Confronting the Entity:
The Implied Presence in Horror Cinema

by

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The following served on the Examining Committee for this thesis. The decision of the Examining Committee is by majority vote.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This dissertation examines three horror films from the late 1970's: John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978), Philip Kaufman's remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978) and Peter Medak's *The Changeling* (1980). The examination illustrates the importance of cinematographically-rendered negative space surrounding the films' villainous entities; the term this dissertation will propose in this context is the *implied presence.* The implied presence is key to not only establishing a distinction between terror (dread) and horror (revulsion), but also subverting the notion of a linear and finite path from terror to horror. The implied presence (that which is not seen on screen but implied) creates the opportunity for the viewer to create and engage with a more personal and individual confrontation with the villainous entity before it occurs visually on screen; this challenges and transcends the idea of subjectivity and the role of the voyeur for the viewer. This argument makes a critical connection between technical filmmaking practices and viewer participatory autonomy in the filmic experience that will show a higher level of intellectual and emotional/psychological control over how one views a horror or suspense film.

Michel Chion proposes the term "Audiovisual Contract" (*Audio Vision*, 1994) to explain how visual and sound in a film are separate cinematic elements temporarily working together, yet are accepted together by the viewer to be creating a sensory backdrop for a diegesis. In a similar way, the implied presence in both sound and image challenge the viewer to form a contract with the impending horror confrontation before it happens on-screen. This establishes the distinction between the notion of horror and the display of horror, which places the notion of horror more firmly in the psychological and emotional control of the viewer. In this way, the viewer becomes able to create an entity that is unique to each individual and not solely dictated by the screen.

This creates the platform for a pedagogical angle to this dissertation: learning how to watch a horror film, to understand why viewers fear them, can extend the medium's teaching value, and open the door for a larger and more comprehensive approach to cross-disciplined film study. This dissertation proposes a methodology for this approach in its study of technical filmic elements and narrative strategies. The three films examined were chosen because they best exemplify the catalysts for modern cinematic practice and expression. They encourage viewers to consider carefully the diegetic world but also the outside world that created them.

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I am proud to be part of the University of Waterloo's English Department. I value very highly the opportunities to be a student, TA, and Instructor I have been given. I aim to add Graduate and Scholar to that list.

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Dedication

For my parents.

Their appreciation of books, television shows and movies opened the door to infinite worlds for me to explore.

Their love and encouragement makes me know I can do anything.

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“Be careful. You’re a man who makes people afraid and that’s dangerous.”

“Well it’s what people know about themselves inside that makes them afraid.”

- *High Plains Drifter* (1973)

Introduction

Over the years I have seen a lot of horror films in theatres. In all of those experiences I have turned my head involuntarily away from the screen only two times. The first was in 2004 while watching the American version of Takashi Shimizu's *The Grudge*. Shimizu remade for an American audience his own Japanese film *Ju-On: The Grudge* (2002), a frightening story about a haunting in a house in Tokyo, Japan. We soon learn that Yoko, a care-worker for an American family living in the house, has been attacked by the ghost in the house and has vanished. Later in the film she reappears, but through the police investigation we learn that she is missing her jaw (it was found in the attic along with the dead bodies of the American couple). There is a very creepy scene involving the care agency's supervisor leaving work for the night and catching a glimpse of Yoko descending the stairwell. Of course they are alone and most of the lights in the building are off. He follows her, calling her name. The suspense is effective. She is shuffling down, one stair at a time, moving like a sleepwalker, her back to the camera. The supervisor becomes alarmed and then very uncomfortable as he sees blood on her torn clothes. The stairwell itself is high-key lit; a dominant fill-light and shadowy grey-blue walls and ceiling give the scene a grainy, almost dreamlike quality. Nervously, he asks Yoko what happened to her. She stops. He waits. We see a two-shot with the supervisor at the top of the stairs and a blurred close-up of Yoko's forehead and one blank staring eye. The focus racks and he blurs, making us see her more clearly. Slowly… slowly she turns, a shuffling rotation to face him. Before we see her face, the shot cuts to a close-up of the supervisor, his face twisting into a rictus of horror; his large glasses enhance the furrowed brows and wide grimace. And he hasn't even screamed yet.

That was enough for me, knowing she had no jaw; my heart was pumping and I was satisfied with the scene, conjuring up my own gruesome images of what that would look like and wondering if she would attack him or not, all the while thinking I might avoid stairwells from now on. But she did turn all the way around and after the supervisor's horrified scream there was a medium-close-up of her face, dead-eyed, hair plastered to her head and her tongue lolling down over her neck like a limp snake, blood everywhere.

I turned my head, thinking, *I don't want to see that.*

The second time was 2007, while watching Rob Zombie's remake of John Carpenter's classic 1978 *Halloween.* I was very excited to see this film, being a fan of the *Halloween* franchise, especially the original film. Zombie's version includes some focus on the main character Michael Myers being bullied as a ten-year-old, which functions as a catalyst for his being eventually committed to a sanitarium. There is a scene where Myers confronts a bully on a forest path after school with a large jagged tree branch. Myers attacks the bully, hitting him repeatedly with the branch, which seems a bit large for a ten-year-old to wield so easily and violently. Narratively we now have the bullied pre-villain assuming command of the well-being of his peers, which is expected. The shot cuts are rapid to enhance the violent nature of the event. The blood on the bully's face is nearly black, suggesting brain injury. The shots are high-exposure, back-lit from the sun and low-key lit from stage sources, very stark and detailed. The bully in an extreme close-up shot, barely conscious, pleads for Myers to stop. Myers pauses; then deals the final blow, the camera showing him in a low-angle shot, framing him against the sunlight through the trees. Again that was enough for me. I was ready to imagine the head splitting open, the sudden

silence, perhaps birds taking flight, and thinking I might avoid forest paths from now on. But it wasn't the final blow. There were four more.

I turned my head and listened to them, listened to the bully's final groans before the silence that came too late, thinking *I don't want to see that.*

Of course, since then I've seen those two parts I avoided, and they are as gruesome as I anticipated them to be. But as I was watching the films again, I came to realize a few things. It wasn't necessarily that I didn't *want* to see what came next, knowing it would be shown in all its stark clarity and nakedness; it was more so that I didn't *need* to see it. I turned my head knowing it would be shown, whether I wanted to see it or not. That was the point. Certain films do that. And it's not difficult to know a little way into a film, that it's coming, no matter what. Often films that employ CGI (computer generated imagery) will ramp up very quickly towards revealing the monster altogether; advanced digital technology can not only make vivid depictions of frightening things, it can animate them in ways pre-CGI films didn't. Also, films that employ a rapid-cut and gratuitously violent and bloody approach aim for the shock and gross-out factor in film. The two films I describe here are examples. I also realized I turned my head both times involuntarily. I wanted to know why. The moment I turned my eyes away from the screen, I disengaged myself from the film's narrative, causing me to attempt to bring myself back in on my own. That return was difficult; the rest of the film seemed to float by with far less substance and I was much less interested in it. More so with Zombie's than Shimizu's film (Yoko isn't a villain, she's a victim), but still, once the monster is shown in its entirety, it is very difficult to reorient ourselves back to anticipation. Importantly for me, I sensed that a line was crossed in these two scenes and looking back on my experiences with them, I decided I want to know where that line

is and why it is there. This is the catalyst for my research; I am deeply fascinated with the line that separates, and often blurs, our responses to what we see on screen that embodies *want* and *need* - in essence, what we engage sensorily and what we engage psychologically.

Here is what will be a key distinction as my argument moves forward. Working from previous discussions of Gothic versus Horror cinema, my theoretical path follows more closely terror versus horror. Noting Edmund Burke's and Anne Radcliffe's eighteenth century observations on this distinction (Burke's discussion of Sublime and Radcliff's of Doubt), Katharina Rein in the book *Gothic Cinema: An Introduction*, revisits several previous notions (more recently Xavier Aldana Reyes) and sums up that "A common distinction between the Gothic and horror film is based on the implicit or explicit representation of the object of fear" (14). A key point that Rein appears to be shaping is that the Gothic film leans towards anticipation and suspense, while the horror film relies more on violence and visual shock value. [1] My own thread of distinction on this matter is that "terror" is the anticipation and expectation of encountering or confronting an event or thing, having accompanying feelings of dread or apprehension, and "horror" is the shock that is the result of the confrontation of the event or thing, having accompanying responses of revulsion. The terms dread and revulsion are integral to Sigmund Freud's discussion of the uncanny, which I will discuss in more detail shortly. In the horror genre, generally, terror precedes horror. The presence of the villainous entity, the confrontation with it, signals the turn from terror to horror. We rely primarily on what we see on screen to validate and identify with its ap-

[1] It is interesting that Gothic is capitalized and horror is not; I interpret in this context that horror is also a genre of filmic story as Gothic is. We are looking at two "horrors" here: Horror as it pertains to the film genre and horror as it pertains to the distinction between terror and horror. A key part of my own argument is that the Horror film employs both terror and horror, attentively playing both off of each another.

pearance; this could be connected directly to Rein's point about the object of fear. I wish to take this a step further: what if we had access to the villainous entity before we actually see it on the screen? What if we were able to confront it before the protagonists in the diegesis do? Is the object of fear limited to a visual or aural rendering of what is presented in the diegesis? Are we as viewers limited to sensory identification to experience dread or revulsion? These are questions I aim to answer.

Implied Presence

Some definitions will be useful to help establish what I will refer to from now on as implied presence. Social Psychology, specifically the avenue that examines how human beings influence one another, finds that "thoughts, feelings, and behaviours include all of the psychological variables that are measurable in a human being. The statement that others may be imagined or implied suggests that we are prone to social influence even when no other people are present, such as watching television" (Jeshmaridian, abstract). OED Online has *implied* as "Contained or stated by implication, involved in what is expressed [or] To express indirectly; to insinuate." And so an indirect expression in this case would include a non-expressive element, something that is formed through suggestion. OED defines *presence* as "A person's self or embodied personality [or] A person or thing that exists or is present in a place but is not seen [or, and most significant] The place or space in front of or around a person; the immediate vicinity of a person." The place or space surrounding a person, their vicinity, is most significant for my research because it signals attention to what I will later refer to as filmic negative space - the space around an object or person forms the person without it needing to be there visually. I will extend this idea towards

how film constructs and communicates this presence. And so, in the context of the visual and aural on-screen/off-screen filmic frame, I will from here on define this as implied presence.

Making the Invisible Visible

This dissertation will explore ways that the implied presence in horror films makes the invisible visible. The partially seen monster can create for the protagonists of a film examples of what the monster represents as much as what the monster is. This differentiates the notion of horror from the display of horror; the display of horror is what we see on the screen, while the notion of horror, highlighted by the tandem of terror and horror, is what we don't see on the screen, but are suggested to see by things cinematographically presented around the monster. This is like negative space in visual art. We are afforded a glimpse of the object in question by seeing the space around that object; the object itself isn't necessarily rendered, but the surrounding space reveals it through its absence. The implied presence in film works in this way. When we "see" the monster without actually seeing it, it keeps us in the film's narrative, but this dissertation also argues that it casts us in the role of protagonist, of a sort, as well, allowing us to see what is forbidden for the protagonists to see. This is how we come to see past what the monster appears to be (ghost, shark, killer, zombie) and become able to see what it embodies beyond the screen's frame. [2] Forbidden knowledge in this context gives us a level of awareness that transcends the cinematic space. In this way then, the implied presence also makes the visible even more compellingly visible. What I aim to do is to show how the implied presence is utilized in film to chal-

[2] Embodiment in this context is intended to suggest that there are two parts to the monster: what we see/hear when it appears on screen, and how we relate to it on a more individual level, especially when we see/hear glimpses of it, or only the suggestion of it. How we relate to it can be as scary, even scarier than what we are being shown on screen, especially when we come to know something about the monster that the on-screen protagonists do not. We come to know the monster then, before the on-screen protagonists do.

lenge the conventional role of the voyeur, the idea that we must identify with a subject or object on the screen to form an emotional connection. The implied presence allows for us to remain in the narrative even if a character dies. If we identify with the entity as much as a protagonist, we become placed in a protagonist role ourselves that transcends the limitations of subjectivity as a viewer. In a way, this dissertation has a pedagogic thread through it; we will see a new way to experience horror cinema. The relationship we form with the implied presence, and the less of the entity we actually see on screen the more cultivated the relationship; it positions us to manifest, or conjure if you will, our own version of what we anticipate the entity to be; also what it informs us about ourselves, projecting from our own terror. We will become able to understand what we fear beyond what we expect to see with our eyes on-screen. I wish to be clear here; I do acknowledge past psychoanalytic interpretations of the gaze, specifically Laura Mulvey's feminist take on the gaze and Kaja Silverman's suture, but I am not intending to perform a psychoanalytic analysis, or to critique current perceptions of the gaze. My goal is to show how we as an audience are able to, through the implied presence and its implications, transcend what I see as the limitations of the voyeur positioning. I am making a critical connection between technical filmmaking practices and our individual participatory role in the filmic experience that will show a higher level of intellectual and emotional control over how we view horror films.

The study of horror cinema over the years has been met with critical reluctance. The slasher film was very popular in the 1980s but faded away as a newer, more realism-oriented approach took over (one only needs to watch 2004's *Saw* to get the picture). Yet since then a large part of the critical focus on horror films has moved towards canonicity. This dissertation's focus on pre-CGI films, specifically 1970's films, reflects the importance of Steffen Hantke's observa-

tion that "the generational turnover [of attention to directors] is not happening," and "recent films by directors associated iconically with neo-horror recreate for contemporary audiences the 1970's as a golden age of horror film" (197). Hantke's article discusses critics' tendency to point towards a horror film canon, suggesting an unpredictable future of the genre, but I interpret that the attention to canonical works also remains, as Hantke says, "a vital form of expression relevant to the culture at large" (195). [3] I believe culture in this way can tell us why certain films are discussed more than others beyond cinematographic relevance. Such a perspective helps to position the argument that the implied presence, specifically in the 1970's horror films this dissertation will discuss, positions viewer awareness that extends beyond the immediate cinematic screen. I wish to separate and focus on the serial killer (a.k.a. the slasher), the alien and the ghost, three arguably instantly recognizable and relatable forms of entity-embodied fear, with some qualifying commentary on the shark, to coax us into rethinking how we go about what sub-genres do and how they speak to us. It is with each of these entities' patterns and behaviours that we get a good look into the lair from which it lurks, and what that lair represents as much as the entity itself. Kendall Phillips comments in his book *Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture* on differentiating truth from fiction:

> [Horror] films connected to existing cultural drifts and directions in such peculiarly poignant ways as to be recognized as somehow 'true.' This is not, of course, to suggest audiences emerged from these films fearing the undead or ghosts or aliens, but that they

[3] The term canon, or canonicity, has been challenged over the past thirty years. The idea of a list of the most influential, or the "best" horror films, has become a multi-pronged debate. Hantke's point about canonicity having a cultural resonance over time is significant to where the bulk of horror film study tends to point. Some films are talked about again and again, while others very little or not at all. My own point to add here is that it is the films themselves that have our attention, not their ranking on a list.

> emerged knowing that somehow what they saw upon the screen was an accurate, if allegorical, depiction of their own collective fears and concerns (5). [4]

I agree, but I also wish to challenge this by suggesting that fearing the undead or ghosts or aliens is potentially a more complex ingredient here. Perhaps most of us know that these entities exist in fiction - but in ways, we create the fiction; you bet people fear these things, and many scramble to produce rational explanations for what could possibly be mistaken for one of them, just to keep them out of reach. On a more meta level, we may step back far enough to grasp that what we fear is… well… fear. Meaning, the idea of fear is as much a part of the experience of fear as the emotional response is. This references the *notion of horror* in addition to the *display of horror* point that I mentioned earlier.

An interesting perspective from this angle comes from cognitive science researcher Giovanni Pezzulo from the National Research Council of Italy. His article "Why Do You Fear the Bogeyman? An Embodied Predictive Coding Model of Perceptual Inference" (2014), discusses the evolution of fear relationship between mind and body. He suggests that we form "inferences" from sensory reception based on both psychological reasoning but also physiological response: "Embodied predictive coding extends the predictive coding scheme by incorporating interoceptive information and the perception of the physiological condition of the body […] If we consider interoceptive information as a source of evidence in the same way that we consider sensory events, it naturally emerges that it can influence perceptual inference, belief information, and choice" (904, 905). Pezzulo's approach is from a neuroscience methodology, but his hypothesis here is very closely aligned with my own for the filmic experience. Pezzulo suggests that the

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[4] I'm not going into allegory; the depiction of one's own collective fears is what interests me.

body will inform, or even affirm (through heart rate, sweating, increased aural awareness) what the mind provides as a possible explanation for a sound (a scratching on the window, a bump against the wall); his notion of coding in this way is related to what I discuss about our creating the entity before we actually see it. It is through our own predictive coding model that we formulate and manifest the entity in our own minds. This is why the less we see on screen, the stronger our ability to do this is. This sheds some light on the suggestion of fearing fear itself as much as what might be appearing on screen. Yet a key element of this is the notion of horror as much as the display of horror I mentioned. I discuss Pezzulo's ideas in more depth in Chapter 3 for *The Changeling*.

I wish to point out here that scholarly attention on implied presence and especially the three films I discuss (*Halloween*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Changeling*) is surprisingly sparse. There is some pedestrian commentary on commercial success ingredients. I am certainly aiming to have my research and hypotheses join and add to discussions that do exist; but I am equally invested in initiating further discussion on potentially updated and new perspectives on horror films, the viewing experience and individual perceptions on participatory levels of engagement that challenge what I see as the limitations of the voyeur position. Horror films have been largely overlooked over the years, with existing scholarship being something that must be pursued, located and defined. Yet I feel that it still halts at a pedagogical point and remains within the realm of psychoanalytic interpretation. Horror films have a lot to teach us about ourselves and our world around us, our relationship with our surroundings and how they can influence and shape us. In conjunction with this, a main goal of this dissertation is to provide the reader with a toolkit to approach, watch, experience and understand horror films, thus understand one's self.

The key in this investigation is to reach beyond what a horror film's monster is and grasp what it potentially represents. This will help to answer the question of why I involuntarily turned my head from the screen before I saw more than I wanted to see. It is curious that I have talked to many people who have said they can't or don't watch horror films; yet many admit they've never watched one before. I wonder what they can be afraid of if they've never seen one. What is it they are already expecting even before the film begins? Could the implied presence be already at work here? My goal is not to vilify newer or CGI-oriented films; there are some good exceptions.[5] I find that late 1970's films have an intelligent relationship with lighting, pace and editing that many films from other eras do not. An important element to this then is what is hidden, both offscreen and in turn, suggested by what is being rendered around it. What is hidden is forbidden, for both the protagonists and for us, the viewer, until the horror confrontation occurs; yet what is forbidden is still accessible through what we perceive based on our own inference and associations; we create for ourselves a glimpse into the space of unreality, a space that defies rationality and order. The implied presence gives us this access, an opportunity to create a contract with the impending confrontation, the moving from terror (expectation, dread) into horror (confrontation, revulsion) before it happens. It is possible that the fear of watching a horror film before actually watching it can act similarly to seeing the monster before we actually see it. The same principle is in motion here; expectation creates the confrontation before it occurs. We are in much better position to create a monster than we think we are. If we are the protagonist, we have access to

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[5] 2003's *High Tension*, a French slasher film, employs fast cuts and lots of blood, but it is an excellent thrill ride that keeps us guessing; the killer is partially visible through the entire film. 2018's *A Quiet Place* uses speed to produce an implied presence for enough of the film to let the characters drive the plot. 2001's *Session 9* uses similar lighting and silence nuances of the 1970's style to create a creepy and tense environment where we don't really see anything except the aftermath.

what is being hidden, what is forbidden. In this process we gain more control over the progression from terror to horror than what the film delivers to us. This, in turn, as I will explain, creates the possibility to challenge the linear progressive convention of terror-horror-reveal; it is possible to return to terror once we reach horror.

What It Is

CGI is not necessarily villainous in its employment, or deployment, in presenting confrontational scenes in a horror film. It does though, add a certain element of *completion* to the scene; by this I mean the villainous entity, or monster, whatever incarnation, is often digitally depicted in its physical entirety, equally often in violent motion, appearing from offscreen to full visual form and the confrontation is completely delivered to us on screen. This can be detrimental to the viewing experience, more so the earlier in the film it appears. Many pre-CGI films take more time to form the entity from the negative space around it, allowing us to develop expectation and anticipation of what the confrontation will be like before it happens; this is done through suggesting or partially revealing the entity to the protagonists, a slow approach for them, which, as we participate in the film's narrative, slowly reveals the entity to us as well. An important point to note about the uniqueness of the implied presence is that it can become something different for each individual viewer (based, as we will see, on cinematographic strategies), while retaining the same level of relevance within the story's narrative. Yet even in its unique form to the viewer, it is not limited to a single or past event or conjuring; it can also embody a demographically or generationally oriented fear, creating a commentary on social, environmental, health, economic and other issues. Characters, conflicts, situations, vulnerability, terror, in extremis, even death, all form a representation of something larger in a social context than the

event unfolding on the screen. We are able to see and recognize in ourselves, through the scenes depicted and especially during the implied presences of entities and events, our own place in the world around us; specifically our perception of the world around us is scrutinized by this confrontation.

