

National College of Art & Design

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Can women find autonomy and power in the depictions of monstrous women on screen in horror films

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I declare that this **Critical Cultures Research Project** is all my own work and that all sources have been fully acknowledged.

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Introduction

The horror film, from its conception has always been a genre ripe for exploration into the abject and including reflections of societal problems through thrilling, often visceral and interesting means. From the experimental film of the silent era inspired by gothic novels, to the rise of the monster movie of the 1930's and its evolution into the subsequent slasher films of the 1970's and 1980's. We as a society have been enthralled by the gory, the garish and the horrifying since *Frankenstein's Monster* first graced the silver screen. Monsters have always been a staple of the horror genre and acted as a tool that projected our societal fears back at us. Women have also, from its conception, been a central figure in horror cinema be it as a victim to the circumstances of her surroundings, or as a monster herself having reacted to these same issues violently or in some cases, as both. Despite this being a genre pioneered by and often including women at the centre, they are frequently excluded in the making of these stories. In a world where the heterosexual '*male gaze*' has controlled our societal ideas and in result our mass media, where can we find honest and relatable depictions of women or other marginalised groups that have complex stories.

I'm going to investigate the role of the female monster in horror films and how she has represented the fears of society and its attempts to repress female autonomy and sexuality. However, as cinema and the horror world at large has been male dominated it is difficult to find films that depict women overpowering men and finding those films that also come from a female perspective, a female fantasy of overcoming the patriarchal order are even more rare.

I'd like to also examine a brief history of the women's role in the horror world, her development, her depiction and the evolution on screen of her monstrous nature and her impact on the stories being told. Is she forever destined to play nothing more than a victim? Can Feminist horror exist? And are women able to outgrow the tired tropes and create a relatable character using classical tropes? Using feminist film theory from writers such as *Laura Mulvey*, *Barbara Creed* and *Shelley Stamp*. In this case I'm going to compare and contrast the movies *Carrie* (*dePalma*, 1976) and *Raw* (*Ducournau*, 2016) as examples of the development of the genre and the interesting contrasts and similarities in tone and execution that occur with a male and female director and writer at the helm.

Section one: It's a man's world and the Male Gaze

Since the beginning of Hollywood and the film industry as a whole, as a reflection of the societal patriarchal order, men have been the creative force behind our entertainment in all aspects from screenwriting to directing to producing. As a result men have identified themselves as '*The Subject*' of the stories they tell, they are the main character, the hero, the villain. He is the '*bearer of the look*' for an audience and their point of relation and empathy. Thus relegating female characters most commonly to the position of '*The Other*', the foreign body, the unknown, rarely at the helm or an autonomous driving force to the story. (deBeauvoir, 1953)

"Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only utmost relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves." (Berger, 1972)

One of the many observations made by John Berger in his 1972 essay '*Ways of Seeing*' about the ways in which women have been depicted historically in classical art. Instead of being depicted as a fully formed human being, a woman's body has been depicted, most often in the nude, as something to be desired, something that is ethereal and otherworldly. Classical art and the world of film, by extension, has been dominated by the male eye and the heterosexual male's desires, his gaze and his ideas. Women have been born into this world of looking and they must '*continually watch [themselves], [they] are almost continually accompanied by [their] own image of [themselves].*' (Berger, 1972)

This *male gaze* is a key concept in film and gender studies. Laura Mulvey first coined the term in her 1975 collection of essays in *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, she states how "*mainstream film [in particular] coded the erotic into the language of*

the dominant patriarchal order", essentially turning the male gaze into the only acceptable viewpoint in wider society. (Mulvey, 1975)

"To be born a woman has been to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men".(Berger, 1972)

Mulvey also focuses on the scopophilic tendencies of the camera. She defines scopophilia as the "*pleasure of looking*" and the heterosexual men who are the bearers of the gaze thrive visually with women's value being based on their visual beauty, their "*to-be-looked-at-ness*"

'pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly' (Mulvey, 1975).

