to find pleasure in confronting what is assumed to be from the Freudian perspective, a paramount object of repression that they don't acknowledge fear of women robbing them of their male potency. The horror genre is playing upon male subconscious anxieties within the spectator and making them a basis for aesthetic experience. Men find pleasure in the horror genre because it tests their ability to face their anxieties. The male audience enjoys knowing the extent to which it can look at the degradation, disfigurement of the female form, and its transformation into something monstrous.

After the 70's the film industry in different genres sought to reach a more demanding audience as far as the audience's desire to know the limits of what it can tolerate. The audience's desire to explore new realms prompted the horror genre to introduce new ways of horrifying audiences. The new perspective leaned toward something really horrible that would launch horror beyond the norm

of traditional male monsters. Horror films began exploring the different range of monsters available to audiences. Writers and film makers opened up to the different options available in creating monsters. This new era allowed and encouraged the birth of horrifying female monsters. Men began to convey a sense of freedom of representation in the horror genre, and the horror genre began to cater more and more explicitly to anxieties of male pleasure.

The audience of the horror genre feels pleasure encountering the horrific. The horrific in relation to female monster involves the transformation of the female body into something androgynous or just plain horrifying. The new outlook of the film industry created a broader span of roles available for female actors. The male driven horror genre industry now allowed women to play roles that were otherwise deemed for men.

The horror genre upholds and supports conventional male ideas about female identity, and we need to acknowledge the way the genre supports the values held by the audience already. We also need to acknowledge that the genre is changing the way audiences appreciate the power of movies to communicate to them especially on the unconscious level. There is a liberating dimension in so far

as that the genre, by accommodating female monsters, has allowed men to confront their own anxieties in relation to female identity in ways that earlier films did not do. Horror films that present female monsters allow men to confront anxieties about the female body's internal fluids and mystical energy that men don't understand. Men want to be in control and horror films help them maintain their control in relation to the female identity. Men have become more open to acknowledging anxieties about female identity, and their support in movies that have female monsters in them has been in itself a liberating achievement. Men want to see that monstrosity in females, and it is probably due to the expanded power women enjoyed after the 70's. Filmmakers are increasing their repertoire of female monster movies and what is being conveyed is a deeper expanded anxiety toward women. The female character is being portrayed as a horrifying creature rather than a feeble victim. The genre is accommodating the senses of the audience that there are these anxieties and that if we are to see them more clearly, we need the genre to change and become more horrifying in this direction. In that sense, the genre is contributing to liberation if we assume that by acknowledging your anxieties as

the horror film does you are some how free from those anxieties. The pleasure arrives from knowing that if you can sit through the horror films grotesque transformation you are stronger than the image of horror and your ability to be frightened by life is diminished. You become stronger because you are less afraid of what you can see. People fear most forces within their bodies that they can not acknowledge, see, or understand. The female body for men according to the new conventions of the genre is a great mystery which may council within it monstrous capabilities of destroying maleness. Horror movies that transform beautiful women into hideous monsters convey a general warning to men to beware of beautiful women because beauty may be their destruction.

Film makers are playing with male desires while conveying the message beware of female beauty. If men do not pay attention to monstrous capabilities they may not be able to detect them behind the beauty of the female body. The deception that beauty presents has lured the horror genre away from old female monsters and has prompted them to explore the beautiful young female body's destructive capabilities. The female body imparts mixed messages and sometimes contradictory messages. The audience needs to

acknowledge those contradictions represented by the many facets of the female body and realize that the horror film does not reconcile conflicts within the spectators as easily as either the film makers may think or theorists of social development may presume.

The filmic codes also play a great factor in creating the many faces of the horrifying female monster. Subjective camera shots, special effects, and sound effects are used to accent the horror film. Horror films rely on the physical transformation of the character's physiognomy in order to horrify or arouse the spectator. These transformations require the collaboration of many talented individuals. Designers, special effects technicians, make-up artistes, costume designers, producers, directors, camera operators and actors combine their talents and expertise to create a believable monster on film. With the help of talented individuals and modern technology, the human body can be transformed into animal forms, prehistoric animals, aliens, vampires, strange substances and almost any conceivable form that the human imagination can conjure up.

Special effects allow artistic freedom and enable movie makers to bring to life the imagination of the writer. With the use

of special effects, film makers are able to transform any story, whether fantasy or fact, into extreme domains of imagination. In the late 1980s the use of computerized special effects allowed film makers to explore realms that had otherwise only existed in the most recessed regions of imagination. The uniquely new computerized phenomenon produced some of the most inspiring images of contemporary cinema. Special effects technicians combined blue-screen techniques, computer scanning, and specialized digital software to allow different images to blend seamlessly into each other. Brilliant special effects designers such as Dick Smith, H.R Giger, and Richard Edlund have been a great factor in creating the many faces of the newly affirmed female monster.

These talented individuals have only recently been able to create female monsters in ways that would have otherwise never been accepted. Some of these unique monstrous characters fall into the category of vaginal monster. The vaginal monster is a monstrosity that is defined in terms of female experience, female relation to the supernatural and natural world, and is perceived to be possessed when she threatens the symbolic order of our society. The films that fall into this category are: Carrie, The Exorcist,

Alien, and Species.

Carrie represents woman as witch and allows us to examine how woman's monstrosity is linked to her mystical menstrual cycle. Carrie is unique to the category of vaginal monster because the film represents the supernatural power of telekinesis that manifests itself through the menstrual passage of womanhood. The film allows us to analyze the female body without the gender elements of the male species.