I mentioned a couple recent films, like *Session 9* (2001), that do still prefer to rely on more subtle cinematographic strategies to convey the villainous entity in a less overt way. CGI can certainly be useful in enhancing facial expression or creating a subtle change in a visual detail. Dream sequences and perceptual subjectivity moments can benefit from a little enhancement to get the point across. But my research focuses on late 1970's cinema, an era I feel has a since unmatched expressive personality to it that connects well with our emotional spectrum. I am not creating a binary observation with my argument; there are several newer horror films that seem to be resisting digital trends: *Cube* (1997), *The Mothman Prophesies* (2002), up until the ending sequence *10 Cloverfield Lane* (2016) and *Skinnamarink* (2022) are examples. The horror genre is still quite broad and covers much ground. But my own critique is one that matches the resistance I mention with these films; the three I discuss here, with peripheral discussion of 1975's *Jaws*, help to form a catalyst for what we at times see now. Yet I return to the dark, brooding, moody atmosphere that late 1970's films, not just horror, but many genres, employed, before the bulk of CGI tools were an option. These films created a two-fold world: one that we see/hear and one that we feel. The analog film cameras of the time certainly helped, along with cinematographic filters and the grainy feel of long lingering takes, something that illustrates another key element I will elaborate on as we move forward: patience. Analog film retains a sense of murkiness, a lack of visual clarity that sound effects can enhance to create emotional and physical discomfort.

Long takes especially, create a sense of patience for both the film and for us as participants. Through this patience we must wait, look, see, feel, expect, become further uncomfortable, and consider why we are experiencing these things.

The implied presence then becomes a source of fear. The invisible that becomes visible in this context is in essence a shapeshifter. The main villainous character in Stephen King's 1986 novel *It* is an alien creature that has inhabited the underground beneath Derry, Maine, for centuries. It feeds off of the fears of children, as their imaginative capabilities are presumed to be far more advanced than adults'.[6] The creature, knowing each of the protagonists' personal fears, appears to each one of them as something different. To one child, a werewolf, to another, a mummy, to another, a derelict leper. The children never see it in its natural form and confront it in the form it chooses; as adults they confront it in its natural form, but together. Even though they don't remember their childhood experiences, the strength of their solidarity is enough to acknowledge its presence. The essence of the creature's power lies in its ability to visually embody an individual's fears. Yet the werewolf may represent the potential dangers of human/animal coexistence; the mummy an impending awareness of mortality; a derelict leper the possibility of sickness or isolation. Horror films, good ones, have the ability to embody viewers' fears in the same way. The monster or villainous entity may well be a werewolf or a mummy; but through cinematography, lighting, mise en scene, editing and sound, creating the implied presence, that

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[6] The irony King presents in the novel is that imagination and belief, even though one might think life experience as an adult would be more powerful, or at least influential in rationalizing fear, are left behind when adulthood takes over (we will discuss this paradox with *Halloween*). King's adult protagonists, the children now grown up, are aware of fearing something from the past, but not exactly what; it is their bond with each other that allows them together to pursue the creature in its natural form. The irony is, though, that the children's fears are born through their interaction with adults. So the creature becomes in this way, a mirror.

negative space surrounding the entity is able to transcend the cinematic space and become an embodiment.

Another key scholar's influence for this dissertation is Carol Clover, from her book *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (1992). Clover's study focuses mostly on horror subgenres that highlight the positioning of male and female figures in both victim and victimizer roles. A few points she discusses have important bearing on my own argument. She mentions a "double-axis revenge plot" that suggests a parallel between "the revenge of the woman on her rapist and the revenge of the city on the country" (115). The idea of revenge is long-reaching and I will argue, surpasses the revenge-film and permeates all three subgenre films I discuss. In all three, the American cities Haddonfield, San Francisco and Seattle all take on lives of their own, driven by a corporate or system-based mechanism that informs surviving characters of who to trust, who not to, and when to take authoritative action when that system turns its back on them. In a broader look, revenge becomes closely linked to survival with a young woman resisting forced entry into adulthood, a man defying societal evolution to retain emotional connection to love and another man transferring the loss of his daughter to challenging systemic hierarchy and moral greed. We may entertain the question of does the revenge film act as a catalyst for commentary on social construction? Clover, it seems to me, says it may, and I agree. My own springboard from this moves into mistrust of the system; the late 1970's were a time of transition with second-wave feminism, environmental awareness and anti-war movements. These three films comment on the complex relationship between individual and collective consciousness within an ever-changing urban environment. As I have noted, the moody and murky look and feel of analog cinematography aids in the suggestions of an unclear future.

Clover discusses the end result of revenge films in terms of the role of the "final girl," the last surviving female character to defeat the villainous entity (in this case the male serial killer) (50). She discusses this in psychoanalytic terms, something I don't intend to do or challenge; but I do aim to address Clover's notion of the final girl with her successful defeat of the killer as moving from childhood into adulthood, specifically with *Halloween* in Chapter 1. The three films I discuss, especially *Halloween,* develop a double-axis plot of their own in this respect. The (presumed) eradication of the killer does not necessarily mark the move from childhood into adulthood; in *Halloween*, on the contrary, it is part of what keeps childhood intact after the ordeal, suggesting that adulthood in this case is the eradication of order as much as the Shape represents. For *Invasion* and *Changeling,* eradication of the entity (alien and ghost) becomes as much about eradication of the system that created the entity; so it becomes quite clearly as much about confronting the chaos that the system-created entity has wreaked, as it is about self-preservation. This is why each main protagonist assumes a self-appointed role of authority in the face of abandonment. Here lies the multi-layered role of survival.

Both *The Grudge* and the remake of *Halloween* (as well as Carpenter's original) will be discussed in this dissertation. *The Grudge's* stairwell scene with Yoko and her boss had effective terror, leading up to a moment of confrontation where anything could happen. And the bully-beating scene in Zombie's *Halloween* also had effective terror, right up until the last blow. The starkness of the gore and violence at the end of these scenes creates a clear differentiation be-

tween terror and horror, horror being the moment of death, or at least in extremis. Terror, parenthetically, is the lead-up to that moment, be it seconds, minutes, hours or even days.[7]

If horror employs the moment of confrontation with the evil entity, killer, monster, turn of insanity, gremlin, re-animated corpse, etc., then terror employs the the anticipation of that confrontation. Anticipation in the context of film is based on the experiences of the characters; in turn, the viewer lives vicariously through the characters and their experiences. Mise en scene, lighting, cinematography, sound and editing build the environment of the characters and their surroundings. Gothic author Anne Radcliffe's 1826 essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" discusses the difference between terror and horror. In the essay, two men, Mr. S and Mr. W, are traveling together, debating the elements of what makes Shakespeare's plays so successful in their ability to create suspense. Mr. W asserts that doubt is needed to differentiate terror from horror, that doubt enables the imagination to allow anything to be possible, noting that "Probability is enough for the poet's justification" (5). Mr. W acknowledges doubt in both the possible itself and doubt in the protection from the possible: "Where lies the great difference between horror and terror, but in the uncertainty, the obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil?" (6). For Mr. W, dread and doubt make the impossible possible, creating the opportunity for horror; in this way, horror cannot exist without terror. In terms of the implied presence, being shown part or the suggestion of the monster allows room for doubt, room to consider what it is and what it isn't, but also what it might be. When we are shown the monster in totality, doubt is overcome by the horror confrontation and expectation is abandoned, left behind, no longer

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[7] Generally in slasher films the whole ordeal takes place over a period of one night, the survivors, if any, escaping the horror to see the daylight. Other horror stories, *The Shining* for example, take place over a period of months, showing the deterioration of a man's mind in isolation.

needed. The uncertainty Mr. W refers to may be interpreted to suggest that through our experience with the implied presence we are able to cultivate growing expectation, making the invisible visible, keeping the terror aspect alive and propelling the narrative forward with us firmly in its grasp.

Doubt and dread then, become closely linked, both being part of expectation, or anticipation. We may see anticipation as an emotion representing looking forward to something, in the positive sense, but in our context it is assigned to what is *not* being looked forward to, hence, dreaded. Sigmund Freud, in his 1919 essay "The Uncanny" maintains that "The uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (3676). He explains that the German word for for uncanny, *unheimlich,* meaning "un-homely," is the opposite of *heimlich,* which means "homely" (or familiar) (3676). Freud briefly touches on Ernst Anton Jentsch's examination of the uncanny as simply that which is intellectually unfamiliar, so becoming familiar would undoubtedly counter the uncanny effect; but Freud says this is incomplete, and asserts, through a series of linguistic definitions and interpretations, that uncanny includes both what is unfamiliar and familiar at the same time. The key for Freud in this point is that what is unfamiliar is what is hidden from sight. This point he references from F.W.J. Schelling, is that everything that is unheimlich is something that should have remained hidden but has come to light (3679). This is important for the discussion of the difference between terror and horror, or dread/anxiety and revulsion. The merging of these emotions and reactions is enabled by the simultaneity of familiar, or homely, and unfamiliar, or un-homely. Like a skewed version of something, we know it, but at the same time, not like we think we know it; not as we are seeing it or recognizing it. Cinematically, the uncanny can be interpreted in a compromised

environment where a familiar neighbourhood becomes the centre of chaos; in a community of citizens where faces remain the same but behaviour has changed; in an old house that appears welcoming and comfortable but seems to have a sinister life of its own; in a beachside vacation spot where swimming used to be an everyday thing, but now it's not. The places and people are familiar, but at the same time, they aren't. And there is something hidden in each of these places, unseen but felt. When chaos ensues and the confrontation arrives, terror becomes horror and what has been hidden comes to light.

Jason Colavito, in his book *Knowing Fear* (2007), states that "The monsters of horror can take many shapes, and they can symbolize many things but one constant remains across time, from the earliest horror stories to the most recent: Knowledge, whether forbidden or achieved, is a primal source of horror" (6). It is significant that Colavito capitalizes the word Knowledge; in conjunction with Schelling's notion of that which was hidden and come to light, forbidden knowledge may be approached, glimpsed, but not fully achieved. Either way, is it then only positive, or friendly knowledge? No. Knowledge, in many forms, may become uncanny in its own newfound existence: sometimes with people or places we think we know, there is something unidentifiable about them we cannot grasp. After all, it was forbidden for a reason, whether societal or psychological. Colavito goes on to explain that knowledge itself extends to include forbidden knowledge, which causes horror, and protective knowledge, which is used to avoid or counter chaos or corruption (7). Looking through the lens of cinema, the implied presence creates a promise or prospect for access to forbidden knowledge; that which is not shown on screen but implied creates an opportunity for the viewer to fulfill that promise, a confrontation with the shapeshifter. Forbidden knowledge, as we have been discussing, can take on any form.

Forbidden knowledge isn't limited to individual hidden fears or even repressed memories. It extends to include a broader spectrum of external perceptions and perspectives that have remained, until terror reaches horror, unseen due to societal or authoritative control. Generational gaps hold many secrets from youths entering adulthood, as we see in *It*. In film it may offer a cautionary voice stressing the vulnerability and dangers that adulthood brings. It may suggest that there is a stranger in all of us and we never really know (or trust) one another completely, or that our past experiences don't ever completely leave us and sometimes reappear like a matte over the present day. Or it may teach us not to take for granted our seemingly familiar surroundings that hold many places where things can lurk and hide, even in the sunshine. Curiosity for an understanding of the world beyond our anthropocentric[8] capabilities brings with it a sense of displacement, of being watched. A growing awareness of survival instincts brings to light possible reasons for them; an awareness of someone, or something, looking back at us. Technological advancements, more and more, mirror human tendencies and interaction; they also mirror, whether we're ready for them or not, the dangers of these tendencies.

What It Does

Pertaining to the implied presence, I mentioned negative space. This is not suggestive of optical illusion or even the Rorschach Test or Pareidolia. For film, it is the emergence of shape and form in unoccupied spaces, perpetuated by expectation and anticipation, terror. What is not seen is key. Yet it is not limited to the visual space. It can be created through various cinematographic techniques and strategies both on-screen and off-screen. For mise en scène setting and

[8] I will go into anthropocentrism in-depth during Chapter 2, when I discuss Philip Kaufman's remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*; I use this term to mean our human tendency to place ourselves at the centre of our perception of reality and the world around us, dictating how we see things, with ourselves as the model, or at least the blueprint.

props are arranged to indicate the potential arrival/departure of someone or something, and a sense of absence. This is done most effectively with partially open doors and windows, especially when the door or window is swaying slightly, that might be the wind or might not. A character's surprise that a door is unlocked suggests there is a presence lurking behind it. John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1979) makes repeated use of this, as it allows the villain's presence to be in the frame without the actor playing him/it actually being there. Stairwells can signal a beckoning to the protagonist so that we holler at them not to go, especially if it is dark up or down there. A prop can signal danger if a character suddenly notices an item that doesn't belong to them, say, a bloody knife on the kitchen table, or a severed finger on the top of the television. Costume can be utilized in blurry extreme long shots to highlight a figure that stands out from its surroundings; they may be blended with setting or contrasted to stand out. Many horror films have recognizable, even iconic costumes, the red and black striped sweater of Freddy Krueger or the hockey mask of Jason Voorhees. A night janitor's surprise that one pair of coveralls is suddenly missing from its hook makes him look around with a concerned frown on his face.

This aligns nicely with actor performance. Good actors can convey a sense of physical confrontation with a villainous entity without us actually seeing what they see. The care agency supervisor's knuckle-biting shriek in *The Grudge*, or the often used blank-faced shuffle of a character appearing to her friends right before blood runs from her mouth and she collapses dead on the floor. Mirrors are used a lot in horror films, and an actor's perfect timing and sense of angle can give us both their blissfully unknowing and vulnerable demeanour and a partial glimpse of a shadowy figure crossing the doorway behind them. Mirrors can also suggest to us a liminal space between reality and illusion, or delusion; often we see a character's reflection match them

perfectly… until they look away. Then it is up to the character's behaviour to tell us whether or not we are watching their mental deterioration or there is something truly strange happening to them. George C. Scott's performance in *The Changeling* (1980) does most of the work before we actually see the ghost. His furrowed eyebrows, up-tilted gaze (to the darkened upper floor) and terrified grimace signal to us that there is an unwanted someone, or something, nearby. It also signals a growing awareness of forbidden knowledge, the awareness of being watched, of being *stalked*.

Lighting, especially chiaroscuro, the focus on a key light to strengthen contrast and surrounding shadows, becomes essential in enhancing the setting for the implied presence. Carpenter's Shape, the film's villainous entity, as we will discuss in chapter one, is nearly always filmed in either partially shown low-key lighting or shadow so dark it is difficult to even see movement. There are times when we can see the Shape moving only when our eyes are averted, focused on the shadows moving across walls, indicating movement; this is an example of negative space. Contrast lighting utilizes shadows that can tell us when someone or something is moving around the corner, upstairs, downstairs or right past us. Stairwells, doorways and extreme low-key lighting combined in the same scene or sequence creates for us a sense of displacement or doubt of the orientation of our surroundings and creates more unoccupied space where the villainous entity may be lurking. We must guess where it is, and when we do that we are afforded the same position as the protagonist; here we experience the notion of horror that is differentiated from the display of horror - what we don't see but anticipate, perpetuated by doubt (the negative space), creates the contract we make to confront the monster before it happens. I must be clear on "protagonist" in this context. The spectator does not affect the plot or change the narrative; this is

more about the viewing experience and level of engagement. The emotional and intellectual engagement to the film allows the viewer to share with the characters' emotional and intellectual responses (as opposed to being told what to feel or what to think), thereby enhancing the immersive aspect of film viewing. Low-key lighting may also create a multi-layered shadow effect that produces room for a partial appearance of the entity. Lotte Eisner refers to this as "penumbra." Eisner, in discussing early twentieth-century cinema, highlights the significance of penumbra as creating uncertainty, secrets, a sense of floating (*Haunted Cinema*, 200). A partial shade, or "veil" (199), allows us to see movement and shape, and in the case of horror films, momentarily, as the entity passes through the frame, or an outer section of the frame; so the sense of floating cultivates the feeling of doubt, which enhances terror and anticipation. The implied presence may be partially seen or not seen at all.

Cinematography (the shot), controls what to put in the frame and what to omit from the frame. The implied presence may be presented as a partial glimpse of the villainous entity, most often in this circumstance as the entity is in motion, exiting the frame as the protagonist is turning in its direction. It may be combined with a camera away-pan (either left or right, depending on what direction the entity is moving), facilitating a quick glimpse before it moves out of shot. Depth of field can allow the entity to be in full view in the shot (most often in an extreme long shot), but with a shallow focus, it can move across the frame blurry; if the focus is racked just as the entity is leaving the frame (the protagonist turning to look behind them but seeing nothing) we are faced with the same doubt they are. The POV shot, used liberally by Carpenter at the beginning of *Halloween*, allows us to "see" what the entity sees, heightening our sense of the protagonist's vulnerability and enabling us to know that the entity is there but not at all what it looks

like: “The person with the camera,” Carpenter says, “is moving through [say] a real house and giving you the sense that it’s gliding and floating” (Kermode Interview, 1:45), which questions audience identification with the villain - is it human or perhaps not human? This camera perspective places us not right next to it but into the position of its own perspective, which is extremely uncomfortable, much too close and still not able to see it, as vulnerable as the protagonist we see through its eyes.

Framing choice involves what to include off-screen. Sound can create for us a sense of the entity nearby without any visual of it at all. As we discussed with mise en scène, props may be used to convey a sense of movement, intrusion, diegetic with a glass breaking, a door banging, a dog barking; non-diegetic with a heartbeat, static or feedback. These are sound effects implemented during the post-production editing process. But as the entity gets closer to us sounds can become more localized to increase terror and we must orient and re-orient ourselves within the narrative and within the frame to gain a position of identifying sound location and source. When identifying these things becomes difficult or they become elusive, as we see the protagonist whirling on the spot in a panic, also trying to locate an errant noise, we share the protagonist role with them. The connection between locating something visually and locating something aurally is discussed by Michel Chion in *Audio-Vision*. Our perspective of locating something visually within the on-screen frame is considered with the character on screen locating something visually in their diegetic environment. Aurally, we may conduct the same search as the character tries to locate a sound they’ve heard. Chion discusses this with the term “point of audition” (90). Specifically it is as much the location of the sound as the source, which places emphasis on *where did that come from?* If the sound comes from off-screen, or if it occurs where nothing is

seen to be moved in the frame, it occurs in the negative space we've been discussing. The doubt is there. A mysterious sound, a creaking of the floor, a tap on the window, a low groan from the attic above, creates terror instantly. The question *where did that come from?* suggests in turn the question *where is it?,* which, in an instant, shows us how vulnerable we are, not seeing but being seen.

CGI has certainly made things easier in many ways production-wise in filmmaking; but it is still interesting to consider how much horror cinema has changed over the last fifty years. Mattes, superimposition, prosthetics, rear projection and stop-motion have given way to digital processes. Just about anything can be rendered digitally through computer programs and positioned in any orientation a script requests. But there are times when the convenience and ease of computer generation compromises the level of suspense in a film. Often, seemingly trivial remakes have a certain show-off quality that neglects the original story's point. Too much icing can make a cake inedible. The three films this dissertation will examine were made at the dawn of CGI's commercial development; in order to highlight specific qualities of pre-cgi film I will make brief comparisons to a similar post-cgi film with specific reference to the implied presence. What is needed is a key question to ask, as in *what isn't needed*. William Schoell, in his 2008 book *Creature Features: Nature Turned Nasty in the Movies*, talks about the 1934 UK film *The Secret of the Loch*, where a diver, determined to prove the existence of the Loch Ness monster, explores the dangerous murky waters after a previous diver hasn't returned: "The monster itself doesn't make any kind of appearance until over halfway through the movie, when we see its enormous shadow on the wall of the cavern… Jimmy later comes upon the diver's helmet, all that's left of the poor lad (If this film had been made twenty or thirty years later, a head would

have been inside the helmet)" (6). Thirty years later would make it 1964; in another forty years we would see the poor lad's demise, all of it, blood, guts, decapitation, digestion, the whole thing as it happened. As I mentioned earlier, there are contemporary films that still do exercise the less is more concept, and well at that. But chaos can be shown to us in different ways and in many instances it is what isn't shown to us that becomes the catalyst for chaos to begin. The implied presence gives us the opportunity to anticipate what will happen, inevitably, before it happens. The inevitability becomes then the driving force for terror; the delay is a delight in the thrill of expectation.