Women in film and especially the horror genre are vessels for passivity. We need to watch their reactions, watch the emotions wrought onto the female body. Women's bodies on screen/art are created by men *for* men, so when she can be used quite aptly in a monstrous sense. Horror as a very visceral medium uses the body as a primal visual and vehicle for terror and abjection. And commonly the female body is already abject and a terrifying form for the male perspective through their *phallocentric ideology* implying the woman as *bearer of the castrated wound*.

(Mulvey, 1975)

The bodies of women figured on screen have functioned traditionally as primary embodiments of pleasure, fear and pain.(Williams 1991)

Yet despite this exclusion, horror and the macabre have long been subjects that have been fascinated by and explored by women. From Mary Shelley's creation of the classic monster in *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus (1818)* to the works of Ann Radcliffe one of the pioneers of gothic horror and big inspiration to poet

Edgar Allen Poe, to the nuances of more modern thrilling novels written by authors like Agatha Christie, Shirley Jackson and Daphne duMaurier. duMaurier, in particular being an interesting example of her gender playing a role in how her novels are perceived and advertised. She is oftentimes listed as purely a romance novelist despite her many of her works delving much deeper into the darker realities and the relationship aspect of her books being less than aspirational. Her novels were a favourite of the 'master of suspense', director Alfred Hitchcock, to adapt to the silver screen with the films of *Rebecca* (1940), *Jamaica Inn* (1939) and *The Birds* (1963) all coming from her mind. She has used the genre of suspense to express and exaggerate the horrors of everyday and casual life. With the film *Rebecca* in particular removing a lot of the female driven narrative and feelings central to the novel, in particular the attractiveness the second Mrs deWinter feels to the eponymous Rebecca and her perceived independence.

'What the film cannot show is her pleasure in imagining Rebecca, the active component of longing which could take the girl beyond her dullness, her orthodox femininity [instead] the masculine point of view runs away with the film, finally leaving the heroine literally behind as the men all go up to London to discover the truth about Rebecca. (Light, 1996)

As Shohini Chaudhuri states in her exploration of *Feminist Film Theorists* (2006), not crediting female storytellers and filmmakers '*starves recognition from some of the ways in which female subjectivity is inscribed in cinema*'. By removing female writers we lose the viewpoint of the woman, her ideas, her feelings, she is reduced simply to what is on the surface.

As women we are taught from birth to be careful, fearful and acutely aware of the world around us, this constant state of wariness leads to, in my opinion, an interest in

the macabre and a willingness to explore the darker aspects of life. We are born and are gradually instilled this mindset of victimhood, exploring cinema in particular that represents women breaking this mould can be fascinating and visceral, an almost fantastical situation. Media that is harrowing and speaks to our subconscious fears can appeal to us. I believe that women want to explore their anxieties and the depths of their subconscious in spaces that are controlled. Yet since women have often been marginalised in film, a reflection of a larger social issue that manifests clearly in horror films where they are treated violently and exploitatively, we have had to look at ourselves through this gaze, this has been our only option.

Section two: Women as *The Other*, the bearers of abject horror

As we have established the patriarchal role in the control of what we see on our screens we can reflect on what this means for women who are abject and fall outside the norm of the expectations of the society that they live in. Historically it has sought to repress female sexuality and the consequent '*monstrous women*' and other female tropes have always had to face the consequences and be eradicated to maintain status quo - a necessary evil for the better of society.

In her writings on gender in *The Second Sex*, French philosopher Simone deBeauvoir explores the position of women within society and how she has been viewed.

"Humanity is male and man defines woman not as herself but as relative to him: she is not regarded as an autonomous being"
"For him she is sex - absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other"

(deBeauvoir, 1953)

In patriarchal society women are often treated as subordinate figures placed in opposition to the dominant social group of men. We can see this reflected in our films, especially ones of the horror genre, which results in a reductive image of women on screen, especially women of the monstrous variety. There a '*spectacle [made] of a sexually saturated female body*' (Williams)

In contrast to the classic male monsters that have graced our screens, female monsters often have no control over their metamorphosis. In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

(1931) and *The Fly* (1986) we follow the stories of ambitious scientists that create their own downfalls, they create their machines, their potions that eventually trigger their monstrous change. Man's excessive hubris is their tragedy.