The Exorcist is unique to the category of vaginal monster because the film exemplifies the power of the female species. The film conveys the achievement of the female character to go beyond the stereotypical female role. The Exorcist represents woman as possessed body and reveals the inability of the male order to control the female body.

The movie Alien is an important aspect to the vaginal monster because it represents the origin of prehistoric life. It conveys the power behind the female species and establishes the fear of the self-reproducing vaginal monster. She does not depend on the concept of maleness in order to horrify, nor does she need to be represented in relation to the male penis in order to terrify.

The film Species represents the vaginal monster in her essence as alien/human. The film is substantial to this category because it represents the dominance, strength, sexuality, and determination of the female monster. The vaginal monster is a category that represents horrifying female character that are not influenced by the male persona nor possess androgynous qualities.

The recognition and popularity of the androgynous female character is largely accredited to the feminist movement. The androgynous female refers to transformations of the female body from feminine to androgynous as opposed to the masculine androgynous which would refer to a male body mutation into an androgynous identity. The awareness of androgyny seems to be widely expressed. Eastern religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, have used androgynous images in myths about the creation of the world. The Greeks had heroines such as: Clytemnestra, Teiresias, and Medea. In the medieval romances androgyny was a civilizing force of the feminine principle. The symbolism of androgyny was not exemplified by a quest for wholeness, but rather mirrored by the congruent merger of male and female traits. The myths create a positive nature of androgyny; however, the horror

genre challenges the exuberant feminization of androgyny.

The horror genre questions the mythic construction and challenges the positive feminization of androgyny. The horror film upsets expectations and lures audiences to the extent that they are going to be horrified. The androgynous female monster is an asset when introduced into the horror genre because it helps create a more powerful female monster who is able to surpass her counterpart the female monster. These androgynous attributes are prevalent in the motion picture From Dusk Till Dawn and Lover's Vow.

This category of female monstrosity seems to convey that women are horrifying when they lose some portion of their facial beauty. Female characters physically undergo a gender mutation that transforms their feminine features into hideous androgynous creatures. The combination of maleness and femaleness achieved by the transformation creates a unique sub-species of monstrosity that enables the androgynous female creature to dominate feeble mortals. The blend of the two genders seems to create a more physically powerful female monster. This new breed of monstrosity allows the character and the production team to take these works of monstrosity to a higher level of creativity. The female character's

sexuality conveys the essence of femininity, but when they are transformed they become a symbol of the androgynous monstrosity. Their transformation conveys the fear that most females encounter when faced with the reality that one day their beauty will be a thing of the past. On the other hand, the male spectator views the transformation as an ordeal that threatens his understanding of the female body. He is unable to relate or deal with the grotesqueness of her physical transformation. This in turn creates an acceptance, by the male spectator, of the violence afflicted on the female character. The female character's gender mutation enables her to reach a higher level of monstrosity that empowers her with strength that normally would be impossible for her to exhibit. Her dual appearance sends out mixed messages that enable her to distort the spectator. The combination of elements seems to arouse male anxieties that are associated with the female body's gender stability. The possibility of a dual sexuality when conveyed by an androgynous female character can lead to uncertainties that can cause some spectators to feel uncertain of their own sexual preference. The spectator views the annihilation of the androgynous monster by the male character with admiration. This type of action

enables both the male character and the male spectator to become allies and create a male bond that aids in the justification of their actions.

On the other hand, the androgynous female symbolizes the castrating monster who personifies man's innermost apprehensions and anxieties of castration. As a symbol of liberation and immortal life the androgynous female monster purges herself of the dominating male figure by decapitating him. The androgynous transformation reinforces the independence of the female character and establishes the separation of the dominant female gender from the stereotypical feeble female character. She purges herself of her stereotypical feeble feminine qualities by adopting a more masculine form of being. She symbolizes women throughout history who have psychologically disguised themselves to comply with society's expectations and demands.

Although gender equality seems to be evolving with a more positive outlook for the female character it has yet to fully break down all boundaries of inequality. We can't escape the fact that these horrifying characters are a product of the male imagination. The horror film genre is a male driven industry that has barely

started to acknowledge female characters. These biased codes have been around since the beginning of film, and the exclusion of the female character in performance can be dated as far back as the ancient Greeks.

The female character has come a long way, but the image of the female monster in the horror genre is still not as equally represented as the male monster. It seems that the problem is that the horror film genre remains attached to conventions that indicate a contrived perception on the part of the horror film consuming culture regarding sexual difference, sexual identity, and especially regarding the male anxiety associated with female identity. Women are a great factor to the horror genre and need to be acknowledged for their contributions.

This research is important in performance study because it establishes a new way of looking at the female monster of the horror genre. The research introduces two new categories the vaginal monster and the androgynous female monster. The evidence presented has enabled us to add to the repertoire of the many face of the female monster. The research conveys that there are different options available when creating a female monster and that the

female monster does not have to be phallicized in order to horrify. The research establishes that women have come a long way from the traditional stereotypical role of victim. They have evolved to prominent and dominant roles that have establish their place in the horror genre.

The female character's new place in the horror genre can only continue to thrive if she is given the opportunity and the challenge to expand her horizon. This thesis leaves us where the horror genre has left the female monster. In order to advance the horrifying capability of the female monster writers and producers must embrace the notion that the female body is capable of horrifying acts. Continued studies are needed to monitor the female monster's representation in the horror genre. The horror genre must also create new monstrous female roles that will enable the female monster to continue to prevail in this male driven industry.

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