Structure

My goal with each chapter is to establish an analytic pattern that illustrates three key ingredients to the implied presence's construction and usage: 1. *Technical elements* - mise en scène, cinematography, sound (working from Michel Chion), narration and editing. 2. *Forbidden knowledge* (working from Jason Colavito) - what we get a glimpse into with the protagonists but that still remains unknown and in some cases unknowable. 3. *The lair* - segueing through particularly what the entity represents from that space is the lair (working from 1975's *Jaws*), the place that the entity comes from and in many cases returns to. The lair is a significant part of the previous two ingredients because it culminates with them the environment for the on-screen confrontation with the films' protagonists. The entity's lair is a physical embodiment of this representation and tropes we are familiar with (the haunted house, the woods, the water) keep it within our psychological reach as the films' characters interact with it. Each chapter will begin by posing a few questions related to these three ingredients. I will perform a brief study of the film's synopsis, that will set up the ground for technical analysis and will show the implied presence in

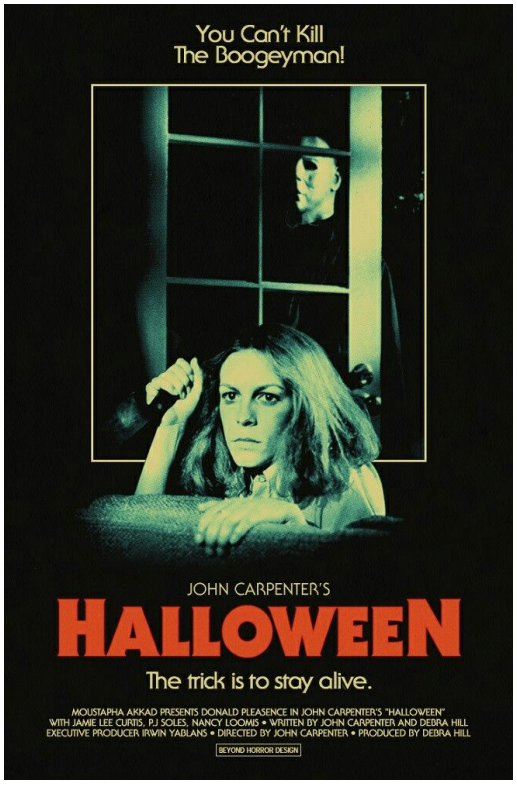
action. My theoretical offering from the analyses will ultimately answer the questions posed. Each film will have a different stylistic approach but the methodology will be consistent. My main goal for these chapters is two-fold: to show how the implied presence works to establish the entity's role in the film and to answer the questions I feel need to be addressed. The answers will provide the framework that will challenge the convention of the linear path from terror into horror and make a critical connection between viewer - voyeur and viewer - protagonist.

The Films

The implied presence in John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) is centred on the visually elusive but always stalking entity named Michael Myers, but called by Carpenter, the Shape. It is also strongly developed through the irony of the film's setting, which is a small suburb of Illinois. The killer is a sanitarium escapee, bent on murdering Laurie Strode and her friends, all babysitting on Halloween night in the same neighbourhood. Carpenter's film does have a brief opening backstory to set up the film's current plot line, but the entire first half takes us through the young women's afternoon and evening, with several implied and partial appearances of the Shape, building suspense and anticipation, fuelled by the women's unawareness of the threat that hunts them. The second half focuses on the Shape's slow, murderous progress towards the final girl, as well as an obsessive psychiatrist intent on stopping his patient. Rob Zombie's 2007 remake of the same name focuses more on the villain's childhood and transformation from victim to serial killer before the main portion of the story begins to unfold. Both films present a strong relational anxiety between generation (kids and parents/authority figures), but also suggest a communal unity representing a binary opposition between good and evil.

The Shape, constantly in either partial or suggested form, facilitates for the narrative what the entity represents for the protagonists. I will in this chapter argue that the female babysitters must confront both the killer and their own mortality, plus maintain the role of maternity figure protecting the children. This places them in a liminal space between child and grownup. The Shape's murderous intent and unrelenting stalking lets us see somewhat of a gateway into the dangers of adulthood; its undefinable shadowy existence acts as a veil into the forbidden realm of what a child is incapable of seeing as the real world beyond them. Yet, from a more mature perspective, it is significant, and discussed by the actresses themselves, that the two friends who are promiscuous are killed, while the one who takes ridicule for being naïve survives. My analysis will show how what is unknown by teenagers on the cusp of adulthood and stepping away from the parental eye signals a glimpse into Colavito's idea of forbidden knowledge. The fragile stigma of authority figures being a staunch protective shield from danger becomes a key element in this discussion. Caught in a struggle for survival, the killer's sister is in a position to represent both trying to save her own childhood before being taken away from it, and assuming command of a newly oriented adulthood, signalled in the moment of confrontation with the Shape, that brings with it the dangers of the world outside the home. The mask Carpenter's Shape wears is featureless, bone white, and seems to glow in the dark. Carpenter's arrangement of framing, lighting and angles creates for us a sense that the Shape is an endlessly moving and shifting presence, void of any individual identity. Its implied presence signals vulnerability and its eventual confrontational arrival brings with it order into chaos and the vehicle for the binary opposition between good and evil. Survival becomes the key objective. The Shape's lair is constantly shifting shadows.

The uncertainty in the original film lies primarily in the absence of the villainous character; we know the killer is out there, nearby, stalking, watching, waiting. Yet we don't know exactly when the killing will happen. Consequently the level of anticipation, terror, is continual, since we know, as does the protagonist, that she is never safe. We then share her doubt in survival. Even Carpenter's film's promotional poster gives us only a partial glimpse of what to expect, setting the implied presence up before we begin watching. It displays the floating mask, the figure partially hidden outside a window and the terrified but determined final girl caught in the final confrontation. The implied presence is intact here through The Shape's positioning and the protagonist's uncertainty, which we share with her. We have three frames here: the poster frame, the perceptive frame (that is, the implied inevitable confrontation that we see behind her back) and the window frame, which, with The Shape partially seen behind it, conveys to us a strong sense of *approach*, a key idea, which feeds anticipation. The two phrases on the poster reinforce the notions of both a nebulous, unidentifiable entity ("You Can't Kill the Boogeyman," also a cultural reference), and survival during the transition from the end of childhood into adulthood ("The Trick is to Stay Alive"). The nameless faceless killer is essential for the implied presence; it is an embodiment of evil, and may represent any form of threat in



Halloween (1978) movie poster.

its position. The entity may be framed subtly, or not framed at all but implied; both still allow it to become the shapeshifter; we dread it in any form it may appear.

Philip Kaufman's 1978 film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is a remake in itself (from 1956, both adapted from Jack Finney's 1955 novel). Kaufman makes similar use of shadow, darkness and slow, deliberate pans, tracks and long takes, much like Carpenter did, to convey a constant sense of unsurety, more aptly, doubt. Doubt in *Invasion* is the key element to the implied presence. Instead of a single villainous entity, we have several, in the form of human duplicates, hiding in plain sight. Doubt then becomes the vehicle for protagonists to forcibly remain in a state of apprehension, which, as it grows, becomes suspicion and then paranoia. A jelly-like alien race, reaching Earth through the ecosystem, begins replicating humans to metamorphosize for survival, killing and, once in human form, disposing of the original body. The film takes place in San Francisco. The implied presence is presented to us through the continual subtleties between characters who display emotion and characters who do not. A key factor is the human tendency for anthropocentric perspective, which makes the idea of alien invasion difficult to fathom; the protagonists cannot identify them as duplicates because they don't believe it at first, but also because there are so few of them to start the film. As the film continues and their numbers grow, their collective behaviour begins to stand out, causing the protagonists to question their own anthropocentric perspective. This parallel development between the aliens and humans brings with it the anticipation and expectation we experience with them; as their paranoia and self doubt grows, so do we see the unavoidable confrontation approaching. Significant to this development is that we know (more than the protagonists know) that the aliens are taking over human bodies, replicating them, but it is a long time into the film before we have a good idea

who is actually changed and who isn't. In fact, there has been debate about whether or not the film's final scene suggests we *still* don't know who is changed and who isn't.[9] In this way the sense of doubt as a constant thread throughout the film allows us to fulfill the contract with the villainous entity being suggested to us but not actually shown. Visually it is a polar opposite of the Shape hiding in the shadows as replicants hide in plain sight - but experientially it is the same platform for anticipation. It is, in the negative space I mentioned, the suspicion and instinctual discomfort the survivors communicate to each other that we observe a change in humanity.

Forbidden knowledge in this case is unimaginable knowledge. When the aliens catch a survivor they tell them they will become a new evolved species, indicating that such forbidden knowledge is attainable (if they surrender their human identity). When the number of replicants surpasses the survivors, the replicants point at a survivor and scream, calling the other replicants to move into collective capture-mode. Their mouths drop down and their scream is like a grinding screeching machine. I mention in this chapter John Murlowski's 2019 film *Assimiliate*, which takes a similar narrative spin on this story. The replicants in Murlowski's film though are enhanced with CGI during their "scream," which elongates their jawline, drawing it down past a natural level. I will argue that this compromises our doubt on who is changed and who isn't. Key to this argument is that doubt must be intact for anticipation to continue, otherwise the on-screen confrontation occurs too early and interrupts our own contractual confrontation. I will draw on Freud's notion of the uncanny with this analysis. A replicated human represents a duality in perception; a person looks like someone we recognize, either biologically or personally, but at the same time, they aren't human. Replicants do not show emotion; when emotion is absent, it be-

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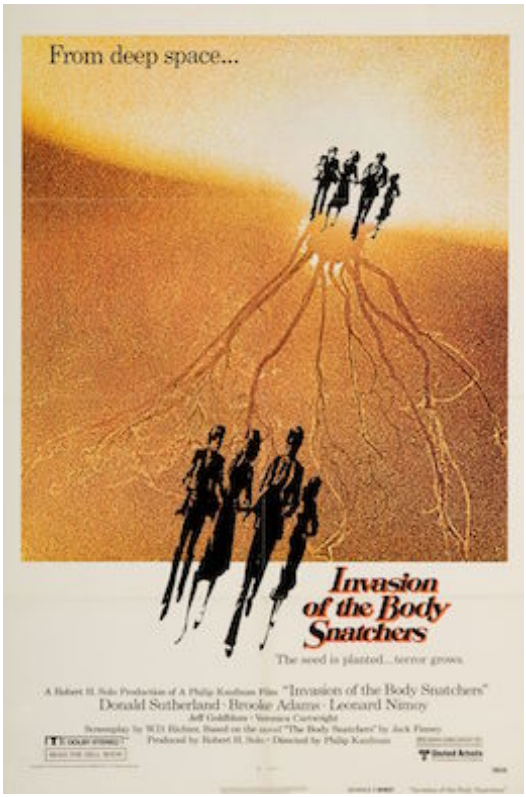
[9] This I will address in Chapter 2 and offer my own argument on the idea.

comes interpretable as hidden, which in turn precipitates suspicion and doubt towards the resulting outer appearance. And as we saw with Radcliffe's Mr. W., doubt brings with it a sense of terror, anticipating the unknown to eventually come to light. As with *Halloween*, survival becomes dictator. In *Invasion*, the entity's lair is two fold; the human form and in plain sight.

Implied presence relies on, much as Carpenter's film does, a mask-like appearance of the villainous entity. Instead of being faceless, the aliens in *Invasion* are expressionless. Merging with city crowds they indeed take on a similar floating quality, seeming to be recognized by a survivor and then gone in a sea of people, always elusive, but always following, approaching. Shadow, specifically trailing shadows from both replicants and survivors, is an essential lighting element in *Invasion*. Shadow is sometimes cast, as I will explain in Chapter 2, in what appears to be an unnatural angle, suggesting the possibility of a replicant before we think we know who has been changed. The film's poster alludes to this with its simple but telling arrangement of two sets of people, one seemingly chasing and another being chased. They appear to be two sets of the same foursome. The ones in lower frame are stepping out of the frame, suggesting the departure of an ordered reality. The ones in the upper frame are positioned at the horizon-line, an allegorical indication of new beginning, or dawn of a new era. The rising (or setting) sun casts shadows from them that seem to reach for the lower foursome; shadows in this context look like veins that may be interpreted as grow-



Invasion of the Body Snatchers movie poster

ing plant-life, and consequently in this film, replicated humans. In the film the aliens at first bloom into flowers that are able to send tendrils to a sleeping human and replicate them in a generated plant pod. The veins in the poster can then also be interpreted as tendrils. The phrases "From deep space" and "The seed is planted…terror grows" are aligned closely with an impending, unstoppable change that comes from outside human understanding. These elements all support a static visual representation of the implied presence before we watch the film.

Peter Medak's *The Changeling* (1980) strays from conventional motif-centred arrangement in that it doesn't rely on a specific character age group or limited temporal space. Instead, the implied presence is fuelled by the identification and situation of a specific character in a specific frame of mind. A classical pianist loses his wife and daughter in an unfortunate accident. He rents a long-empty mansion in a rural area of Seattle to recover and return to his work. But he soon realizes there is a presence in the house trying to communicate with him. As with Carpenter's and Kaufman's films, darkness and shadows are essential for conveying a constant sense of someone (or something) hidden and inaccessible. Yet as the activity grows more aggressive we become invested in anticipation of the coming confrontation. An interesting perspective in *The Changeling* is that the protagonist knows there is something approaching, something from a position unknown to human perception; and so do we as we experience the ghostly activity with him and share his terror and confusion. The terror seems heightened by his (and our) knowledge of something approaching and his inability to stop it. Takashi Shimizu's film *The Grudge* (2004), is about an American social worker student on a placement semester in Tokyo, Japan. She takes a job at an American family's house after the previous worker, Yoko, has disappeared. Their house, like the Seattle mansion, has a secret history. There are a lot of parallels with these two films in

that very similar murderous activity preceded the hauntings, the protagonists know early something is after them and there is a fire in the end during the face-off. In both films the protagonists seek help from an authority figure (police officer) but authority isn't able to protect them or solve the mystery; consequently the protagonists then assume the role of authority figure themselves. This character progression suggests that in the face of an unknown danger, it is not always authority figures who are able to protect the individual; when the danger is beyond human understanding, earthly human hierarchy loses its solidity.

The significance of *The Changeling* in terms of the implied presence is that it is primarily based on actor performance. The actual activity in the house is built around absences - things not seen, darkened corridors, objects moving by themselves. There is a strong partnership in this way between the music the protagonist writes and the sounds he hears from the upper floors. The film is so subtle that for the first half of it we get much of the information from the excellent acting of George C. Scott. His furrowed brow and agitated upward glare during low-key-lit close-up shots convey enough dread that we experience it with him. This is an important observation because *The Changeling* presents us with a character who is still reeling from the death of his family and is now in self-isolation in a remote location. The haunted-mansion-in-the-woods motif is a strong setting for an investigation into the human experience and we have it here. I will argue that not any old character will do in these ghostly circumstances. There must be enough of a parallel between the character's life experiences and the haunting activity that we begin to question whether what we are experiencing with him is in fact a haunting, or perhaps, on some level at least, a projection of the grief and residual horror he is feeling from his familial loss. And as forbidden knowledge in this case is perception of after-death existence, outside of corporeal understanding,

the protagonist's peers and acquaintances wonder the same thing. This gives us two levels of anticipation: we wonder about what is going on in the house and why, and we wonder if we are being drawn in towards a certain growing madness through the protagonist. Narratively, this suggests that it is a direct communication from spirit to protagonist that cannot be interfered with, and it is this vehicle that affords the protagonist the promoted role of authority, taking the responsibility themselves to, even if breaking the law, uncover the mystery surrounding the haunting that has upset their life.

In this way the grief-stricken protagonist acts as a catalyst for the ghostly activity to begin. This provides a large platform for us to, as viewers, constantly try to locate the source of either visual motion (a ball bouncing down the stairs) or an unidentifiable sound (a metallic hammering from above). As I mentioned earlier, Chion discusses this as point of audition, the location of a sound's source, either on or off-screen; but the implied presence operates in this unknown space, and coupled with a character whose experiences parallel the haunting activity's suggestive implications we have a catalyst at work. The person needs the place as much as the place needs the person to survive. In this way the implied presence allows Medak to give to us a haunting as a two-fold entity - a haunted house and a haunted man. Because of this, throughout the film we keep guessing, wondering, anticipating… doubting.

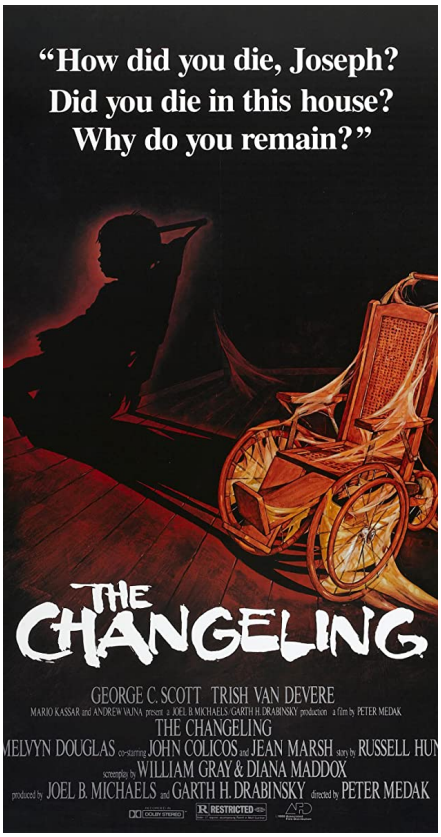
My argument for this chapter takes a bit of a turn. Terror and horror are discussed, but I argue that in this film we are shown that it is possible to return to terror after we face the horror. The on-screen confrontation in *The Changeling* comes about the middle of the film; then the implied presence continues. This is a rare progression in horror films - we may be conditioned to adhere to a linear tandem of terror into horror and then in extremis or death; yet in this film we

get a glimpse of death, but return to the terrorizing implied presence. The return to terror after horror both challenges the conventional expectational pattern of terror into horror, and also exemplifies the differentiation between the notion of horror and the display of horror. It is this unique subversion that maintains the parallel between the two hauntings (the house and the man). We do come to know what happened in that house before John arrived, and who the ghost is and why contact was made; but it all comes after a sufficient development that enables us to formulate the questions we need to be in position to create our own version of the entity, to assign our own fears to it.[10] When the confrontation occurs then, we face the shapeshifter. The lair is built on a two-fold premise of living and dead; inside the house, on our side, it is the upper darkened floors. Beyond that, it is the entity's forbidden side of death.

The poster for *The Changeling* is a bit different than the first two I discussed in that it offers some information from the film's confrontation before we see the movie. Yet it also as assertively asks questions that we must pursue as the film progresses. Three of them are boldly asked at the top. We may add to these one of our own - *Who is Joseph?* The silhouette is obscure enough to deter a positive interpretation of age or physical characteristics, which creates the platform for an unknown entity. The wheelchair indicates a physical disability, but also perhaps suggests isolation, alienation or immobility, which would further indicate vulnerability; these things are what we experience as John experiences them. The chair is positioned at the bottom of a slope, suggesting dismissal, or being placed in a locked space, hidden. This would facilitate the

[10] We all have had those moments, whether we just watched a scary film or not, where we hear a noise in a silent and darkened room that we can't immediately recognize or identify and the hair on our arms stands up. We stop, look around and try to spot some sort of movement. When there isn't any, our minds begin cheerily to conjure up images we have stored in our memories of things the sound could indicate, whether realistic or not. The concept of the ghostly encounter is a universal thing; we can say as much as we want we don't subscribe to such things, but we cannot help but wonder sometimes. Just for a moment we wonder.

idea of that which was hidden and come to life (ironically through death). The tattered cloth draped around it indicates time and neglect. There is a parallel with this person who died and the child in the film's current plot timeline (John's daughter) who dies, creating doubt as to whether the ghost is someone John knows or not. The film's creepiest scene is a seance where the questions in the poster are asked. Diegetic sound is dominant and defies sound perspective rules, being turned up quite loud to enhance the absence of score. During the scene we are encouraged to prepare ourselves for the confrontation, and there is a build-up to a seeming climax, but it doesn't come. Instead, it heightens our sense of terror, having come close and now being forced to wait. The film's strength lies in the control its pace has over our expectations. As we are forced to wait, we are also forced to create the confrontation contract and wonder about the answers to our questions.



The Changeling movie poster

Throughout this dissertation I will be threading observations concerning Steven Spielberg's 1975 film *Jaws*. It doesn't warrant a chapter on its own, but I am of the opinion that it nicely collates the three aspects I address in each of the chapters: cinematographic strategies, forbidden knowledge and the lair. The mirrored surface of water returns our physical reflection to us; we cannot see into it, but what lurks beneath the surface can see us. What we see instead is our own vulnerability and mortality. Mirrors are an often-used motif in horror films; we witness two equal versions of one person, yet with a slight a-synchronic turn or facial expression (by the

reflection in the mirror, and here we are drawn to perceive *actually inside* the mirror), we realize they are now opposing versions. It will be in the conclusion that I draw more deeply from *Jaws* to tie my observations together and return to the implied presence. I am interested in where horror films intend to go with the next generation, how they will extend, develop, evolve… or devolve. And to what extent adaptation might participate in that evolution.

An important element of the implied presence in film is that the villainous entity exists, as I have discussed, in negative space, which can translate into hiding. The Shape hides in the shadows and outside doors and windows; the aliens hide in plain sight, blending in; the ghost hides in the house's darkened upper floors, utilizing objects for communication; here the shark hides (albeit naturally of course) in the water. The dark, a crowd of strangers, attics and basements and the ocean are all mysterious and fearful places that are defined by forbidden knowledge. And in all three case studies, the lair is a place we know, a place many of us will try to avoid, a place where fear is alive and we begin to wonder about our own perceptive limits.