Female monsters rarely have this autonomy in their stories, their monstrosity is often triggered by something innate within themselves suddenly beginning or as a result of an outside corruption or attack. Women being reduced to the position of *Other* lends itself to their natural bodies being depicted as unnatural or horrific through the male lens.

'The notion of women-monster or monstrous feminine in the horror film is often tied to the female reproductive function of the female body, which is constructed as abject in patriarchal cultures' (Chaudhuri, 2006)

Male monsters are oftentimes completely asexual grotesque beings whereas female monsters are inherently linked to their sexuality, be it the lack of, burgeoning of or fear of. Female victims are demonised and killed for their sexuality while female demons are inherently sexualised and also punished for it by the end.

Taking Laura Mulvey's words literally from her text *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* as she refers to women as '*the bearer of the gaping wound*', we can see how this has been a direct way to display the female body as liminal space for abjection in horror, with many films using burgeoning sexuality and puberty, most blatantly menstruation, as a trigger for monstrosity. Films such as *The Exorcist* (1973), *Carrie* (1976) and *Ginger Snaps* (2000) use this analogy directly. The latter two use the event of the protagonist's first period as the turning point in her story. The titular Carrie getting pelted with tampons and pads by her peers (which I will expand on later in this text) and Ginger attracting a werewolf with the scent of her blood

which results in her gradual transformation into a werewolf herself following this attack.

In *Ginger Snaps*, the two leads, sisters Ginger and Brigitte Fitzgerald even explicitly refer to menstruation as *the curse* and the film makes a direct correlation between monstrous lycanthrope and the changing female body during puberty with the girls visiting the school nurse to enquire about her excessive blood loss and '*hair that wasn't there before, and pain?*' and are subsequently told that this simply '*comes with the territory*'. Women are expected to experience this pain '*every twenty-eight days or so, for the next thirty years.*'

As a result of her monstrosity resulting in uncontrollable sexual desire and bloodlust, Ginger needs to be defeated by her *virginal* and still pure, period-less younger sister Brigitte.

The sadomasochistic teen horror films kill off the sexually active "bad" girls, allowing only the non-sexual "good" girls to survive. But these good girls become, as if in compensation, remarkably active, to the point of appropriating phallic power to themselves. It is as if this phallic power is granted so long as it is rigorously separated from phallic or any other sort of pleasure. For these pleasures spell sure death in this genre. (Williams, 1991)

The Exorcist was an instant horror classic upon its release in 1973, it terrified audiences and was the first of a new genre within horror films that are still popular today. Directed by William Friedkin and based on the novel of the same name written by William Peter Blatty follows the story of Regan MacNeil, an eleven year old daughter of a famous actress who undergoes a harrowing demonic possession. Blatty based this novel on a real life case which added mystique and legitimacy to the horror of the novel and subsequently the movie but makes an interesting change. In the original case he based his story on the gender of the child is male, I believe

this was to really exemplify and exaggerate the corruption of the young innocent purity of Regan, a young girl just on the cusp of puberty, not yet corrupted by womanhood. This theme of young women being the host for the devil or evil spirits has continued in this subgenre throughout the years, exemplifying the contrast between the presumed innocence of a little girl and the pure evil that possesses her to commit abhorrent acts.

Possession becomes the excuse for legitimising a display of aberrant feminine behaviour which is depicted as depraved, monstrous, abject – and perversely appealing. (Creed, 1993)

Here, the change from the sweet child to raging monster is a gradual and horrifying metamorphosis which can in some ways be likened to the visceral change a woman goes through with puberty, albeit in a very extreme and visceral manner. Her deteriorating skin can be an analogy for the onset of acne. The demon speaking from Regan uses cruel and sexually graphic language, obscene gestures and implications in a deep monstrous voice that cannot belong to a little girl. A scene where her mother Chris enters her room and finds her daughter stabbing herself in her crotch with a crucifix being the most disturbing, it is not clear if the blood is from her getting her first period or whether it has solely been inflicted by the crucifix. A blatant display of violence against the female form. Regan's possession is also debated by the film to be caused by her mother, another recurring theme in monstrous female horror that makes itself apparent.