The implied presence in film makes the invisible visible, but it also may prolong invisibility, giving us the opportunity to create the confrontation with the villainous entity before it happens. In this way the visible (formed in negative space) becomes even more compellingly visible. We are afforded the position of protagonist to even more assertively invest in the narrative's action. We expect, anticipate and dread what is coming, acknowledging that it is coming no matter what - it is a matter of when. So the implied presence controls the when, and makes us fear the unknown, but at the same time we know, to a certain degree, what is located in that hidden space before we see it. Perhaps this is why people who don't want to watch horror movies and have never done so fear them so much; we may fear what we don't see as much as what we

do see. Unanswered questions become a vehicle for exploration. This makes us confront ourselves as much as the entity on screen. Schoell's comment about the head in the helmet suggests that if we don't see the dead explorer's head, the possibility of our own head in that helmet begins to appear. And here is our confrontation with the shapeshifter; there is no limit to what form it can take.

It can even be us.

Chapter 1: The Slasher: John Carpenter's *Halloween*

There is an essential distinction between *presence* in horror films, that is, the thing (killer, ghost, ghoul, etc.) being seen on screen, and *implied presence*, which is the suggestion of the thing being seen on screen. The implied presence is either partially seen or not seen at all. The significance of this is the subversion of the need to display the horror in the film; this works with both audio and visual elements. The implied presence in horror films may be formed with music that suggests the approach of the thing, or, as I will refer to it from here on, the villainous entity. Some scores in horror films have become familiar and reused in pop culture, assigned to a specific entity, or more specifically, to the approach of it, the impending and inescapable death nearing its victim. This is certainly true of Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*; the cello's two-note rhythm pattern signals the presence of the shark – yet the shark is hidden in the water, even before its first dorsal fin emerges. The score serves to inform the viewer that the villainous entity is nearby, yet unseen. Even then when the fin emerges it is not the whole shark, the displayed horror that is shown; it is the suggestion of the arrival of the entity, and the fin's moving direction suggests its intent. The length of space between the first and second dorsal fins suggests the size of the entity. For the purposes of illustrating the three foundational approaches outlined in the Introduction, technical elements, forbidden knowledge and the lair, this dissertation will return periodically to *Jaws*; Spielberg's film lends some strong examples of what our three main films indicate.



Jaws (1975) shot 1

There is somewhat of a promise or prospect made by the implied presence in this way; it is the prospect of the inevitable confrontation with the entity that we are encouraged to fulfill before it happens. This expectation that we are responsible for, working with a partial and suggested display of the horror, makes the invisible visible; what we are seeing and hearing, even though partial, or perhaps because it is partial, also makes what we are seeing most compellingly visible. This means that what we don't see on screen, we create ourselves, becoming immersed in the filmic experience on a more intellectual and emotional level. The relationship between image and sound, the combined partnership, even if temporary, for sound to help convey an enhanced version of the image for the viewer in film is what Michel Chion refers to as added value: "Transformed by the image it influences, sound ultimately reprojects onto the image the product of their mutual influences." In the case of horror films, sound "[*suggests*] the forbidden sight in a much more frightening way than if viewers were to see the spectacle with their own eyes" (*Audio Vision*, 22, author's italics). This relates directly to the implied presence; music, sound effects, camera angles, framing, silence, shadows, all present the villainous entity in a partial or suggested way, which encourages us to confront the portion of it we are not seeing (hence, compelling visible). The shark in *Jaws* of course is not humming; but the two-chord bar represents the en-

hanced image of the shark's fins to lend it a more menacing and aggressive intent. The score allows us to believe we are its prey. It is somewhat Pavlovian in its effect on viewers: that score, so familiar, becomes the shark's dinner bell. Yet it is the viewer who responds.

In most slasher films the villainous entity, the serial killer in the case of John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978), is a stalker, meaning he/she/it hunts the victim(s) systematically, usually one at a time. In order for the stalking sequences to convey the implied presence the entity must spend a substantial amount of time either off screen or subtly framed in the background, darkness, or peripherally moving out of view. Score, sound effects and carefully placed and framed props all operate as signals for the approach and arrival of the entity. The entity's presence is signalled by the on screen environment of mise en scène, often mobile framing and both diegetic and non-diegetic sound. This chapter will show how *Halloween* goes a step further.

This chapter will illustrate how the linear path of terror into horror can be interrupted. The prolonging of terror through the cinematographic strategies Carpenter employs creates the opportunity for repeated approaches to the horror confrontation, each closer than the last; and we as viewers think and feel the confrontation is finally happening, but it does not. By the time the final confrontation does indeed happen on screen, we have already confronted the entity ourselves through the negative space the film has presented. Carpenter shows that terror does not have a timestamp limit in a film; horror waits. The Shape, the film's entity, suggests a kind of embodiment of evil. On a deeper level it acts as a gateway from childhood into adulthood. *Halloween's* characters display a double-layered level of childhood belief and source of fear (at about ten and eighteen years old) that become more parallel and alike than at first thought. The way into adulthood for Tommy Doyle is a long dark tunnel haunted by monstrous lurking shad-

ows; for Laurie Strode it is a threshold to step from a protected realm guarded by the parental (authority) eye, over to a dangerously forced assimilation of sex, partnership, money and parenthood. Yet it is significant that both characters refer to the Shape as "The Boogeyman." It is equally significant then that we do not see the Shape in its entirety until the final sequence of the film; in order to maintain the forbidden knowledge it represents, or signifies, it must be partially shown in shadows and murky ghostly long shots where we know it is there but can't locate it. This approach in its prolonging of terror past the point of expected horror, shows both cinematographic elements and forbidden knowledge. Its uncanny environment, an urban setting at once familiar to most viewers, becomes an unlikely lair; unlikely because it is an environment that suggests order, peace and familiarity. The Shape's invasion of that environment transforms it into an uncanny arena for chaos and disruption of both the city's hierarchical structure and the individual's world view. This chapter will answer these questions: *Can a villainous entity actually become an environment in itself? Does our understanding of the lair become changed or compromised from childhood into adulthood? Can terror navigate a horror film without the need of horror until the very end? Or does terror become ineffective after a certain time in a film?*

As indicated, Carpenter's *Halloween* brings the answers to these questions to light. It is a combination of environment, moving props and both diegetic and non-diegetic sound that signal the arrival/presence of the entity; but also, when the viewer does see the entity, its physical appearance maintains the implied presence in the film with cinematographic framing, camera movement, angle and, perhaps the most significant, the interplay between key and fill lighting with direct and indirect light. *Halloween's* entity, a madman named Michael Myers, escapes from a mental institution after fifteen years of incarceration for murdering his older sister on Hal-

loween night. Intent on finding and murdering teenager Laurie Strode and her babysitting friends, he begins a killing spree to get to her on the current Halloween night. For the entity's physical appearance to accommodate the implied presence, the plot has Myers break into a costume store to steal a white faceless rubber mask and kill a tow-truck driver on a country road to steal a pair of black boots and dark blue featureless coveralls. This places the entity's physical appearance in a state of visual neutrality with gender, nationality and adult age. He becomes in this physical state simply a presence. I will explain later how it is that Myers's psychiatrist, in his refusal to acknowledge scientific reasoning, obsessed with capturing his patient and convinced Myers is superhuman, is the catalyst for transforming the human *he* to *it*, accommodating the visual neutrality of the costuming. It is then the technical filmic strategies that place the presence in an implied form. And the costuming Myers now dons becomes quite deliberate in its ability to blend in with shadows, distance, and conversely, provide sudden subtle expressionless appearances. Carpenter's direction and Tommy Lee Wallace and Charles Bornstein's editing collectively utilize a wide spectrum of chiaroscuro.

Halloween takes place in Haddonfield, Illinois. The environment for the main scenes in the film is a cozy unobtrusive suburb. Subverting the common motifs for horror films, *Halloween* moves away from isolated locations such as the cave, the forest and the cabin by the lake, and places its protagonists in a commonplace, identifiable neighbourhood that may be recognized by viewers as resembling their own. In creating the fictional setting for *Halloween*, producer Debra Hill drew inspiration from her home town of Haddonfield, New Jersey:

> I wanted a midwest sleepy town. The idea of pulling off the veneer and seeing what lies beneath intrigued me. What's so interesting to me about horror movies is that they take

> place in small towns where they don't have a huge police force. You put the story in a sleepy town, really beautiful homes, nice full trees, it seems safe. You think nothing could go wrong there, and nothing could be further from the truth. Every town has a secret, every town has that lore of something that went horribly wrong with it. ("The Making" 4:20)

Here setting builds the platform for the implied presence; even, in the seemingly comfortable and safe appearance, becomes an implied presence in itself. The safe suburb, with the vulnerability of the protagonists and the impending arrival of the entity, develops a hidden layer beneath the cozy appearance, anticipating a deathly confrontation, accommodating Schelling's notion of something hidden and come to light. In this way the suburb, a seemingly unlikely location for unheimlich experiences, especially in its home-oriented space, becomes uncanny. This paradoxical environment sets up the anticipation of the protagonists' vulnerability, terror of the arrival of the entity and the collapse of safety and order, *especially* the collapse of safety and order. Forest and cabin settings facilitate the anticipation of the entity because of their isolation; removal of familiar ground produces vulnerability. Here the opening of *Halloween* displays to us not a remote location but a well populated and comfortable one; the houses, carefully parked cars, manicured lawns and paved roads suggest order. The date, October 31st, and the urban lore that accompanies it, herald an approaching disruption to this order.

Carpenter's film opens with the plot set in 1963 when Myers is 6 years old. It is Halloween night. His parents are out and his older sister has her boyfriend over. Carpenter utilizes a POV handheld shot to move around the house's exterior to the living room window. Through the window the viewer is immediately given a voyeuristic gaze into the private life of teenaged

promiscuity. The couple go upstairs and the POV shot moves to the back of the house, into the rear door and into the kitchen. A small hand appears from lower frame right, reaches into a drawer and pulls out a large knife. The POV shot continues into the living room and pauses in the gloom while the boyfriend suddenly leaves. This places the woman, unaware of her stalker, in a vulnerable space. The shot continues up the stairs and in the upstairs hall the hand reaches out lower frame right again and picks up a mask from the floor. A dissonant high-pitched sustained organ note accompanies the shot. As the mask is placed over the camera lens, there is a quick cut to show the same POV shot now with a dual iris filter over the lens, depicting the POV from behind the mask. Now the viewer sees what the killer is seeing with the mask on (5:26).



Halloween (1978) shot 1



Halloween (1978) shot 2

The filtered POV shot continues into the woman's bedroom, where she is sitting undressed at her mirror brushing her hair. When she turns, the shot pans right, framing the knife-wielding hand in a stabbing motion and dull slushing sounds are heard, depicting the stab impact, several times. The shot pans left and tilts downward (still handheld), and she is lying motionless, bloody, on the floor. The masked POV shot turns, moves down the stairs and through the front door, onto the sidewalk, where the parents have just arrived. The father approaches the camera and appears to pull the mask off the killer's face. The shot quick-cuts to a medium close-up of the six-year-old Myers with a stunned look on his face, holding the knife. It is finally here that the viewer sees the killer is a child. The camera pans back to a crane shot, showing both parents on either side of him, standing still; the child is wearing a clown costume. The reverse crane shot stops to centre-frame the family, house and front yard tree, all indicating that this killing took place in a suburban neighbourhood. The mother and father are dressed in evening wear, suggesting their night out was an affluent social event. The contrast between the well-dressed parents and the bloody knife-wielding child in a clown suit indicates the upsetting of order. The parents are bewildered and stare at the child; the child is expressionless, staring straight ahead.

These are the origins of the character Michael Myers, who will be arrested and sent to a sanitarium in Smith's Grove Illinois, where he will stay throughout his trial and conviction. It is significant that the identity of the killer is withheld until the end of the scene; in order to portray the adult character of Michael Myers, especially from his psychiatrist's obsessive perspective, as preternaturally disposed to murder, the killing taking place when Myers is still a child, not yet of the first stages of pre-pubescent cogitative morality, would certainly suggest this. It is then sig-

nificant that such a murder by a six-year-old could even take place. To witness in a film a six-year old child murdering a teenager would simply not be believable without the aid of computer generated imagery, which would have to render the child either superhuman or supernatural, which would eliminate the implied presence; the teenager, unless physically disabled, which, the victim here is clearly not, would simply either escape him or overpower him. For the implied presence to work in conjunction with the suggestion of the preternatural disposition to killing, the age of the killer needs to be withheld. Carpenter achieves this with the POV shot and the iris filter suggesting perhaps a limited or skewed social or psychological perspective. The anonymity of the murderer in this scene, the dual-iris POV shot, allows the viewer to see only the event and the teenaged victim, not the culprit; even then, the actual stabbing penetration is not shown, only the weapon and panning of the camera lens. The victim moans in surprise and pain, off frame. The POV shot, especially with the dual iris filter, allows the viewer to see the murder without *actually* seeing it; the implied presence, subtle but there, in this scene, is both the killing and the killer. This opening scene is important to set up the film; the subsequent scenes take place fifteen years later. Haddonfield now has a secret.

The POV sequence to open the film does seem to take the shape of voyeurism, as the viewer is placed into the position of the gaze of the killer, making the woman objectified. But if we consider the role the dual-iris lens plays in this sequence and compare it to a more conventional subject-shot of the victim only, the lens presents a boundary between the killer's perceptive presence and the victim's physical space. The implied stabbing activity furthers this. The choice for the lensed POV in this opening sequence is more so to construct both an access tunnel into the film's diegesis and to create a veil between the viewer and what will become forbidden

knowledge - from the identity of the killer to how its intentions inform us. Later in the film there will be over-the-shoulder shots of the Shape with the only sound being its breathing as it watches its prey. But here, to introduce the newly chaotic and compromised urban setting, the indication of the voyeur positioning becomes more dynamic. As the sequence seems to suggest that we are the killer, I argue that we are more so being thrust into the diegesis to become a player in the impending fragmenting of the ordered urban centre.

Myers escapes the institution on the night before Halloween 1978. Myers's psychiatrist, Dr. Sam Loomis, a pivotal figure in the film, accompanies a nurse to arrive at the sanitarium during a rainy night to transfer the now adult Myers to a jail for the morning's trial. The patients are roaming around the fenced-in yard in the rain, their white robes making them stand out in the darkness, their faces hidden. Loomis exits the car to use the gate phone. Myers attacks the car, breaking the passenger window and forcing the nurse, who was driving, out of the car and, panicking, to dive into a nearby ditch for safety. Myers drives off. This scene is a bridge between the prologue and the main portion of the film, which takes place on Halloween day and night. It also introduces Dr. Loomis, who, having treated Myers for fifteen years, believes he should never be free, referring to him as a supernatural being. When they first arrive at the sanitarium:

NURSE: Are there any special instructions?

LOOMIS: Just try to understand what we are dealing with here. Don't underestimate it.

NURSE: Don't you think we can refer to *it* as *him*?

LOOMIS: If you say so.

NURSE: What do I give him when we take him in front of the judge?

LOOMIS: Thorazine.

NURSE: He'll barely be able to sit up.

LOOMIS: That's the idea. (8:47)

Loomis's refusal to see Myers as a human being is important for the implementation of the implied presence throughout the rest of the film. When Carpenter and Hill were writing the script for the film the Myers character as an adult was referred to as "The Shape" (*25 Years Later* 6:29); there are no lines for the Shape, only movement. The absence of dialogue allows the Shape to appear and disappear on screen, allowing cinematographic, sound and editing strategies to dictate *its* approach, appearance (partial or implied) and the evidence of *its* aftermath. Perhaps because Loomis, always a step behind the Shape, seems to always find *its* aftermath (a dead body, a broken into store, an abandoned car), it becomes easy for him, and for us, to know that *it* has been there and moved on, but always moving, closer, towards the ultimate prey, who is the sister, Laurie Strode. The stolen mask and coveralls become representative of not only non-identifying age, gender and nationality, but also the possibility of non-human: "Michael Myers was a monster made of cinematic parts. The camera; the framing; light and shadow; sound, and editing. He was death itself" (*25 Years* (Narrator), 8:00). We may easily see Loomis as a taxed and aging psychiatrist, fraying at the ends of rational cogitation; and that as a narrative strategy is effective in creating doubt for the viewer, perhaps even interpreting the Loomis character as a red-herring.[11] But as the film progresses there is more and more of the inhuman side of Myers, now the Shape, through behavioural pattern, linear plotting and destruction, aided by the easy guise of

[11] The red herring is an often-used plot device for detective fiction; most often in armchair detective fiction, we are encouraged to see what appears to be an obvious choice for the culprit as the episode progresses. But towards the end, we discover it is someone else, someone much less suspicious, who is the real killer. The red-herring ends up being a misinterpreted character, or someone at the wrong place at the wrong time and wrongly suspected, but innocent. Basically an attention decoy if you will.

being costumed on the one night of the year where costumes are not out of place in society. Loomis, in a dual role of Myers' psychiatrist, positioned on a level of authority, and (later on) protector of Laurie and the children she babysits, is a mediator between individual and collective consciousness. He wavers between an adult rationality and a childlike cautioning of impending doom. At the sanitarium Myers, the last known of the deranged human man, escapes in the car, stranding Loomis and the nurse, who's name is Marion Chambers. The night ends and it is day. Halloween. Now the main portion of the film begins.

The rest of the film takes place over the course of about twenty hours. Introduced is the cozy suburb of Haddonfield Illinois and also introduced are the protagonists, late-teenaged Laurie Strode and Tommy Doyle, who is about 8. Laurie will be babysitting Tommy later that evening. Their suburban neighbourhood is a calm orderly recognizable and familiar environment that is most familiar during the daytime – order in the form of travel, communication, work, school – and at its most homely. This is the type of environment that Debra Hill was discussing in her examination of a presumably impenetrable familiar space. From the film's opening sequences, the viewer knows that Myers is now making the transformation from escaped convicted murderer to The Shape and could already be in the area, perhaps even nearby. The prelude scenes now add an immediate sense of both underlying secret and impending doom to the characters we've only just now met. In a sense, we know something they don't, which involves us more deeply in the narrative, encouraging an emotional investment in the characters. In this way the cozy neighbourhood becomes both homely and unhomely; there is something beneath the surface that is waiting to be revealed, as Hill states. The implied presence in these sequences suggests the constant possibility of being watched, being stalked. In this way we have a sense of three-way

surveillance: first, the teenagers being watched by authority (Annie's father is a police officer who doesn't trust kids) and the parental eye (Laurie's father is a real estate agent trying to sell the Myers house; he tells Laurie to drop the key under the porch mat on her way to school for the prospective buyers' meeting later that day. For a moment we are with her at the front door of the entity's lair, the long abandoned and empty Myers house. We know this because it is standing just inside the door, watching her approach and allowing her to leave [13:45]).[12] Second, the children being babysat that evening watched by their prospective teenaged babysitters, the teenagers conveying a paradoxical role of adult-children, given the opportunity to stray from the parental eye, but also assuming the role of authority figure. Third, the teenagers are being watched by the entity. As with many slasher films of the 1970's and 80's, the entity will have to find and kill all her friends to get to her (The final girl, an element of slasher horror films that Carol Clover discusses, will be addressed a bit later). So the implied presence is the unseen eye, yet always nearby, watching for mistakes, deviance, and waiting for a moment of vulnerability to strike. We may also include ourselves in this multi-layered function of watching; we as the film's audience have assumed a voyeuristic role, especially with the knowledge of the impending arrival of the Shape and introduction to Laurie that the final confrontation's participants are now in motion. The film's set-up sequences have afforded the viewer the luxury of being a step ahead of all of the characters so far. Here is the first of the over-the-shoulder shots, repositioning the viewer from the entity's lensed gaze, to one of collusion - we stand with the entity inside the lair. We, in essence, become the omniscient eye observing everything unfolding (13:40):

[12] It is not made known to us that Laurie is Michael's sister. As far as she and the town know, the Myers house is a haunted empty house filled with the ghosts of the killings from years past. It will be later in the story that we find out they are related and that Laurie is a more intended target than we at first thought. But now, she has no idea.



Halloween (1978) shot 3



Halloween (1978) shot 4



Halloween (1978) shot 5

The screen on the front window obscures Laurie's view, even though it is clear she is unaware of any presence inside the house. The Shape's head is positioned frame right, just barely in view. A dissonant organ note along with breathing are heard. The window screen is an example of a physical barrier between order and chaos, rationality and irrationality, real and unreal. Yet it is translucent, offering a glimpse through it from chaos to view the ordered side; as the film progresses, the glimpse through a more figurative veil will offer the opposite.

The Shape, now in mask and coveralls (but still with the car, which gives it an eerie, surreal element, almost like a faceless driver), is indeed seen during the daytime. The placement and movement of the Shape though is much different from its appearances later in the film, at night. During the day the Shape is framed with a long shot, standing stock-still, staring at Laurie and only for a second or two. Then it is gone, before anyone else can see it. This positions the Shape as more of a reflection of Laurie's imagination and fear of it being Halloween than an actual presence – she knows she will be babysitting and there will certainly be pranks afoot by her friends; this suggests the Shape as an implied presence. Her friends don't believe she is seeing anything; she tells them someone is there, but they tease her that her hallucinations of being followed are a product of her needing a date. This is a thread that runs through the film's teenager dialogue and puts emphasis on Colavito's notion of sex as forbidden knowledge as central to the victimized fate of the female protagonist (*Knowing Fear*, 336) . Both of her friends who the entity kills are murdered either just before or just after sex. Laurie, the only one of her friends to abstain from sex, is the last to survive and the first to see the Shape. We know though that now, even in the day, the Shape is indeed in Haddonfield and is watching Laurie, waiting for the right time to strike. Between school time and babysitting times Laurie sees it three times: outside the

school window where she is sitting in class (15:52), beside a hedge on her way home from school (23:20), and in the backyard after she gets home (26:40). In all three cases, it is only Laurie who actually sees it. Near the hedge she points it out to Annie but Annie is distracted, searching in her bag; when she looks up, it is gone:

LAURIE: "It was standing right there."

ANNIE: "Poor Laurie, scared another one away" (24:30)

Carpenter is careful in these sequences to bookend the long shots of the Shape with two close-ups of Laurie's frowning face. A shot of her look, cut to the Shape standing there, then back to the close-up of her look. The fourth shot in these sequences is the empty space where the Shape was, but is now gone. These repeated four-shot quick cut sequences suggest that Laurie sees the Shape, and then sees it disappear, which in turn suggests that what she is seeing is from within her own imagination. This, coupled with her friends not believing her and telling her she needs a date, and the Shape being motionless and fleeting, all position the Shape in an implied state, indicating its arrival in Haddonfield, but not yet making its move towards its prey. The fact that Laurie's friends don't believe her is important, as will be discussed later in the chapter; the doubt Laurie has for her own perception projects onto our own perception of the Shape, as we are encouraged to wonder if it is actually there, playing with its prey or still en route and what we are seeing here is another narrative element – perhaps the instinctive fearful anticipation of Laurie's babysitting job on Halloween night. Either way, the doubt is a key factor for even a visible on-screen framing of the Shape to maintain an implied presence.



Halloween (1978) shot 6



Halloween (1978) shot 7



Halloween (1978) shot 8

Similar non-diegetic music plays in all three moments of the entity's appearance to Laurie. In the car shot it is a slow paced, high-pitched tinkling-timbred piano score, suggesting an eerie dreamy quality, which accompanies many of the Shape's subsequent appearances. Laurie is in class, and the droning sound of the teacher's voice sneaks out for the score and then back in to ask her a question. The piano score stops as Laurie answers. When she looks out again, the entity is gone. In the hedge shot, a slow two-note piano minor scale is played with a high-pitched organ note, also descending; it is nearly identical to the last shot of the opening scene with the 6-year-old Myers exiting the family house. The same eerie piano/organ scale accompanies the backyard scene, with Laurie shutting her bedroom window and backing away from it, hugging herself. She is convinced she is seeing someone following her. The similar score in these three shots suggests Carpenter is assigning this particular non-diegetic sound arrangement to the physical presence of the Shape. Here is an example of Chion's notion of added value; the assigning of the score to the Shape, still and stalking, knowing the confrontation will take place later in the film, gives the entity an impending sense of violence and murderous intent. We, as does Laurie, see it from a distance and fleeting – the doubt Laurie feels we may empathize with. The score with the implied presence in the shots inform us that the Shape is danger, evil, death.

Chion asserts that a certain musical score or accompaniment piece in film can be assigned to a certain character or moment, often one that repeats in the narrative; this he calls a leitmotif: "Each […] character is assigned a musical theme, which characterizes the character or idea and acts as its musical guardian angel […] These musical themes are heard frequently in the orchestral score as 'their' characters appear" (*Audio Vision,* 51). Similar as we have come to learn that the three bar cello piece is assigned to the shark in *Jaws*, the Shape in *Halloween* is assigned,

firmly in these three private appearances to Laurie, the piano-organ minor score when it is near-by. We will subsequently become accustomed to expect that particular score as the film's narrative develops, to anticipate its leitmotif as a signal that the Shape is approaching. In this way, music becomes an important element of the development of terror.

The transition from day to night and the parallel positioning of the entity and the teenagers as predator/prey is set up in two important scenes. When Tommy comes out of school he is carrying a pumpkin. He is small, and cornered on the front steps by three bullies, he is portrayed as vulnerable and weak (16:54). Carpenter separates the teenaged preoccupied mind from the irrational fears of a child. Instead of either attaining or avoiding a teenaged sexual encounter, Tommy's child mind is fixated on not meeting the Boogeyman on Halloween.



Halloween (1978) shot 9

The bullies chant "He's gonna GET YOU!", playing on Tommy's fear of what he thinks of as the Boogeyman, a faceless, identity-less being that preys on children. The bullies follow him and laugh at him and trip him, making him fall onto his pumpkin, breaking it. They split up and run, laughing. One bully runs down the stairs and into the hands of a tall adult figure clad in dark blue coveralls. The shot is a low-medium-shot framing the adult actor from mid-thigh to neck, not

showing the face – from this vantage the bully's facial expression is seen clearly. In the rule of thirds framing the bully is nearly centred, making him the focal point of the shot – his pause and stare drive the shot's narrative intent (17:15):



Halloween (1978) shot 10

Carpenter is careful not to show the Shape's masked head; it is the bully's facial expression that tells who – or what – he has encountered; it is a child who informs us that this person is not friend, but foe. It is ironic that it is Halloween and certainly there will be citizens clad in costumes by late afternoon, so initially there really shouldn't be any surprise to see a mask; but here the child's intuition is acute. There is a brief sharp and high-pitched, high-reverb scraping sound and then the film's opening credit piano score, the same quick and sharp-noted eerie minor scale, the leitmotif. Tommy is framed high-right, examining his broken pumpkin, unaware of the stalker nearby. The bully stares at the Shape for a moment and then runs away. The Shape lets him go; he is not its target.[13] We know The Shape is interested in Tommy because Tommy was with Laurie in the earlier scene dropping the key off at the Myers house; it has seen Laurie of course, but

[13] This is one of my favourite shots in the film; the bully, only a moment before, was teasing Tommy about the Boogeyman and now literally runs into it. The grin is gone from his face in an instant. Carpenter suggests to us in this scene that we must be careful of what we caper and cajole about – it might be lurking nearby. No more bullying for this young man, I gather.

it knows that Tommy will lead it to her. It follows Tommy away from the school and then drives away. This scene is important for later scenes with Laurie and Tommy discussing reality from fantasy on Halloween night, giving context on the difference between the Boogeyman as a mythological idea and as a real living monster. For Tommy the Shape is the Boogeyman; for Laurie it is a stranger threatening her safety.

Later, Laurie's friend Annie picks Laurie up in her car and they drive together to their babysitting appointments, which are across the road from one another (34:00). The sequence is shot from the back seat looking out the windshield. Carpenter uses two-shots and close-up cuts of Annie and Laurie as they discuss the upcoming dance and who Laurie likes at school. Annie teases Laurie about how surprised she is that Laurie thinks about boys at all. The back seat vantage allows the viewer to see the setting sun as they cross the suburbs. The sun shines through the trees, creating a subtle natural rim lighting on their faces. As their conversation continues, the sky gets increasingly purple and shadows grow deeper inside the car. The piano score begins again as a long shot at street level shows that the Shape's car is following them; it is also suggested that because the girls are busy discussing dates they don't notice the car behind them. A quick cut to Laurie getting out of the car and Annie parking across the road – it is full dark (35:30). The Shape is here. Now everything is set up – the viewer knows the characters, their situations, it is Halloween night, the Shape is placed to begin its killing spree to go after Laurie and most importantly, none of them are aware of its presence, which puts it in perfect position to appear in wholly or partially implied form, especially under the cover of darkness and shadows, which Carpenter utilizes well. The significant aspect of this narrative set-up is that we are aware of The Shape's presence, but so far through the film (since Myers's escape) there has been no

actual killing (other than the truck driver) or definitive action from it. We know it is there and what is about to happen, but there is still lots of room for the implied presence to be implemented. Carpenter's slow and deliberate pacing through the film allows the Shape, portrayed as slow and plodding, to maintain that parallel pace and to keep us guessing what it will do and how it will do it – this is key to our investment in the film's rising action – our anticipation of *how* it will kill the babysitters: "With *Halloween*, the visual style of the film [is] inseparable from the story; the innovative photography created a world where danger lurked around every corner and every empty space had the potential to conceal a threat" (*25 Years,* (Narrator), 5:18). As will be explained later, Rob Zombie's remake deploys a fast and rapid pace, and Myers there is much bigger and faster. Zombie's approach, while aggressively terrorizing, forces us to confront the entity right away. Carpenter's approach keeps us standing still, waiting, watching, looking, anticipating, very much a parallel to the behaviour of the entity itself. Cinematographer Dean Cundey asserts that Carpenter wanted to "create the tension, the suspense, in the Michael Myers presence, or even not being there. Where was he lurking?" (*25 Years*, 5:37). This question is key to the implied presence; the constant knowledge of its presence, its nearby approach and impending attack facilitates terror through suspense and the anticipation of horror elevates the emotional impact of the confrontation when it finally does happen. It is Carpenter's deliberate parallel approach with camerawork, editing and performer movement that provides a larger platform for suggestion, subtlety and suspense. The turning of the head that I mentioned at the start, the "I don't want to see that" now becomes "where is it?" Now we are looking for it. Here is where sound becomes key to this perceptual shift. The film utilizes a bevy of sound effects, glasses tinkling, doors squeaking, ceilings thumping, things that in otherwise silence also have the potential

to signal the approach or arrival of the Shape. This places us as the viewer/participant-protagonist in a simultaneous position of being seen, but also of trying to see, which challenges the idea of a one-way voyeuristic gaze. We become both the object and the subject of the gaze. In our participating position as protagonist, we are immersed in the film's diegesis as well as its narrative.

Tommy Doyle is an important character. He is responsible for positioning Laurie in two simultaneous roles. As a babysitter, she is a maternally instinct-driven young adult in charge of his safety; she is also a teenager not yet fully grown emotionally from her own childhood. This latter role is perpetuated by her conversations with Tommy about what he calls the Boogeyman, which The Shape signifies in the film. Tommy asks her what the Boogeyman is and before she can respond, the phone rings. It is Annie, with news of a young man's interest in Laurie from school. These roles converge in this scene (41:32); Laurie is moved from a responsible adult answering a child's fearful question to responding fearfully herself to Annie's news. She is too shy to go out on a date, which prompts the teasing she receives from her friends. This creates a parallel between Laurie and Tommy, both being teased for their perceptions by their peers. While Laurie is on the phone pleading for Annie to call the date off, Tommy goes to the window and looks out. There are trick-or-treaters walking on the sidewalk outside and across the road, where Annie is babysitting, a shadowy figure stands still on the lawn. Laurie has gone in an instant from motherly voice of reason telling Tommy that there is no such thing as the Boogeyman to unconsciously tugging at her hair and telling Annie on the phone that she absolutely can't go out on a date with the boy she likes. In this instant she appears as fearful and vulnerable as a child. It is a noticeable recurrence in the film that when Laurie, Annie and/or Lynda discuss dates or sex, the Shape is seen nearby. Yet in this convergence scene, we see the duality in Laurie, a struggling

with being an authority figure for Tommy and pleading with Annie, more experienced with amorous encounters, who appears to control Laurie's emotional state. It is significant that in this scene, the Shape appears to Tommy at the same time Laurie fears a more adult-oriented social presence. It is also important to note that Tommy peers behind the living room curtain to view the Shape across the road, the curtain being an example of the veil I discuss that separates rationality and the unknown, or forbidden, realm.



Halloween (1978) shot 11

Carpenter uses an extreme long shot to establish the uncanny effect of a friendly neighbourhood and an intruding presence in the middle of it. The key light comes from the lower part of the house with the fill light, a large one, placing the left portion of the house in a blue ghostly glow. The Shape is in silhouette and stands still, seeming to be looking right at the viewer. At a quick glance it might be part of the shadows of the trees or of the porch, but we know it is the Shape. And Tommy also knows. He goes to Laurie and tells her the Boogeyman is outside; when Laurie looks, the Shape is gone and she tells him to go watch TV. There is a clear pattern in the film of the appearance of the Shape near Laurie and the possibility, through her interactions with Annie and Lynda, of a sexual encounter. As mentioned, Annie and Lynda's demises both come

during their own sexual encounters. This links the Shape to Colavito's notion of forbidden knowledge in that the Shape represents both that which is hidden and come to light, and the consequences of leaving the parental gaze and even perhaps a dying childhood, or at least a compromised sense of innocence. The term I use here, the death of childhood, can be interpreted as both figurative (innocence) and literal (virginity). Granted, the age difference between Tommy and Laurie is large, and while Tommy would have no inkling of sexual notions, Laurie clearly does because she fears it. She will become, as I will address shortly in response to Carol Clover's discussion, The Final Girl (Clover, 35), the last surviving female character, bound to confronting the Shape, her own human mortality, and her own childhood demise. The implied presence in this way comes in two forms: the partial/suggested visibility of the Shape and the anticipation, or terror, of an impending and inescapable confrontation with the entity and what that confrontation also includes. The Shape's slow, plodding approach establishes terror until then.

From here Carpenter utilizes props and brief glimpses of the Shape's mask and shadowy movements to signal the beginning of the climactic action scenes of the film. Annie goes to the backyard laundry room and finds the lights, of course, non-operational. When she goes in, the door slowly bangs shut against the jam. When it opens again, there is a medium-shot of the Shape behind the door, its face framed through the door's window. Low-key lighting, with two key lights from the left and right direction and the draped window framing, give the Shape a dreamy, ghostly quality. A high-pitched organ double-note accompanies the shot, creating dissonance and adding to the surreal effect of the moment. When Annie looks out, there is nothing there. Again, the Shape is fleeting, momentary, but also nearby (46:51).



Halloween (1978) shot 12

As discussed in the Introduction, doors and windows are utilized for their effect of sustaining the environment and feel of the lair. In *Halloween,* the Shape's lair is the empty haunted Myers house; yet it is able to, in its repositioning with its potential victims, transform other surroundings into its lair in a similar way. It lurks around the house where Annie is staying, peering in windows, knocking on surfaces and drifting past open doors that should be shut and locked. The Pavlovian effect to terror that I discussed with Giovani Pezzulo's study of perceptual inference, in the case of the Shape, conditions us to assign the window ajar and door unlocked to the entity, even before we see it looking in or walking by. Yet because we still don't see the Shape in its entirety, the framing of windows and doors, especially within the frame of the cinematic screen, create a kind of portal through which, like the veil, we may catch a glimpse of the unknown realm that the entity resides in. It creates a sense of dramatic irony when we realize a character doesn't realize a door is no longer locked. We want to reach out and stop them from entering or exiting; they are walking into the Shape's lair unaware. But we are keenly aware.

The film, having set up the characters, environment, suspense and terror, and assigning both diegetic and non-diegetic sound to the entity, as well as giving glimpses of what the villainous entity looks like, or what the viewer can interpret it looks like, now increases the action and

the entity begins its attacks on the characters. Terror has become horror in confrontation, and the Shape starts to go after Laurie through her friends. Carpenter isn't done with the implied presence, but the point of the implied presence shots and scenes until now have been purposefully designed and arranged to supply just enough visual and audio information to know when it will strike; not yet how, but at least when. This positioning for a viewer allows the film to have an enhanced and sustained terror effect – we still haven't seen it fully yet, but we know the moment has come. It is a unique ability for a horror film to have terror and horror at the same time. The promise or prospect of the inevitable confrontation with the entity made by the implied presence encouraging us to fulfill it before it happens has been supplied and the invisible has become visible, yet also because what we are seeing and hearing is partial, makes the visible, especially through the anticipation of the confrontation, compellingly visible.

Annie delivers the child she is babysitting across the road to Laurie, with the promise that she will talk to the young man from school about cancelling the potential date in the morning if Laurie will watch both children so she can meet her boyfriend. Laurie agrees and Annie goes to her car. Realizing the door is locked, she gets her keys. The only sounds through this scene are Annie singing a love song, clearly distracted, and the diegetic sounds of her hair brush through her hair, the clicking of her heels and the sneaking-in of her opening the car door handle. This last is important because the car door was locked, but she is too distracted to notice. She gets in, the closing of the door is loud and she stops singing, frowning. She puts her finger to the windshield, seeing that the windows are fogged over. The sound of her finger squeaking down the glass is loud in the score-silence, heightening the moment of in-extremis. The Shape jumps up from the back seat, grabs her, chokes her and then stabs her. A low major keyboard note sounds

once with a few seconds of sustain and then it is only diegetic sounds during the killing, the Shape's heavy muffled breathing and Annie's choking (54:10).



Halloween (1978) shot 13

Still, in this attack scene, the Shape is only seen as it was outside the laundry room door, partially visible because of the fogged-over windows, seemingly ghostly and dream-like, a phantom more than a tangible presence. The key light is projected from lower-left frame, and illuminates Annie's struggling face more than the Shape's faceless mask. This lighting arrangement puts more focus on the protagonist's situation than the killer, which enhances viewer emotional investment in the anticipation of the final confrontation with the Shape and Laurie, where the children are. It is clear by now that's where the Shape is headed.

There have been six scenes with psychiatrist Sam Loomis interspersed throughout the film so far: the sanitarium pick-up attempt and escape; Loomis presumably the following day, leaving the sanitarium after a heated exchange with the facility coordinator; at a phone booth warning the police after Myers kills the tow-truck driver; at the cemetery after the grave of Myers's sister has been vandalized; meeting the sheriff outside the broken-into costume store; and again with the sheriff that night in the abandoned Myers house. Here Loomis is determined to wait for the Shape to return so he can confront it. In all six scenes Loomis's character performs a

two-fold function: he is like a detective, one step behind the villainous entity and he also represents an adult version of child-like irrationality. He warns the police that Myers isn't human and cannot be stopped with ordinary methods. Yet at the same time he is determined to rely on his own psychiatric experience, having been assigned to Myers for over a decade, to somehow stop the Shape from completing its murderous mission. Loomis's perception of Myers as inhuman narratively bookends the positioning of the Shape with Tommy's; in this way both Loomis and Tommy see the Shape as the Boogeyman and both try to warn others but aren't taken seriously.[14] This makes the Shape's costuming and dreamy quality framed in camera shots and angles so important, as well as Laurie's friends teasing her – the Shape's presence must remain, to a certain degree, an uncertainty. Yet for terror to be conveyed effectively, only the viewer knows what is about to happen. Carpenter has arranged the narrative, plot, characters and cinematographic suggestion so far in the film to bring everyone and everything to a central location and moment. Here the narrative's main focus shifts to put more control into what the Shape is doing, and from here on it will be more physically revealed, in action; this will be effective in framing Laurie in a more victim-oriented position, heightening terror even more, and as mentioned, allowing the film to give both terror and horror at the same time.

Loomis is always a step behind the Shape, always displaying a duality in both himself and the way he addresses his patient. Myers is/was a human being, according to Loomis, but now has achieved a state of superhuman ability - namely that of the horror film trope - seeming invincibility. It makes sense that Loomis help set the suspension of disbelief necessary for us to expe-

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[14] Tommy, after telling Laurie that the Boogeyman is outside, is admonished and warned if he doesn't stop he'll be sent to bed. He sulks on the couch "Nobody believes me" (55:56). Loomis, leaving the sanitarium, is angry the staff won't go to greater lengths to stop the escaped Myers. The coordinator tries to blame Loomis's lax attention. Loomis hollers "I TOLD EVERYBODY!" (14:43).

rience the terror that the Shape invokes, beyond what a human Myers would be able to do. Yet part of Loomis's motivation for his persistent pursuit of what he refers to as his former patient is formed by his expression of his own mortality, that which reflects the vulnerability of the town of Haddonfield. He constantly heralds, to people of authority, the Shape's presence, enabling us to become aware of it before we see it. Yet authority in this film, as it is in so many horror films, is limited in its power and cognizance. Loomis hollers for authority to realize the dangers of approaching evil. But the sanitarium co-ordinator chooses to blame Loomis for faulty patient monitoring. The local police sheriff (victim Annie's father), immediately assumes the break-in at the costume store was "probably kids" (32:24). When Loomis is on the phone with the police after finding the abandoned tow-truck, he illustrates his dual role with his reasoning: "He's on his way [pause] You've got to believe me, officer, he is coming to Haddonfield [pause] Because I know him, I'm his doctor, you must be ready for him [pause] If you don't, it's your funeral" (19:03). The last statement by Loomis to the officer on the phone shows a transition from a psychiatrist addressing his patient, to an exasperated citizen, warning of a larger, more destructive result, assuming if the police do nothing, or not enough, to stop Myers/the Shape, everyone will die. This is also, for the viewer, an indication that the police force will have little to no effect in stopping the Shape on its destructive path.