The feminine, particularly the maternal, is constructed as unclean specifically in relation to menstruation and childbirth. (Creed, 1993)

Chris is a single mother, actress and most importantly, by the film's standards, an atheist. Despite being a caring mother, she is seen as a modern woman, a single woman earning her way in a more frivolous business. This may reflect the fears of

1970's society commenting on the rise in Second wave feminism, wanting the mother to stay in the more traditional role and the effects her pursuit of success is for her child left at home.

In the end they receive help from two priests who ultimately sacrifice themselves to reinforce the patriarchal order by purging the female body of the demons that plague her.

The role of women as active monster, moreover, calls into question the theory of the male gaze and generates forms of identification for the female spectator' (Chaudhuri, 2006)

In his exploration of monsters Jeffrey Jerome Cohen offers that the fear of the monster is actually desire, He writes that:

The monster is continually linked to forbidden practices, in order to normalise and to enforce. The monster also attracts. The same creatures who terrify and interdict can evoke potent escapist fantasies; the linking of monstrosity with the forbidden makes the monster all the more appealing as a temporary egress from constraint. This simultaneous repulsion and attraction at the core of the monster's composition accounts greatly for its continued cultural popularity, for the fact that the monster seldom can be contained in a simple, binary dialectic (thesis, antithesis... no synthesis). We distrust and loathe the monster at the same time we envy its freedom, and perhaps its sublime despair. (Cohen, 1996)

I believe there is a certain escapist fantasy in the escape from sexual and societal repression in the depiction of the 'monstrous feminine', She is almost allowed to be abhorrent, to be feared and is taken seriously as a threat. There is power in voyeurism - if heterosexual men can experience euphoria with their dominance over the portrayals of women on screen, maybe these abject women can transfer their power to its female viewership.

Section three: Case study of *Carrie* and *Raw*, two sides of the same coin



Fig 1. (Red Bank Films, 1976) Carrie is drenched in pig's blood at prom

Carrie presents a masculine fantasy in which the feminine is constituted as horrific. In charting Carrie's path to mature womanhood, the film presents female sexuality as monstrous and constructs femininity as a subject position impossible to occupy (Lindsey, 1991)

If *Carrie* is a masculine fantasy of the female monster, *Raw* is inherently a feminine fantasy of the female monster told from a female perspective.

Carrie is a 1976 film directed by Brian de Palma based on the 1974 novel of the same name written by Stephen King. The story follows the titular character of Carrie, a sixteen year old social outcast bullied by her peers and kept under the thumb of her religious overbearing mother as she discovers a telekinetic ability and attempts to come into her own.

The French-Belgian film *Raw* (2016), made about forty years after *Carrie*, can be regarded as an interesting companion piece to the 1970's classic. Directed and written by Julia Ducournau it also follows the life and struggles of a sixteen year old girl, Justine, who discovers an underlying monstrosity that awakens a hunger for human flesh inside her. Many parallels can be drawn between the characters of Carrie and Justine, they are both shy, naive and have been kept under a strict set of guidelines imposed by their mother from birth. This is further elaborated on with the character of Alexia, Justine's older sister who represents, I believe, the other side of Carrie, her overpowered rage and monstrous side allowed to roam the film wild and free for at least a little while.

As a woman Ducournau offers a unique perspective on the monstrous feminine. We not only examine the physical changes that Justine faces but we explore the psychological aspects too, we sit with her for long periods of time as she attempts to find comfort under the covers by hiding from the world and as she struggles to contain her desire for human flesh.

Ducournau infuses her story with some female horror separate entirely from the cannibalism aspect, she looks at painful beauty regimes, in a torturous and a much harder to watch scene she shows the visceral pain of waxing as Alexia tries to bring

her innocent sister into womanhood by ironically taking away that which would separate her from a child, body hair.

Raw follows many of the same issue as Varrie but where there is just one Carrie in Raw the two sisters Justine and Alexia both experience the same monstrosity, the two sister's characters can be seen as a direct representation of the two sides of Carrie, her shy naïve personality in Justine and her guttural raw no-holds-barred self in older sister Alexia.