A thread that runs through the three films studied in this dissertation is the inability of authority figures to maintain order and stop chaos from disrupting a societal system. Coupled with this is my argument that it is mistrust of the system (and the idea of authority that attempts - and fails - to uphold it) that drives certain protagonists to assume the role of authority when the traditional one becomes inert. Kendall Phillips asserts that Carpenter's *Halloween* "draws on the

elements of preceding horror films, but also inverts the predominant sense of invading chaos." Phillips argues that the Myers character "functions as a punishing avenger who imposes order in an otherwise chaotic world" (126). I agree to a certain point, that the Shape, not Myers, does indeed act as a punisher of the wicked, as far as cautioning a more free-spirited (1970's revolutionary) sexual enlightenment and singling out a disbelief in adult rationality, but I argue that bringing chaos is a necessary element of the Shape's existence. The Shape must establish chaos in order to reframe the notion of a value-based order; the Shape does not initiate chaos, but it embodies it (as is affirmed from Loomis); the chaotic confrontation with the Shape shows us the consequences from proceeding from teenaged moral ambiguity into an adulthood that is already tainted from immorality. Loomis becomes a key figure who tells us this with his warnings to a seemingly inept and indifferent authority. Loomis tries to trust the system but he cannot because he isn't acknowledged by it; but he creates for us our mistrust of the system through our acknowledgment of his perspectives on what the Shape is and what it intends to do. As the film progresses, there is a more defined duality in Loomis's adherence to finding his former patient, but also to try and save a town from an evil that cannot be stopped. We will see a parallel between Loomis's challenged rationality and Tommy Doyle's childlike perspective of the Boogeyman towards the film's conclusion.

Lynda and her boyfriend Bob arrive at the house Annie is babysitting at, but they find her gone. They enter the house through an open front door, informing us that the Shape is inside. Again, there is the importance of the unlocked door prop as implied presence; as with many horror films, the villainous entity arrives before the approaching protagonists and provides an invite to enter the domain. Amorously distracted, they do so. Carpenter utilizes many times the un-

locked, open and closing doors to signal the nearby hidden presence of the entity; the door creates a frame of both a screen (as in a see-through object to hide behind) for the Shape to appear in its dream-like partial presence and also the doorway as a liminal space between life and death, in this way terror and horror, in extremis. Lynda calls Laurie, discovers she has both children and she and Bob take advantage of the (mistakenly) empty house to enjoy their tryst.

After sex Bob goes downstairs to the kitchen to get them both a beer. The terrace door softly knocks open. Bob, thinking it's Annie and her boyfriend, begins opening doors (terrace, closet), calling them out. The Shape comes lurching out of the closet and impales Bob to the door with a large butcher knife. A hard cut to Lynda in bed filing her nails. The bedroom door creaks open and a figure is standing in the doorway covered in a sheet (1:06:10). Lynda of course thinks it's Bob and laughs, unaware. The implied presence here includes a touch of comedy; the Shape has donned the sheet, but cut out eyeholes and placed Bob's glasses on top of them. Again the rule of thirds is used and the Shape and doorway are off-centre, to put emphasis on the darkness of the bedroom and to highlight the importance of the doorway as liminal space; it is literally death entering the room. Here is a clear example of terror and horror happening simultaneously. Lynda is about to die and she is indeed confronting the entity but she has no idea. Impatient, she gets out of bed and tries to call Laurie. The Shape attacks and kills her, strangling her with the phone cord.

It is interesting that a phone chord is used as the weapon of choice in this scene. In chapter 2 I will discuss Carol Clover's notion of the slasher films' villain utilizing non-technical weaponry to employ on its victims. Here the phone chord signals a removal of communication between victims; the Shape knows Laurie is on the other line and listens to her voice.



Halloween (1978) shot 14

The final confrontation happens very quickly. Lynda is killed while Laurie is listening on the phone line; the Shape listens to Laurie, only breathing. Alarmed, Laurie hangs up and checks on the sleeping kids and then goes across the street to investigate. There she finds the bodies of Annie, Bob and Lynda. Screaming, she backs into the hallway and is confronted by the Shape. She escapes and scrambles back across the road, where the Shape follows her and the confrontation takes place. There is no implied presence utilized here, as there is no need; all the implied presence sequences and shots have set up this final scene. We finally see the Shape up close and in the light (1:23:51):



Halloween (1978) shot 15

Yet Carpenter is still careful to maintain a partial framing of the entity, even in the horror confrontation. It is seen descending the staircase, but it is a low-angle long-shot in near-complete darkness, giving the perspective of a floating shadow. The POV shot above is from Laurie's perspective hiding in a closet. The naked bulb acts as a key light and a fill light is used from off-screen right, behind the Shape's right shoulder, to add rim lighting to its head and the bars of the closet door onto the wall, reinforcing the protagonist's position of a prisoner. Even though Laurie and the children survive, this shot positions the Shape as the dominant figure and literally breaking into the private space of a suburban neighbourhood. Perhaps more significantly, the shot and closet setting also suggest that the Shape is breaking into Laurie's self-controlled temporary adult role; she has gone from not believing Tommy about the Boogeyman to fighting it off for survival. The last lines of the film reinforce this, as will be mentioned in a moment. Laurie stabs the Shape with a coat hanger, giving her time to send the kids out of the house to go to neighbours for help. Important is her interaction with the children during this sequence; she gets to her knees to be eye-to-eye with them and tells them they're going for a walk. Tommy and Lindsay tell her they're scared. Laurie says there's nothing to be afraid of. Tommy says "Are you sure? How?" Laurie responds with "I killed him" (1:22:17). The last remnants of Laurie's attempt at performing a maternal role with the children are formed with her choice of the word "him," assigning the Shape to a human intruder, along with her calm assertion of taking a walk, wanting to keep the children safe but also calm. Tommy responds with an adamant shake of his head and "You can't kill the Boogeyman." The children do escape the house, but the Shape appears once again to attack Laurie. As she struggles with it, Loomis, as mentioned, always one step behind the Shape, is

suddenly there, leaping up the stairs and drawing his gun. Loomis shoots the Shape six times. The Shape is forced back onto the balcony and falls to the ground below.

Laurie, crying and cowering on the floor, lifts her head and looks at Loomis. She says, "It *was* the Boogeyman." The following shot of Loomis is significant. It is a medium-close-up slightly low-angle shot. Loomis stands in a doorway, which symmetrically frames the shot. He is positioned off-right, again illustrating the rule of thirds, placing the viewer's eye more strongly on him. Smoke drifts slowly (from the gun) into the room where the balcony is. He turns to Laurie and replies "As a matter of fact, it was" (1:27:25). The significance of the doorframe as liminal space coupled with the fading drifting smoke places emphasis on Laurie's validation of the existence of the Boogeyman. Her admission signals the compromising of her emerging adulthood and validates both Loomis's and Tommy's heralding of a superhuman entity; the smoke, drifting towards the open balcony where the Shape fell from, signals its departure. The ending of the film, while seemingly closed narratively, also remains open in this way; we are encouraged to consider the consequences of both the families of the deceased but also the disruption of childhood growth to maturity. The Shape, even though now presumed dead,[15] represents these things. Carpenter has given us so much of the implied presence and an abundance of open doors and windows along the way that, even after the entity's departure, it is still plausible to imagine it being nearby, unseen, retreated but waiting for the next time.

[15] Of course it isn't; Loomis looks down from the balcony and there is no body there, which aligns well with many slasher films of the 1970's and 80's – the open ending, which suggests the entity escaping and out there somewhere, reinstates the terror aspect that lingers after the film has been seen.



Halloween (1978) shot 16

Clover discusses the role of the Final Girl in slasher horror films as a character, the final survivor, who "is abject terror personified" (35). Part of the Final Girl's role is that she "alone looks death in the face, but she alone also finds strength either to stay the killer long enough to be rescued (ending A), or to kill him herself (ending B). Clover observes that following *Halloween*, the Final Girl character becomes more assertive, able to defend herself and even overwhelm her pursuer (37). Clover does note film exceptions, but both endings seem to suggest a successful conclusion to the last transition from terror into horror, and a defeat of the villain. Laurie Strode exhibits evidence of both endings, yet at the same time, her last comment to Loomis challenges this by suggesting a reversion to a childlike perspective, one that the children she was babysitting made clear to her. Laurie was indeed able to save the children, and she did fight off the Shape long enough to do so. And it was Loomis who arrived to shoot the Shape with finally a weapon more deadly than a knife or a coat hanger. Yet the Shape does not die. It disappears. Laurie, reeling from her traumatic experience of survival and witnessing the deaths of her friends, now assumes the response in an affirmative way instead of an inquisitive one. "It *was* the Boogeyman." Not asking, or wondering - stating, with wonder, what seems obvious. Laurie's affirmation informs us that the eradication of the villainous entity is not successful. If she had

"killed him," as she told the children, Tommy's response would become dismissible, left behind in the realm of childhood innocence; Laurie does not move from childhood into adulthood with this last statement. Instead, she affirms Tommy's idea of an unkillable evil, making the disappearance of the Shape (sequel payoffs aside) align with the idea that it has moved on for the time being. Loomis glares out onto the town from the upper floor balcony, and Laurie cries, not of relief, but of helplessness and defeat. At the confrontation's conclusion, Loomis acts from the irrational side of his duality to confirm Laurie's childlike fears come true by confirming her affirmation and displaying to us a clear response of failure to restore order, something the authority figures he defies could not do either. The Shape remains in a mythological realm and we are tempted to see things at this final point more from Tommy's perspective. He was right; you *can't* kill the Boogeyman.

Carpenter makes use of different ways to convey the implied presence. The Shape appears as a gowned man running through the rain at night, a shadowy faceless figure standing still, a ghostly apparition in a sheet, which Lynda, laughing, conveys the implied presence for it, and a wisp of smoke, suggesting its preternatural existence. This dynamic makes the Shape a shapeshifter character, able to change its appearance to suit the perspective or expectations of its victim(s). And indeed, Carpenter's insistence on calling Myers the Shape in the story validates well this idea. The Boogeyman, apart from its mythical origins, in this case is apt, as it signifies a generic villainous entity that is everywhere and nowhere, able to appear in a form that is never tangible or concrete enough to recognize or identify. Yet paradoxically, the shapeshifter symbolizes simultaneously an instantly recognizable entity, one that is unique to each of us individually. This is why the white mask, dark blue coveralls and plodding expressionless movement of the

Shape is so effective; it is not the being we all see on the screen that is the Boogeyman – it is the unique version of the villainous entity that we each see on our own, brought about by the implied presence conveyed in the filmic experience. The villainous entity in Stephen King's novel *It* (1986) is an alien being brought to Earth centuries ago, living underground in a Maine city; it is able to confront and overwhelm its victims by presenting itself in a different form to each individual, based on its knowledge of their own unique fears. King explains that in this way the novel is "like a monster rally… every monster you could think of… [it's] nothing but the Biblical idea that faith can move mountains and that faith proveth all things. So when this kid in IT believes that he is seeing the Mummy coming toward him across the ice of a frozen river, it really is the Mummy" (*Art of Darkness*, 164). When the shapeshifter, or in this case, the Shape, appears in a recognizable environment like a homely suburb, it skews that homely comfort into something that is both recognizable and yet not recognizable, making it uncanny. Laurie's confrontation with the Shape, which she locates in her mind as the Boogeyman, moves her away from the adult role she was both acting in as a babysitter and desiring, as a possible lover, thereby moving her away from forbidden knowledge and back towards the parental eye.[16] This is why Tommy is so important; in his child way, seeing the Shape as the Boogeyman, he helps Laurie see past what her friends treated as her imagination or hallucinations. She realizes at the end of the film that her friends were wrong and she was right all along – that's why she places emphasis

[16] The first sequel to Carpenter's film, *Halloween II* (1981), takes place in the hospital, where Laurie is being treated narratively right after the first film ends. She assumes a more submissive, child-like demeanor; she cries in fear when they give her a sedative, one of the orderlies becomes fond of her and offers to break the visiting rules and get her a coke and her running and escaping scenes from the Shape are performed in a more crawling, scrambling way. Even though she is an adult, she responds to these situations less as an adult would and more like a terrified child would. So the parental eye in this sequel would certainly be the adult doctors and staff at the hospital, an ordered and structured institutional environment.

on the was – "It *was* the Boogeyman." Laurie and Tommy share the same glimpse of the same unidentifiable entity, even though it means something different for each of them. Loomis, in his failed attempt to subdue the entity as mortal human, accepts the outcome as an unavoidable result of his unheeded warnings to rationality.

Forbidden knowledge in this film is centred around moving away from the parental eye and from childhood into the murky unknown realm of adulthood, from which, from a child's perspective, the Shape has come. The chaos with which the Shape appears, as I argue above, inverts an ordered societal structure that relies on values and expectations of maturity. The town's secret seems to be swept under the rug by adults and sensed, instinctively feared, by youth. This creates the Myers (human)/Shape (Boogeyman) dichotomy. Sexual activity in itself might be a natural part of adolescent curiosity and growth; it might be a form of rebellion or self-searching; or it might be a symbolic act of relinquishing a child-like innocence to grasp at access to a realm of a more immoral vulnerability disguised as independence. It is somewhat of a trope in slasher films that promiscuous characters die quickly after or during the act; but the act itself in the transitional late adolescent state, comments on the importance of leaving one realm behind and entering a new one. The Shape is against this transition because it lives in irrational fear. Actress Nancy Loomis, who plays Annie, laughingly asserts "Is it intentional that the girls who get killed in *Halloween* are promiscuous? Absolutely" (*25 Years*, 22.10). Cinematically the Shape represents a nameless, faceless killer that will stop at nothing to get to its prey. In this case, unlike King's novel, it is significant that the Shape does not harm children, nor anyone else other than the truck driver and a couple dogs, which arguably was simply for material need and silence. Its methods encourage us to reevaluate how we see knowledge, especially when it is forbidden to us, things

we cannot see through rationality, or refuse to see without. The Shape does not represent forbidden knowledge directly; its ever-elusive but nearby presence makes us approach the threshold of forbidden knowledge, to get a glimpse. It is like a gatekeeper at that threshold, showing how chaos and order must exist together, that one cannot exist without the other. The Shape is a single-minded killer, but as importantly, it is positioned as a constant reminder of what may be lurking behind a half-closed door, outside an open window, out in the dark and rainy night, or, perhaps the most frightening, inside the closet. The hidden and partial views we get of the villainous entity keep the unknown just outside our grasp, helping us to create the prospect of the inevitable confrontation, which we may experience even several times before it actually happens onscreen. This is the expectation we are responsible for; our own confrontation with the entity that makes the invisible visible and the partially visible, consequently, compellingly visible. The confrontation we have with the entity from our own fears that are not necessarily forced by what we are seeing onscreen but more so from within our own minds, makes the shapeshifter our own.

Rob Zombie's 2007 remake of Carpenter's film, also called *Halloween*, takes a different approach to conveying the villainous entity. It is significant to note that American horror cinema went through many changes during the twenty-eight years between the two films. Economic fluctuations brought with them rising unemployment and technological advancement was being implemented into filmmaking at a rapid rate (Kvaran, 966-7). The influence of the internet, the sense of immediacy and instant access to actual news events on younger audiences, suggests a more available and commercial draw to realism; as the new millennium opened, horror cinema, even though the slasher genre had faded in production and popularity, began to assume a more gritty and realistic integrity. The new genre of torture-horror presented a starker and edgier con-

frontation with the villainous entity – consequently there became much more immediate visual screen-confrontation for audiences and less implied presence. Higher budgets and resulting revenue (aided by streaming services) created a much larger accessibility, in turn creating new opportunities for interactive experiences and adaptive multi-media. Yet horror films, especially slasher films, were quite quick and easy to make in the 70's, with lower budgets and most with a similar storyline; in the 2000's budgets had risen and the guarantee of profit wasn't nearly as trustworthy (Kvaran, 968). Carpenter's *Halloween* in 1978 was made on a budget of $325,000 (Mojo); Zombie's in 2007 on a budget of $15,000,000 (Wiki). Yet the *Halloween* franchise, having made ten sequels behind Carpenter's original film, survived the millennial changes, despite now meandering storylines and interchangeable characters; perhaps it was the emerging avenues of platform viewing access that challenged the less trustworthy profit Kvaran mentions. At any rate, Zombie's remake, employing digital filmmaking tools and a wider narrative arc, reflected the grit and realistic rendering that many horror films had at the time.

In a pre-release interview with halloweenmovies.com, taking questions from fans, Zombie was asked what he meant by re-envisioning the original film. Zombie responded: "I am basically making a prequel and a semi-remake of the first film all in one. So really in theory there will be more original content than remake content. That's why I don't like the word 'remake'" (No date). A bit of a cryptic response, but the idea seems to be focusing on the additional part of the original story, adding a lead-up to where Carpenter's film began. And indeed, Zombie's film does run thirty minutes until the first family killings and then continues for another thirty minutes before the sanitarium escape. He planned it this way: "Act one, about a half an hour of young Michael and act two, about a half an hour-ish of Smith's Grove Sanitarium with young

Michael turning into adult Michael, and then the last third of the film would be Haddonfield" ("Exclusive Rob Zombie", 1:45). The first hour provides a good look at Myers's childhood home and school life, his low-income abusive family and schoolyard bullying, and at the sanitarium, his growth from a brooding pre-teen into a physically enormous mask-wearing patient. Myers in Zombie's film becomes obsessed with masks, making hundreds of them in his sanitarium room. They adorn his walls during the prison escape (Below, 45:00).

Zombie's film, gritty as it is, and rife with motifs from the original franchise, gives us instant forced access to forbidden knowledge. Myers's mother is an exotic dancer, his stepfather an abusive alcoholic, his older sister dismissive of him and promiscuous. The sexual aspect is there, not suggested or hidden from a pre-teen but presented in front of him. A bully at school shows Myers a newspaper clipping of an ad for the club where his mother works, her photo, scantily clad, clearly visible. The bully taunts him and pushes him around (5:31). This is the catalyst for the beating scene I turned my head from. Myers repeatedly strikes the bully with a large branch, able to inflict an inordinate amount of damage for so young a person. The result is a very bloody and broken bully, now pleading for his life. The moment, as I mentioned earlier, of the climactic blow, did not end the scene, but extended to include, post-pleas, three more. The score is a dissonant violin/perhaps oboe combination, not melodic, sporadic, hectic. The last three blows are framed in extreme close-ups of the bully's rocking body, in-extremis. In essence, the viewer witnesses the murder from start to finish (11:20).



Halloween (2007) shot 1

Myers returns home and murders his stepfather, sister and her boyfriend. He leaves the baby alone (who turns out is Laurie Strode, the film's main protagonist, for whom he returns fifteen years later to kill). He is arrested and sent to the sanitarium, where he will stay until he can be tried as an adult. There are indeed glimpses of the original storyline here but, coming after the humanizing prequel section, do not leave room for the implied presence, even cinematographically. There is a long dual-segment of Mrs. Myers visiting Michael, still a pre-teen, in the sanitarium, trying to get him to talk to her, and Loomis delivering an academic talk to an audience about Michael's case. In both sequences, Michael is portrayed as, even though troubled and potentially evil, still quite human, and the Loomis sequence especially removes the adult bookend to childlike belief in the Boogeyman. This important perceptual aspect lessens the impact of an implied presence, as there is little doubt at this point about who Myers was and is; as will be discussed soon, it also removes the childlike aspect to Laurie, who is not put in a position to question herself mentally. Myers does murder a truck driver for the coveralls and goes back to his childhood home to wait out the impending night. The mask though, is buried along with the butcher knife in the floorboards, which he recovers and reveals, the Shape-aligned villainous entity. Myers standing in the gloom of the abandoned house holding the mask in front of him be-

fore donning it (Below, 57:34), presents a nod to the original character that Carpenter and Hill created, and it does resemble the original, but it ties more to Myers's childhood persona than the adult one portrayed now. This consequently takes away from the Boogeyman aspect of the Shape and maintains the humanized Myers character (44:15), the implied presence much less tangible than if he were portrayed as inhuman, as Carpenter's film does:



Halloween (2007) shot 2



Halloween (2007) shot 3

Even though the mask had been bought by Myers's sister's boyfriend when he was a child (the pre-teen Myers wore it to murder her), this return to the empty house scene places the mask in the hands of a corrupted and tortured human being, creating it in a way, in order to hide himself from the world as he responds to the childhood life of abuse and neglect. The difference between

hiding it for fifteen years and stealing it on a whim at a costume store may appear subtle, but the implications are large; the stronger connection to the childhood Myers reinforces the human side of him and compromises the suggestion of unknown, or mystery to the character. As I have indicated earlier, the gritty, realistic aspect is clear and stark, and the prequel approach that Zombie intended, while interesting narratively, disables much of the Boogeyman aspect that Carpenter succeeded in conveying with less domestic details, in fact, no domestic details. This is important because the implied presence in Zombie's film hasn't really occurred yet. Zombie fills in much of the negative space with visuals, showing both the pre-teen and hulking adult Myers in-frame nearly at all times. Over-the-shoulder shots, whip pans and extreme close-up handheld instability are abundantly utilized, but Myers' scenes frame him clearly. And here is a key point - there is little room for us to guess about who or where Myers is. He is fast, there, while Carpenter's Shape is slow, elusive, plodding. It seems Zombie has employed no Shape, but always a constant enraged human Myers bent on revenge.



Halloween (2007) shot 4

There are a few moments where Zombie's film incorporates Carpenter's original piano theme score, but most of the murder scenes are a ringing discordant jangling of high-pitched

string notes and the sneaking in of impact sounds. The notes are disorienting. Says Zombie: "At times of the violence, rather than having music trying to drive it, it was more like soundscapes of Michael's mind. That's why a lot of times… you'd just hear these sounds as if you're in Michael's head, the ringing in his head" ("Exclusive Rob Zombie," 3:10). And of course the screaming of his victims. This approach, intense as it is, places the visual and aural focus on Myers more so than his victims, strengthening his presence in the film, making implied or suggested elements more difficult to perceive; the leitmotif certainly helps to discern the approach without the visual of the entity. When Myers returns to Haddonfield, the film follows some of Carpenter's narrative thread and setting choices, but in line with the heightened presence of Myers himself, they are more overt than the camera shot and framing shows. There are two stalking shots that resemble Carpenter's, outside the school (59:24) and the neighbourhood street (103:44). In the second reveal all three girls see Myers standing in the middle of the street. This eliminates the possibility of Laurie imagining the figure, which makes it instantly and from then on, very real. The girls are cocky, swearing and rude. The actual stalking section of the film is about fifteen minutes. Zombie takes a similar route towards the confrontation with Myers as Carpenter did, with Annie and Lynda both engaging in sexual encounters, Annie pawning off her babysitting job on Laurie. But the gritty realism disables Laurie from much autonomous thinking. Annie and Lynda do tease Laurie about not actively pursuing a date, but it is brief and doesn't stand on its own as part of the dynamic between the three friends. I wish to point out here, and I will address it more firmly at the end of this chapter, that my discussion of Zombie's film isn't to critique or judge its merit; in fact, on its own aesthetically, it is a stunning and entertaining film. I

utilize comparisons to Carpenter's original in order to explain the importance of subtlety and suggestion for creating the negative space in which the Shape dwells.



Halloween (2007) shot 5



Halloween (2007) shot 6

The final confrontation is difficult to isolate in the continual violence, but it takes place at the abandoned Myers house. Myers kills the police officers in the Doyle residence, where Laurie is babysitting, and it is significant to note that the children are unhurt, but he takes Laurie back to his lair, so to speak. The handheld camerawork is jumpy, rapid paced and dizzying, nearly impossible to pick out one pan or track from another. Loomis is a central character, and he does appear to shoot Myers, saving Laurie, but it is in a neighbouring empty pool. When Loomis gets back to the police car with a traumatized Laurie, she asks him "Was that the Boogeyman?"

(1:45:00). Loomis responds "As a matter of fact, I do believe it was." Grammatically, the placement of the positive identifier in the inquisitive position indicates that Laurie doesn't believe it was, only that it could be. Loomis's inclusion of "I believe" is passive, indicating that he is on the defeated side of the psychological debate of whether or not murderous behaviour can be inherent. Loomis has attempted several times to warn authorities about Myers's dangerous intentions, and they have gone for the most part unheeded; but it is Sheriff Brackett (Annie's father) who explains to Loomis how Laurie is connected by family lines to Myers. Combined, Laurie and Loomis are both still on the losing side of this confrontation. Carpenter's Loomis aims and shoots with complete intent, while Zombie's Loomis seems to fight with himself and hollers at Myers to stop, only shooting him three times. Having been primed with Carpenter's original though, we know that three, plus one the cop put in him just before he died, won't be enough to finish Myers. He attacks the car, pulls Laurie back into the house and incapacitates Loomis. The last scene is similar to Carpenter's with the balcony, but Laurie and Myers both go over it. She lands on top of him; sits up; straddles him and shoots him. Her gory screaming face in an extreme close-up ends the film as her sanity lets go (1:55:03).

It is certainly clear from Carol Clover's point about post 1970's slasher films that the Final Girl has now taken a more active role in confronting her killer. Carpenter's Laurie utilizes a knitting needle and a coat hanger in her struggle with the Shape, while Zombie's Laurie takes Loomis's gun and shoots at point blank range. There is an interesting debate afoot here, about the Final Girl's participation in the confrontation with the entity and the means with which she tries to defeat it. On the surface we seem to be seeing in Zombie's last sequence Clover's observation of Ending B (the Final Girl kills the entity). Yet, as we have come to know, the Shape, or in this

case, Myers himself, will not go so easily. If Myers isn't going to die from the extension of the Final Girl's role into a victorious one, why have her shoot him at all? (If we are to assume we have not seen Zombie's sequel (2009), then this film ends with the shooting, Laurie screaming and an abrupt cut to black). The use of the gun, especially with Zombie's Laurie straddling Myers, who is on his back and appears unconscious, a clear indication of female dominance, specifically with Laurie's bodily position, will perhaps suggest a reversal of gender roles from previous slasher film templates. The sexual aspect is still here, and we may even boldly go so far as to wonder about the over-abundance of blood covering the one character who did not engage in intercourse. Yet if the sequel hadn't been made, it may be able to conclude here that the Final Girl did indeed defeat the entity. Interestingly though, Laurie's sanity (similarly does Tobe Hooper's Final Girl in 1974's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*), seems to break with the shooting of the gun, leaving it just shy of the full impact of the Final Girl being victorious in the end, until we catch up with her in the next instalment to see if her sense of adolescent innocence is still intact. Comparing to Carpenter's final sequence, Zombie's Laurie does not seem to retain any sense of childlike perspective, which reinforces the role of the Shape in this film to be assigned a dangerous but still human villainous entity. Tying this together, I am interested to compare both Lauries' last reactions in these two films. Carpenter's Laurie covers her face and cries softly, suggesting she has retreated back to adolescence, even, with the admission of "It *was* the Boogeyman," back to childhood, where she realizes Tommy was right. Zombie's Laurie, independent of the male Loomis authority figure, screams in a maddening cathartic rage, suggesting she has relinquished adolescence and childhood and has crossed over into the realm of forbidden knowledge. Finishing what Loomis could not, she has (presumably) killed the entity. Yet, a key difference is that to

escape the entity is to survive; to kill the entity is murder. Perhaps this is why there is arguably the indication of madness, the ending of part of a reality.



Halloween (2007) shot 7

Carpenter's film employs subtle suggestive camera work, lighting and sound to convey an implied presence that enables us to see the entity before we actually see it. This places the onus on us to look. In fact, Carpenter's film makes us crane our heads to look, to strain to see, as we are shown so little for so much of the film. Zombie's film forces us to see, as everything is shown to us in stark gory detail; the gratuitous violence, swearing and nudity, entertaining as they can be, comparatively prohibit the opportunity for an implied presence, making the villainous entity always there but significantly, always in front of us, never behind us, which minimizes the terror aspect and foregrounds a continual horror confrontation. This is why I turned my head during the bully scene in Zombie's film; Carpenter made me want to look while Zombie made me not want to look. The difference lies in the level of mental and emotional audience engagement. I argue here that Chion's notion of added value may also apply to on-screen negative space; as silence is equally important to sound for shaping temporal and perceptual space, absence in the on-screen frame presents a gap to be filled by the senses. As we fill this gap, whether or not we want to, added value is achieved through our own enhancement of what is invisible

becoming visible. It is very difficult for a remake or re-envisioning to gain much following, much less cult status in pop culture, but Carpenter's film forty-three years later is still hailed by many as one of the greatest horror films of all time and appears in most top ten lists online (*25 Years*, 1:18:50). It became quickly a template for many subsequent horror films to try to live up to in a changing cinematic world.

When asked about his film becoming so influential, Carpenter said "Much like the killer himself *Halloween* seems to never die. People constantly coming up and saying they saw the film or they remember when they saw it when they were kids or they've seen it on TV… and that is really neat" (*25 Years*, (1:19:35). Perhaps the affinity fans feel for the original film and continued devotion to it began with Carpenter's implied presence; we are still fulfilling the prospect of the confrontation with the villainous entity long after the film ends. And perhaps the Shape stands as a gatekeeper to the frightening unknown world that is adulthood, where we can approach that doorway again and again to get a glimpse of what is beyond it.

As mentioned, Zombie's film is an interesting prequel; it presents a fascinating perspective of the Shape's origins and development, outlining the environment that helps to form the protagonists' situations and perspectives. At the risk of a comparative study, which was not my aim, I discuss the prequel to set up my observations of how elements of filmmaking like narrative, cinematography, sound and performance work together to create the negative space that allows suggestion and the implied presence to happen. There are other comparisons in the following chapters. Actor performance can be so subtle, but equally key to providing the opportunity to share emotion and response with a character; also to formulate our own further response to an impending situation we have yet to see, if we do at all. If we don't, we might not need to. Can a

villainous entity become an environment? Yes. We may argue that Zombie's Myers is or becomes a product of his environment through the experiences that drove him to murder in the first place. But on a more technical level I argue that it is the unidentifiable entity, the Shape, that not only reflects an environment of fragmented urban society and an unreliable authority structure, it also shows us where childhood ends and adulthood begins. If there is a threshold, we are given the chance to glimpse it and ponder it. The lair then, becomes dual as well; an empty house that is rumoured to be haunted and feared by resident children, and on a larger scale, a town that is haunted, stricken with secrets and an inability to rationalize terror. There is in Carpenter's film the sustaining of terror until the very ending, expecting the horror confrontation with the Shape to overcome it and make it no longer viable; yet Laurie and Loomis give viewers the opportunity to maintain a perspective of the entity to be mythical, unidentifiable, omnipresent and unattainable. This keeps the Shape ours as much as Laurie's or Loomis's; in this way we see the Shape much like Tommy sees it. "You can't kill the Boogeyman," he says matter-of-factly. Terror might become ineffective in a horror film, often in a slasher film, but in Carpenter's *Halloween*, it does not. The POV sequence to open Carpenter's film stays with us, at first suggesting that the killer is anybody and everybody, a veil itself between us and forbidden knowledge; as that villain becomes the Shape with a leitmotif, it becomes a gateway into the fragmented society of the diegesis. If we can see these things in the film's world, we may be able to see them in our own.

Chapter 2: The Alien: Philip Kaufman's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*

This chapter will show how the implied presence is utilized in the form of continually growing numbers of alien replicants, hidden in plain sight. Differently, from Carpenter's Shape, the aliens in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* hide, stalk and confront humans among them and right in front of them; in fact, it is the protagonists who are in shadows, specifically during their times of survival and escape. The key for the implied presence in this film is doubt. The protagonists doubt what they think they are seeing (changes in people they think they knew), they doubt each other's perception of reality, and they come to doubt every stranger's identity and intentions. I will argue that our own promise of confrontation with the implied entity we create, through our own conjuring of it, encourages us to experience the same level of doubt as the protagonists do. We too might wonder who has been changed into an alien and who hasn't. This doubt must be there for the implied presence to remain intact, and we must never stop wondering. I argue that (director) Philip Kaufman sustains this doubt right up until the very final famous scene of the film. Key to my argument is Eugene Thacker's three-level idea of human perception. Thacker asserts that we can only see up to the limits of anthropocentric understanding about what he refers to as our world (our understanding of our surroundings), our Earth (scientific perception of systemic eco-patterns) and the planet (an evolving, de-evolving and orbiting mass); when we reach that limitation, we revert back to our anthropocentric safe zone to establish rationalization. It is through this inability to perceive beyond a human ideological level that doubt is

cultivated. What is beyond our understanding is inconceivable, unknowable and horrific.[17] Linking this to Colavito's notion of forbidden knowledge, *Invasion* shows us that the forbidden realm is where the planet functions without us. I will argue that the lack of human control and purveyance of doubt causes the film's protagonists to mentally and emotionally refuse what they are experiencing. Instinctually though, these human responses are transferred to the only acceptable return to rationality, which is survival. So the aliens, specifically in their ability to double as humans, represent a post-human Earth. The questions I ask and intend to answer are: *How does Kaufman maintain the level of doubt needed to sustain the implied presence for the entire film? What cinematographic strategies are employed in* Invasion *to allow viewers to experience a similar but more personal level of doubt?* And most importantly, *how are viewers positioned to become a protagonist as well, to create the confrontation with the entity before we are sure we see it?* If *we are ever sure?*

As discussed with Spielberg's *Jaws,* it is primarily the prospect of the unseen entity beneath the water's surface that provides the platform for cinematic suggestion of the implied presence. Water in this case provides a perfect platform for this to occur: it is reflective, which means an observer above the surface cannot see beyond their own reflection. So the fear of the unknown beneath the water's surface is embodied in both a figurative and literal redirection back to ourselves. With *Jaws*, an aquatic entity, that is, flourishing underwater while its human prey

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[17] OED online defines the term anthropocentric as "Centring on humanity or human beings; regarding humanity as the central or most important element of existence, esp. as opposed to God or the natural world." This dissertation does not intend to go into religion, but certainly the natural world is important for the main argument. The alien race is from another planet and they infiltrate Earth through its ecosystem, replicating human beings from plant pods they grow themselves. A strong thread through this film is a potential mistrust of Earth's cyclical functions, but significantly, what we as humans do not control, or have only a rudimentary understanding of that is commanded by intellectual science and speculative quantification.

attempt to combat it from above the water's surface (here, in a comically too-small boat), the implied presence is most prevalent in its suggested size. Early in the film Spielberg captures this suggestion with a telephoto-lens, which, with its longer focal length, flattens the framed image, bringing far distances seemingly closer to the camera. He uses a long-shot showing a boy playing in the sand while behind him, realistically about a hundred yards while cinematographically appearing no more than twenty, the two emerging dorsal fins of the shark, which in this frame encourages the viewer to interpret the entity as approximately the length of a driveway. Later in the film the boat's captain, Quint, insists (after it is finally shown underwater) that it is twenty-five feet long; but by then the quantitative data we receive becomes academic, as we have already determined on our own its colossal size from the preceding implied presence of it.

Implied presence of a villainous entity is, of course, determined by different factors, depending on the film's plot environment. For *Jaws,* fear of the entity is created through its immense size. For Carpenter's *Halloween* it is movement that is key, or in this case more precisely, the entity's limited amount of movement. Carpenter utilizes pans, tilts and both forward and backward tracking shots to lead through urban environments. But the placement of the Shape is mostly stationary; the camera will pan or track past it, following the protagonist's movement and the viewer gets only a glimpse of the Shape (or think we do), and then it is gone. Constant mobile framing in this way prohibits the Shape from being seen in its entirety. We know the Shape is there, but until the final third of the film, we don't actually see all of it. The Shape's limited movement keeps it partially hidden in shadow, while its constant partial appearance maintains the illusion of its omnipotence. In all cases the entity is hidden; but the repetition of the suggestion is tailored to fit each entity's unique make-up. Our promise, the inevitable confrontation

with the entity that we are encouraged to fulfill before it happens, depends on this approach to the implied presence. We fear the shark because it is huge; we fear the Shape because it is always there but we can't see it. The alien utilizes both of these elements.

Reciprocally then, partially seen also indicates partially hidden. The shark hides in the water; the Shape hides in the shadows. The key that ties these two examples together is the unknown, or forbidden knowledge. Humans aren't aquatic creatures or omnipotent; but there certainly is a rudimentary understanding of what might constitute these things. This is why the implied presence allows us to create this promise. What we don't see we create for ourselves to suture over the unknown spots left out of our sensory perception in the filmic experience. It is an anthropocentric tendency, meaning, facing the unknown, or unknowable, to revert back to a human interpretation of what is being faced in the diegesis. But a tendency nonetheless that the implied presence constantly challenges. The entity in these films this dissertation will discuss comes in different forms; but in all cases they may be interpreted as non-human. The Shape is indeed humanoid, and its origin is a mentally damaged man, but he develops into near-mythic proportions through both his actions and the way he is perceived by the other characters in the film as an unkillable and unstoppable *it*. The alien is also humanoid, but a replicated one, an interloper from an inconceivable world beyond humanity. The ghost is a former human, now residing in a realm of the dead that projects itself to the living as a threat to perception of reality. In the case of *Jaws*, a film this dissertation will be returning to through the course of these chapters, the shark is a fish, but also a man-eating creature that can strike at any time if one is in or near its aquatic lair. Human awareness of forbidden knowledge isn't a rejection of the entity itself; it is

more so a rejection of the danger it represents. So viewers are able to deflect that danger and transfer it to anthropocentric understanding, which translates to human survival.

Forbidden knowledge though takes a turn here. The teenaged babysitters in Carpenter's *Halloween* are positioned at the threshold of a human transition of understanding. They are stalled at the ending of childhood looking through an emotional doorway into an adult world where they are to become vulnerable to grown-up dangers. The Shape in this way, as I have asserted in Chapter 1, represents the mystery and dangers of the larger world around them, away from the parental eye, while at the same time also representing a balance between order and chaos. But it is still an anthropocentric perspective for them. Philip Kaufman's 1978 remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* presents a much larger and vaster attempt at seeing an unknown world around humanity. A more urban centre retelling of Don Siegel's adaptation from Jack Finney's novel, an alien race from another planet infiltrates Earth and duplicates human beings, destroying the original and assuming their lives as replicants, in order to survive. The replicants become replacements for humans, and blend in. Forbidden knowledge from this perspective will extend to include that which we not only should not, but are humanly incapable of, understanding. The implied presence in *Invasion* comes in the form of increasing numbers; but the vehicle for it on a social level, precisely through this inability to understand, is paranoia.[18]

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[18] I use the term paranoia throughout this dissertation, mostly in this chapter. By this I mean to focus on anxiety more so than delusion, although in *Invasion*, Elizabeth at times wonders if she is deluding her perception of people around her becoming different. I don't focus on power or grandeur here. However, through the thread of anxiety, there is a level of persecution complex present. Elizabeth believes she has wronged her partner Geoffrey and he is angry with her. Matthew exhibits a level of authoritative control, as will be discussed later, and is convinced Geoffrey is abusing Elizabeth, whom he secretly loves. He is constantly trying to save her from potential violence. There is a constant level of mistrust in this film that is key to creating the implied presence of the entity; the survivors are never sure who has changed and who has not, even, I will argue, right to the film's famous final scene. For us to create our own confrontation with the entity we must NEVER be sure who has changed either. We must share on an individual and personal level, some of the doubt the protagonists have. The suspense lies in not knowing.

The aliens in *Invasion* are a nebulous life form, meaning they are not humanoid (at first), but viscous and able to travel through Earth's eco-system undetected. They enter the atmosphere through rainfall and immediately strive to continue surviving as rapidly-blooming flowers of a species unknown to humans. The film's two main characters, Matthew and Elizabeth, are friends and colleagues at the San Francisco Health Department. Elizabeth's curiosity as a botany scientist compels her to notice and want to study the new species of flower that has suddenly appeared. This narrative development serves to suggest the first instance of implied presence in the film; Kaufman's framing focus on the instantly blooming flowers suggests the first stages of human environmental infiltration. Of course, as humans, we could never know this would be happening right out in the open. At any rate, Elizabeth picks a flower and takes it to her lab to study it; she also takes one home, where she lives with her boyfriend Geoffrey, to enjoy its beauty. This is where the first replacement in the film occurs. The next morning Geoffrey, having been depicted in the film's first few sequences to be a distracted but likeable dentist, is stoic, emotionless and dismissive. Elizabeth, alarmed that she has done something to upset him, immediately notices the change in him, and goes to talk to her friend Matthew about it. Soon after, Elizabeth, having decided to follow Geoffrey to get to the bottom of his strange behaviour, notes his meeting with other people she doesn't know; she sees their behaviour is the same as his but they converse in a secretive and covert way. They blend in, but at the same time, to Elizabeth, because she is watching with suspicion, stand out.

As noted above, to be partially seen is also to be partially hidden. The shark in *Jaws* hides in the water; the Shape in *Halloween* hides in the shadows; in *Invasion*, the aliens, now as repli-

cants,[19] hide in plain sight. For many people all three places, in deep water, in the dark and in a crowd of strangers (again, anthropocentric – how could we possibly know what it would be like to be the only two human beings covertly conversing on alien ground while they surround us?) are fearful places, places of the unknown, of a capacity to stretch the human imagination to approach the brink of madness, to capture and crystalize the things most immense and dreadful. In these films discussed, the implied presence of the entity, in the unknown sensory spots it creates through its partiality, places the viewer, unwillingly, there within the diegesis.

Invasion offers a chance to witness the presence and impending approach of the entity, this time of a growing number of them, its arrival being the increase of their population. We become aware of a fulcrum balancing the numbers between humans and replicants, or more colloquially, pod-people. This is the doorway for understanding terror versus horror in this chapter. The implicit changing of humans to aliens is a constant, shaped by continual doubt and suspicion of an upset normalcy, on an impending larger scale, social disorder. Suspicion fuels terror in this way, building anticipation through paranoia, eventually leading toward the confrontation with the reality (albeit anthropocentrically rejected) of humanity's potential downfall. The horror in *Invasion* is facing one's own replication, as later in the film Matthew's own experience exemplifies. As the film progresses and the plants recreate and destroy the original humans, the fulcrum moves towards the centre. It is when the fulcrum passes the centre point of a considered quantitative estimate that it becomes apparent that it is now humans who converse covertly on the urban corner, trying to blend in. The entity itself then becomes a constantly and inexorably growing number. Doubt works two ways through this; through the initial and progressing unsurety and

[19] A term borrowed from the writers of the 1982 film *Blade Runner*, for a bio-engineered copy of a human being, in that case an android. In this case, in Kaufman's film, it is cellular but also suggesting a microorganism evolution.

mistrust to anyone who might be changed, and then, by the outnumbered point, returned back to the survivor's own self-image, a doubt of their own self identity. There is also doubt cultivated in the form of the survivors' constant fear of being an impostor themselves.[20]

Eugene Thacker in his 2011 book *In the Dust of this Planet*, discusses the theory of what he calls "horror of philosophy": "[The] isolation of those moments in which philosophy reveals its own limitations and constraints, moments in which thinking enigmatically confronts the horizon of its own possibility" (2). He makes the essential distinction that it is not "philosophy of horror," an approach to analyzing a system of genre, but how horror interrupts philosophical thought or understanding, which heralds limitations of anthropocentric perception: "the thought of the unthinkable that philosophy cannot pronounce but via a non-philosophical language" (2). From this Thacker explains a three-level assertion of understanding our world from a human awareness. Kaufman's film through its slowly but deliberately developed narrative and framing, nicely illustrates this.