Ducournau pinpoints and expertly depicts the frights that exist in the everyday world — especially when you're a young woman trying to figure out your place within it. That's what's so startling about the film: It's not necessarily the monstrous moments that'll shake you up, but rather the mundane ones.
(Lemire, 2017)

Justine and Alexia highlight the two sides of Carrie, her shy side and her empowered dangerous telekinetic side, we can see the two sides of her story: what could have happened and each of the consequences. Both Carrie and Justine begin their story in their prospective film as fishes out of water, Justine beginning to attend veterinary school having to undergo the harsh and demeaning hazing of her upperclassmen and Carrie being the social outcast of her high school and bullied by her peers in the gym after she is confused and horrified about getting her period in the shower. Her pious mother has kept her in the dark about the change all women's bodies go through during puberty believing women to have inherited sin from Eve and are cursed to bleed. We see her chastise Carrie for her first period accusing her of impure thoughts and feelings instead of offering her comfort through a harrowing ordeal. [See figure 2 below].

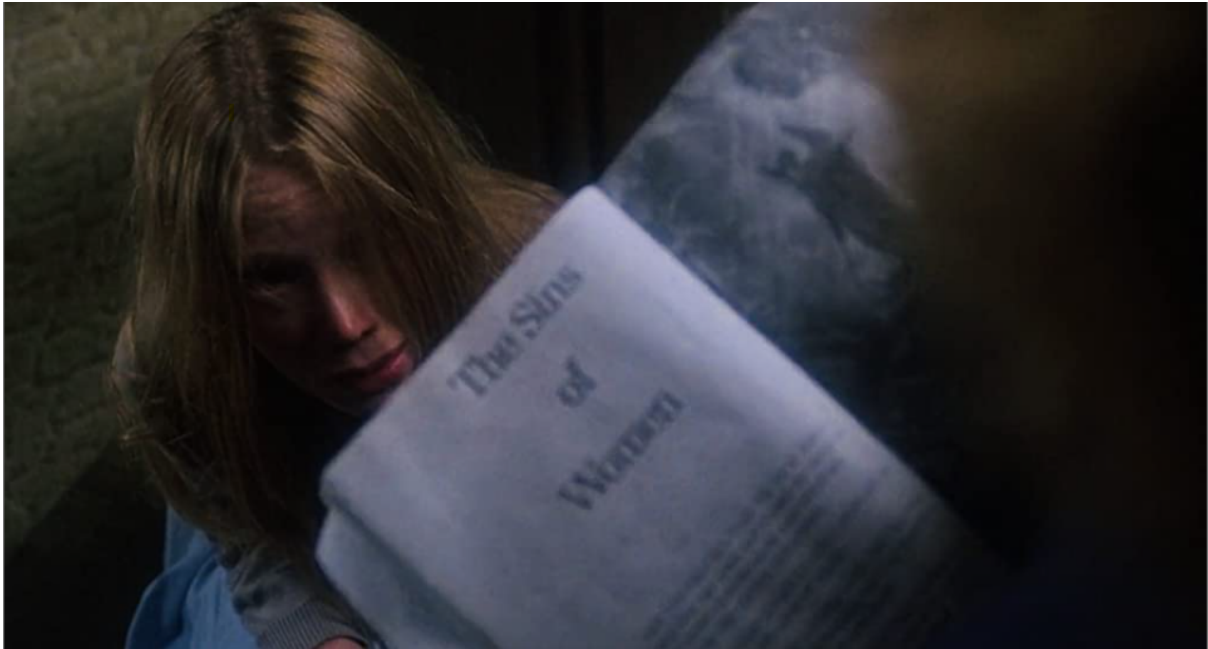


Fig 2. (Red Bank Films, 1976) Carrie cowers under the Sins of Women.

The figure of our protagonist's mothers play a large role in both films, especially in the repression of our leads' urges and the preservation of their naïveté. Justine's mother has imposed a strict vegetarian lifestyle on her daughters since birth as a way to curb their desires but as a result of neither one of them knowing the detriments of consuming meat when they both first taste raw meat as part of a hazing ritual they start spiralling and undergoing changes. We never see Alexia go through these changes but have to imagine how similar it was for her and potentially even more isolating than Justine's case as she never had anyone to share this aspect of her life with. Perhaps this being why she encourages and then forces Justine to eat the raw meat, to *fit in*, ironically doing the exact opposite. [see figure 3]. Alexia is the main driving force behind Justine's change over the course of the film, trying to get her to join her in her indulgences. Alexia finally doesn't have to be alone anymore but having had no one also led to her completely reverting back to base desires and when she shows Justine how she hunts people, Justine is

thoroughly horrified and rebuffs her sister's offer of companionship. Perhaps the back and forth of their relationship stems from a difficult relationship to their overbearing yet loving mother leaving them to try and scavenge some semblance of relationship. The reveal that the origin of the sisters' monstrosity in *Raw* repeats the idea from *Creed* of the mother's '*unclean*' depiction in monstrous horror, infecting her children with her own plight. It gives us an insight into their mother's psyche. She obviously chose the strict vegetarianism for them to curb their appetites but to think they would keep their innocence and never be tempted shows her intensely naive outlook the future of her daughters.



Fig 3. (Petit Film,2016). Justine, covered in blood, is encouraged by her sister Alexia to eat raw meat.

The male and female gaze in these two films plays a huge role in how we are *supposed* to perceive our protagonists. De Palma opened his film with a scene steeped fully in the male gaze. Long languid shots of half naked or fully naked girls

as we follow a *scopophilic* camera observing the fantasy around them, before finding Carrie alone in the shower, for her this is a moment of peace, “*a refuge from external anxieties, a comforting site of self-pleasuring*”. (Briefel, 2005).

We watch as she rubs her body in small snapshots, dividing her up into a glimpse of thigh, arm and breast. De Palma doesn't introduce Carrie as a person we are to relate to, she is someone we are to observe. We become the voyeurs of a private moment not meant to be seen.

“*The look, pleasurable in form, may be threatening in content*” (Mulvey, 1975)

As Mulvey writes, our voyeuristic look *does* end in threats as Carrie freaks out bleeding from where she was just pleasuring herself, instead of receiving sympathy and assistance from those around her, the once *nymph-like* creatures of her classmates DePalma filmed in slow motion suddenly turn into *demons* (Lindsey, 1991). We briefly see the camera through Carrie's eyes as she is pelted with tampons and pads and shouted at repeatedly to *Plug it up!* Carrie may drive the plot of the film but the camera remains to be male and subsequently encouraged to eroticise.

In contrast as previously stated Ducournau films Justine not with an objectifying or judging gaze but more with curiosity. We are thoroughly placed by Justine's side for the whole film, this is her experience that we get to experience through her eyes. Specifically in a scene where she starts to desire the flesh of her roommate Adrien, we watch as Justine is the one who bears the look and fantasises about his flesh, this mixes with her sexual attraction for him, further confusing the girl.

This sexuality is further explored in her foray into sexuality dressing up in her sister's dress and admiring herself in front of the mirror, applying lipstick while listening to music trying to embrace her new and awkward body. This almost directly relates to a

scene in *Carrie* where she starts getting ready for prom, but instead of being allowed to revel in her embracement of womanhood, she is interrupted by her mother, spouting more religious jargon calling her a witch and proclaiming that she is destined to fail with everyone laughing at her. An unfortunate prediction that comes true by the end of the film.

Ducournau's horror in *Raw* is much more subtle and stems more from the everyday horrors that women face, like the aforementioned waxing scene. This scene is by far the most visceral compared to the concept of a cannibal horror story. A bonding session gone wrong Alexia attempts to give Justine a bikini wax as she is a woman now, which ends up with her accidentally losing a finger. Here Justine's body is filmed in such a matter of fact way, she is not there to be sexualised, Ducournau takes her body and sways more towards the abject, showing in close detail the wax being put on and how savagely it's ripped off.

Similarly earlier in the film after eating the raw meat, Justine breaks out in a painful red rash that covers her body, what follows are intense scenes of her scratching herself red raw. Many of these scenes take place in her bed and under the covers, there is a level of intimacy that we engage in that we never get to with *Carrie*. [see fig 4]

Throughout the film, *Raw*, shows us a woman who feels sexual desire and is empowered and emboldened by it but isn't sexualised, even when she is depicted in pyjamas or showering there is a completely different relationship to the camera. Even though the camera is almost inherently voyeuristic it doesn't have to lead to objectification and having a *female monster* that can indulge in her desires without being punished later, is refreshing.



Fig 4. (Petit Film, 2016). Justine struggles with her newfound hunger and changing body.

At the end of *Carrie's* film we relate to character, we have been through all she has endured and we feel for her. We, as the audience, are on her side. There is catharsis in her burning down of the school hall and the killing of her mother and her classmates. When she embraces her emotions, she comes into her own and finds power. Her telekinesis represents her womanhood and strength. Power that she ultimately rejects washing off the blood and makeup when she returns home and reverting back to a childlike state looking for her mother's comfort

Carrie's story is one steeped in hatred, monsters surround her, she needs to become monstrous herself to survive. Treat someone like a monster and that is what they will become. Yet, ultimately her embrace of her power and strength isn't celebrated by the film but punished, she is not allowed to yield this power or grow and learn to use it for good. Her potential for change is snuffed out as easily as she gained it.

Carrie quite literally ends as a woman's nightmare, with the character of Sue the only survivor grappling with her trauma from the events of the movie. *Raw* ends with Justine fully being aware of the realities that face her, embracing her monstrosity entirely and meeting the same fate as Alexia or like her mother feeding on your

partner slowly taking their life one lump of flesh at a time. But her father simply tells her that it'll be ok and she'll figure it out one day. Her otherness doesn't need to be killed but still kept in check, under control as her other option is to be incarcerated and lose her freedom like Alexia, yet she must figure out how to live her life with a certain hunger she can never fully quench.

The monster is transgressive, too sexual, perversely erotic, a lawbreaker; and so the monster and all that it embodies must be exiled or destroyed. (Cohen, 1996)

Conclusion

With the discussion around the role of women in film changing and becoming more discursive there has been a rise in women having more control behind the camera leading to more complex and relatable stories about women.

Ever evolving feminism and the rise in feminist discussion surrounding the MeToo movement

In today's movies women are allowed to make mistakes, show their faults and embrace their sexuality in modern horror and not be punished for embracing outside the norm. They have evolved from being simple plot points or victims with no say in their story. Embracing the abject nature of ourselves can be liberating and a step towards a more open, aware and accepting society.

The growing trend in normalising the female form and embracing its innate horror along with its beauty is inherent to success. It is a body, to be embraced in all its gory glory. The female monster has been a rare example of putting the female in an active powerful male role in film, she can drive the plot of her narrative even if she is punished by the film at the end she has been taken seriously by the plot, she has been feared and listened to.

There is power in voyeurism - if heterosexual men experience euphoria with dominating women on screen maybe abject women can transfer their power to it's female viewership

Can the female monster ever survive her abjections and embody a new feminine ideal, break free of her mould and be allowed to embrace her horror and macabre desires? Can she reflect us? Does her downfall in nearly every film ask us to do

what she can't and embrace our desires, our femininity, our urges and not dampen ourselves for the patriarchal order?

In my opinion her continuous defeats are urging us, outside of the fictional world, to change the status quo so that in the future she can survive as herself without reprimand or attack.

As long as our society is as it is and places these horrors upon women, in societal rules and expectations, in policing the female form she needs to exist to show us that we need to shape up. As long as we don't change she will have to forever continue to hunt under the cover of night.

Carol J Clover writes of this in her book *'Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film'* (1992)

"One of [the women's movement] main donations to horror, I think, is the image of an angry woman – a woman so angry that she can be imagined as a credible perpetrator (I stress 'credible') of the kind of violence on which, in the low-mythic universe, the status of full protagonist rests."

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