In conjunction with World, Earth and Planet noted above, Thacker provides three terms to differentiate his three levels of understanding, which relates to acknowledgment of Earth as being world, ecosystem and a functioning mass, and connect to how human perceptions fit in. What he calls *The World for Us* is human perception and understanding of Earth as we see it, as it appears and functions in accordance with our desires and expectations, even our academic reasoning… the world that we, as human beings, interpret and give meaning to (4). We may attribute this anthropocentric approach to Kaufman's film's opening scenes where a strange flower suddenly blooms that hasn't been seen before, even creates a mysterious attraction to it that is ac-

[20] Returning to *Blade Runner*; Philip K. Dick's original novella has the main character Deckard, coming face to face with not so much who is a replicant and who isn't, but more so if he himself has always been a replicant.

knowledged by humans but still attributed to an aesthetic or perhaps nostalgic response to it. Even curiosity, as Elizabeth displays, coaxes her into examining it, unaware of her vulnerability. Sometimes, as Thacker points out, the world "bites back" or resists our attempts to mold it to our interpretation (4). This he calls *The World in Itself*, which presents the world still to a certain degree as we would see it, but with conditional acceptance upon the ability to transpose its mysterious actions to suit our own anthropocentric *World for Us*. *The World in Itself* acts on its own – disasters, climate change (arguably) and unexplained events; but this is where humanity begins to see the limits of its understanding of Earth's presence, identity and personality. Adherence to scientific inquiry and technological advancement help to make the transference of information back to a human perception level of understanding (5). When Geoffrey changes Elizabeth thinks she's going crazy, that she's the only one who sees it. But when other people also begin to both act similarly to Geoffrey and to acknowledge it (there is a creepy scene I will get to where Matthew goes to the dry-cleaners and the Chinese proprietor tells him "That not my wife," as she walks by in the rear of the frame with a glowering stare at him), Matthew, searching for logical answers, brings Elizabeth to his psychiatrist friend for a logical and reasonable explanation. Yet, Dr. Kibner's behaviour is also a bit strange. As these experiences increase, the inability to fully comprehend the changes causes first anxiety and then panic in Elizabeth and Matthew.

The inability to fully comprehend, or to even at least entertain the thought of alien infiltration (other than attributing it to the movies of course) illustrates what Thacker refers to as the inaccessibility of *The World Without Us*, "the subtraction of the human from the world" (5). Here it is the planet and its functions, which, even attempted to humanize through scientific exploration and convenient anthropomorphic terminology, cannot be humanly comprehended. Cine-

matographically the viewer is given cues that encourage experiencing a sense of isolation, even alienation (as in ourselves becoming the Other), through extreme close-ups of human faces exhibiting anxiety, wariness, quick cuts away from what we're not sure we're seeing (strange grey husks being carried by people), and long shots of groups of replicants all standing still and staring at the camera. This is *The World Without Us* imposing itself, forcing itself into human perception of reality, but through familiar identification, recognizable human beings, yet, unfamiliar at the same time, a stark example of the uncanny. Kaufman notes the film was successful in portraying a world acting beyond human perceptive capability: "We were able to create that sense, essentially, of a planet that could be our planet in the future where all living matter has been devoured" (Weiner, para 16). The idea of a planet in space, unknown to astronomical records, orbiting, degenerating, regenerating, evolving, whatever, must be applied to at least *The World In Itself* for humanity to even begin to grasp anything near comprehension, which is still humanly impossible. It is this limitation that makes *The World Without Us* "nebulous… impersonal and horrific" (Thacker, 6). Scientific data may create a suggestion of potential understanding, but we must attribute the data to how we see *The World for Us* in order for any of it to make sense. Beyond human perceptive abilities, as Kaufman suggests in his film, lies first denial with a frantic search for the relief of human explanation, and then, when that is depleted, a panicked paranoia that leads to the impulse for survival.

Invasion comments on social order, specifically in the way it presents human urban functioning as an adamantly ordered yet foundationally fragile society, tethered together by behav-

ioural expectations and recognizable patters.[21] When order is challenged, an immediate search for explanation is sought; when there isn't one, a filtering process of dismissal-oriented deduction is attempted (this is where the scientist laughs and says of course there is a rational explanation for this, of course – these imaginings, they just don't exist, therefore they are not happening). If scientific reasoning cannot explain anything beyond anthropocentric conclusions, and mysterious events continue to occur, instead of acceptance there is a denial (this cannot be happening, so I refuse to believe it is), which, coupled with the powerlessness to stop the unbelievable, and the unexplainable, becomes a refusal.[22] The refusal in *Invasion* is survival; even though the survivors acknowledge people are being duplicated, it still remains on the level of a threat to an ordered reality (when Elizabeth is finally duplicated, Matthew cries more that she has died than that she has been changed - he could easily embrace the replicant Elizabeth and be changed with her, but instead he runs from her). In the face of the inability to understand what is happening, survival becomes a surrogate, displacing the desire for understanding. So, survival becomes the rational answer. Extinction, as Thacker points out, is a product of *The World Without Us*, and in *Invasion, The World Without Us* is forcing humanity into its unknown realm; so the entity in *Invasion* embodies the space beyond human understanding. Horror in this way, Thacker asserts, "[should] be understood as being about the limits of a human as it confronts a

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[21] My interpretation and intent here is more sociological than philosophical. By this I mean more so patterns of behaviour that are dictated and steered through media communication and human expectation. In this case, when a person's behaviour becomes out of the normal realm of expectation and acceptance, that person becomes positioned to be heralded as different, mysterious or unpredictable. Hence, potentially dangerous.

[22] I am aware of the Freudian approach to this as disavowal; however, I am arguing that *Invasion's* protagonists don't reach the point of acceptance, as in "I know it is, but…" There is an immediate and cultivated wall with them where they refuse to accept what is happening right in front of them, even when they are running for their lives towards the film's end. There is reasoning, yes, but it is conditioned on the pretence of first saying "no, that can't be."

world that is not just a World [anthropocentric], and not just the Earth [scientific], but also a Planet [independent mass] … This also means that horror is not simply about fear, but instead about the enigmatic thought of the unknown" (8-9). Survival in this way represents the scrambling at any cost, even one's life, to return to the safe even ground of anthropocentric understanding.[23] Yet, before survival becomes all-consuming, the viewer/participant must first be led to create the promise for confrontation with the entity by its implied presence.

Implied presence begins almost immediately in the film, and since the invasion involves the duplication of people, primarily centres mostly around mise en scène and actor performance, specifically with the facial expression and body language of the characters. The first five minutes (with opening credits) are a montage of the globular aliens traveling through space, entering Earth's atmosphere, rain falling on the city and then after the rain stops, clear gigantic drops moving among leaves and foliage as the human citizens go about their daily lives. Immediately the drops begin to sprout, spreading out on their leached surfaces to form bulbous flower buds that bloom in what appears in plot-time to be just a few hours (*Invasion*, 4:19).



[23] To go further into Ontology would take me too far off my path; I wish to stay with forbidden knowledge.

The close-up angles eliminate any awareness of human passersby as they begin to bloom. The frame only contains their covert survival process. This suggests the potentiality of an intelligence to the alien species, an understanding of Earth's ecosystem's resources while Earth's inhabitants are incapable of grasping the usage of them for anything other than humanity. The close-up shots of an alien species literally evolving right out in the open for humans to see if they'd notice, also suggests the constant tendency for humanity to acknowledge Earth's ecosystem, and even utilize it for scientific exploration, but otherwise take it for granted, or dismiss it through the perceptual lens of complacent social performance and utility. This thread is commenting on the dangers of such a dismissal. Humanity is vulnerable to bacteria, chemical waste, ozone damage and water pollution, among other dangers; and the metaphor of an invading species using plant life as a vehicle for infiltration indicates the vulnerability to losing natural resources via global trade or even war. A parallel may be drawn between fictional extinction via alien takeover and real-world extinction via sickness and death, or resource depletion and resulting social disorder. In all of these instances there is the potential for a fragmented society, possibly resulting in a post-human Earth. Don Siegel's original film (adapted from Jack Finney's 1955 novel), released in 1956, has been debated as being a commentary on paranoia about communism (Weiner, para 4); further reflecting the time of release's social concerns, or historical placement of the film. Kaufman's remake was released in 1978, a prime time for environmental concern and activism.

Carol Clover in her book *Men Women and Chainsaws* discusses the significance of the absence of weaponry and technology specifically in the Slasher sub-genre: "In the hands of the killer, at least, guns have no place in slasher films. Victims sometimes avail themselves of

firearms, but like telephones, fire alarms, elevators, doorbells, and car engines, guns fail in a pinch. In some basic sense, the emotional terrain of the slasher film is pretechnological" (31). Clover notes that the preferred weaponry for protagonists in horror films seems to be a throw-back to items such as hammers, picks and pitchforks; this suggests that survival is linked closely to a sense of social reversion, a return to a more instinctive perceptual state. Indeed Clover mentions "a primitive, animalistic embrace," tying such a state to extension of the body itself (32). Yet with the consideration of Clover's mentioning of "tactility" (32), this would also extend to other genres of horror cinema, including the alien story of *Invasion*. The threat in *Invasion* is decidedly ecological, one that in its theoretical implications, precedes technology altogether. Later in the film, Matthew's frustration grows from the absence of phone reliability, and the apex of his confrontation is culminated in his decision to defend himself with a shovel. Clover links tactility to noise (chainsaws and drills); I further this point to include the physical connectivity of eyes and hands to foliage and the continual preponderance of dust from discarded husks. Tactility in this way then moves beyond sensory input and into a state of being.

The special effects show a time-lapse movement (looking like stop-motion) of the drops forming tendrils that reach over the entire leaf. The extreme close-up shots include quick cuts, indicating rapid development. The sound effects are a dissonant organ sharp note and what sounds like speaker feedback with it. Immediately there is a sense of reality distortion (3:50).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 2



Invasion of the body Snatchers (1978) shot 3

It is a sequence of alien flowers blooming in plain sight. In conjunction with this, Kaufman wastes no time in paralleling it with human activity, already suggesting a change in at least behaviour before the actual replacement process is shown. Elizabeth, curious, picks one of the flowers. The camera pans left to follow Elizabeth walking away and she passes a group of children herded by a woman presumed to be their teacher as she leaves frame left. The teacher gives Elizabeth (out of frame) a suspicious look and tells the children, "There's more flowers to pick,

go pick them" (4:46). The children, exclaiming their joy at the idea, starkly present the opposition to authority suggested. A child-like curiosity by Elizabeth, picking and smelling the flower and the children, innocent, unaware of any danger; both highlight the actions of the teacher, who by the urging to pick the flowers and her furtive look at Elizabeth, suggest a replacement has already occurred. This simultaneity of human interest and covert behaviour work together to offer the first instance of implied presence. The viewer is prompted to question a character's identity.

The teacher leads the children into a park, where she continues urging them to look for the flowers. There are children running, playing and on the swing set. The teacher's behaviour has encouraged the viewer to now look for things that are out of place. In the middle of the playing children on a swing is a priest, seemingly unnoticed, swinging as the children do; but expressionless and staring in the teacher's direction. The teacher is turned away, but the brief movement of her hair suggests the two exchange a glance. It is subtle, but there (4:57).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 4



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 5

The fact that the children don't pay any attention to the priest even though he sticks out like a sore thumb strengthens the interpretation that he and the teacher exchange a glance. Perhaps the two adults are noting how easy it is to be a replicant in plain sight. Or, more fundamentally, a positive affirmation that their survival is now more plausible. As the camera tracks forward it is Robert Duval acting as the priest. His jutting brow and steely eyes are recognizable, and help to make his stoic expression convey he looks human but… something is wrong here. Having a well-known face so early in the film stand out like this makes the suggestion of implied presence more noticeable. "We were good friends," Kaufman says in an interview. "I just thought if you're going to make a horror movie, you've got to have a priest in it […] There he is in the back-ground. It's odd and skewed and the angles are sort of strange. The pods have landed, there's a squeakiness in the air and a priest on a swing" (Weiner, para 25). The squeakiness Kaufman mentions is the high-pitched diegetic sound of the swing chains, which resembles the dissonant organ note in the film's opening sequence as the aliens are landing. This segment acts as a transi-tional one, in that it steers our perspective from the aliens in their natural form to their hidden space, which is the human body; as the film continues, the flowers and subsequently the pods

themselves are shown in the act of replication, but focus is now primarily on the human body, recognizable but also becoming mysterious and unsettling. It isn't necessarily body horror, or even consumption, as there is no possession as takeover, nor encouragement to interpret the replicants as an alien inside the original human body; they are duplicates grown from pods, copies of the original vessel. Yet, even though Kaufman avoids depicting the actual eating of a human body, his film's commentary on the fragility of the human vessel as vehicle for infiltration does come close in this way. Once the duplicates are formed (a rapid fetus-to-adult development that takes plot-time only about an hour), the original human, unconscious, begins a degrading process and turns to dust. This may be seen as birth and death simultaneously. Once the survivors are faced with the possibility of this replication process, their cause for survival kicks in. Consequently, surveillance has begun. We, along with the survivors, no longer trust that anyone is human anymore and try to determine who has been replaced, knowing that replacement means death. This is the platform for the implied presence in the film. It creates tension, mistrust and paranoia in its ability to challenge anthropocentric perception and explanation.

The use of shadows is integral to presenting the implied presence in this way, framing human characters and either preceding or following replicants. There is a subtle commentary afoot with Kaufman's cinematographic placement of performers in either partial or complete shadow. In these opening plot set-up scenes, there is an unlikely amount of shadow caused by low-key and nearly absent fill lighting that seems unnatural, almost obtrusive, but which prepares anticipation for an ongoing attempt to differentiate potentially replicated humans from unchanged humans who will be assigned the role of survivors. Elizabeth is the first survivor to be subjected to darkness, both literally and figuratively.

Elizabeth returns home with the flower she recently picked. Geoffrey sits in an armchair with a beer, watching the basketball game. Geoffrey is a key character in that he watches television with his headphones on, a symbol of separation from the world around him, something that will come to identify him after he has been replicated as well. Elizabeth speaks to him but he doesn't answer. She says loudly "Hello?" He responds with a snap of his fingers and she goes to him. She says "Look at this flower." For a moment she is in a partial fill light as they embrace but she returns to shadow when he hollers to the television when a team scores. Even though he hasn't been replicated yet, it is suggested that he is vulnerable to it through his detached demeanour – there is a close parallel between the stoic expression of the teacher and the priest and Geoffrey's behaviour. Both may be seen as parallel examples of social deviance in a way; behaviour that becomes noticeable, that stands out. Elizabeth, positioned centre-right in a long shot of their apartment, responsible for bringing the flower into their home, is completely in silhouette; not even a backlight is visible from the windows behind her. Significantly, she does not *cast* a shadow; she is e*ncased in* shadow (5:30). This places her, as a survivor, in the shadow of the approaching collective entity. I will explain as this chapter moves forward, how *casting* shadow and *in* shadow are differentially important. This relationship between light and darkness shows how the implied presence can be either implicit (casting shadows) or explicit (encased in shadows). Either way, chiaroscuro is a key lighting/editing strategy that positions the viewer in equal measure of displacement as the characters from reality.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 6

During this sequence there is a clearly heard tick-tock of a clock in the room. Coupled with Geoffrey conveniently not acknowledging the flower and the timing of his cheering after she mentions it, the clock heralds the countdown to change, one that the viewer, now recognizing altered behaviour, may anticipate with more confidence. This anticipation builds the platform to foresee a changed Geoffrey very soon. What would it be like having someone we know and love (even if aloof) suddenly become a stranger? This brief moment of Elizabeth being encased in darkness in her own home signals her impending position of being alienated (irony indeed) from her own familiarity, and also as a potential target for an impending threat. Also pertinent is the colloquial phrase *in the dark* when considering the unaware and vulnerable position the survivors in the film will find themselves in. Later, when Matthew comes to rescue her, the ticking of the clock will sound more overtly, signalling a more dominant role this darkness plays. *Invasion's* cinematographer is Michael Chapman (New York, b. 1935). Chapman had worked with Kaufman once before this film's production, on 1974's *The White Dawn*. Since *Invasion,* the two have

worked together on two more films. By 1978, the two were arguably in-synch in visualizing a dark and mysterious urban landscape for an alien infiltration film.[24]

The viewer meets Matthew arriving at a restaurant, knocking on the back door and announcing himself as "Department of Health" (7:10). Immediately Kaufman offers another unique suggestion of surveillance; the shot is an eye-level fisheye shot of the peephole in the door. Both Matthew's leaning in for a close look and the POV from the person answering the door create a simultaneous observatory position – us observing them and them observing us. This is a key shot to help set up the viewer's constant striving to identify replicants as the film progresses. Matthew's employment position is inspector, which becomes starkly convenient when his keen eye for detail is assigned to picking out rational explanations for things we cannot possibly understand; yet later, when faced with survival, his *eye* is able to spot the entity. This shot also directs the viewer to maintain a level of wariness experiencing the film's narrative.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 7

[24] Many 1970's thriller and drama films had a proclivity towards overtly darkened environments, sometimes to the point of obscuring a character's movements, leaving the camera and glints of key and fill lights off of props in control of reframing. The mystery of darkness creates in its wake a sense of disorientation, which enhances anticipation and expectation. Music can certainly add to this, but silence can be much more effective, as will be explained in *The Changeling.* Some other films that do this are *Play Misty For Me* (1970), *The Godfather* (1972) and *When A Stranger Calls* (1979).

Matthew gets glares from everyone in the kitchen of course, since he is there to inspect the sanitary conditions while they work to prepare dishes during a busy supper shift. But his intrusion is significant in that he is an unwanted and scrutinized guest, as much as he is scrutinizing the restaurant. By now there have been several blank furtive glances from supporting characters, so the viewer is now positioned to suspect each one. Matthew identifies a "rat turd" in a dish (9:05) and serves the restaurant owner with a sanitary notice. When Matthew returns to his car in the alley he finds the windshield cracked from a thrown bottle. As he pulls away he sees two workers on the stairs staring at him silently (9:25).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 8

The crack in the windshield is significant; it indicates a violent response from the restaurant workers, but it also represents a separation between reality and speculative uncertainty. More to the point, how Matthew views the world around him, outside the safety of his profession, his vision, has become compromised.[25] This scene is couched in the suggestion that these two men are kitchen workers who were instructed to lash out at a health department worker's aggressive atti-

[25] The crack is a motif often used in horror films. A cracked mirror can represent a fragmenting of the self, a cracked eyeglass lens compromised morality, or a cracked building a threat to societal order.

tude; yet the over-the-shoulder shot from inside Matthew's car, clearly separating him from the loading dock by a broken windshield, the two men's stoic expressionless stances and what appears to be their departing shadows (they look like they are turning away from the men on the wall), indicate the possibility of them (and potentially others in the restaurant) being replicants. The viewer as observer in the scene, is positioned in the car with Matthew, moving away from the suspected restaurant workers. They are casting shadows onto the wall of the restaurant. As Matthew drives away, he becomes encased in shadow and the viewer is, in the role of protagonist with him, encouraged to feel like we are both figuratively and literally, in the dark about what is potentially happening (9:50); suspicion, but not surety.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 9

As Matthew departs, the scene take continues from the passenger seat, shooting him from a side perspective, as if riding shotgun. In the process of trying to differentiate survivors from replicants, the shot has moved from the rear seat to the front seat. He drives down a main street in silence, a police motorcycle passes him and he is, much like Elizabeth, completely in shadow.

Kaufman fills each scene with an element of surveillance that quickly becomes an important thread in both the plot and the characters' identities. Characters eye each other cautiously, pensively, even suspiciously. There is momentary and suggestive peripheral framing with the police motorcycle, lights flashing, speeding by (9:50); there is a man sprinting across the street while others pretend not to notice him (14:10); there is the tolling of the church bell at midday (14:10); characters watch Matthew and Elizabeth's movements more so than other people's. Matthew's and Elizabeth's behaviour is casual and natural, even during dialogue scenes; strangers in the film, that is, characters we don't really know much or anything about, display a more deliberate and guarded behaviour. This opposition makes Matthew and Elizabeth stand out – they become, in their state of unawareness, vulnerable to a threat they have no way of conceiving in their minds. This sets up the implied presence, an approaching presence, seen in the potential for a replicant, specifically not knowing whether someone has changed or not, in turn providing the encouragement to become suspicious of everyone in the film. The viewer's anxiety will be matched by the survivors in the film very soon.[26] Seeing Matthew and Elizabeth in complete shadow illustrates an awareness of the danger they are in, but for them the danger remains unknowable. This is very much like the omnipresence of The Shape in Carpenter's *Halloween*; the protagonist(s) aren't aware of it, but the viewer is, a constant growing uncomfortable expectation of the confrontation that we feel powerless to stop. Yet through this process we are afforded the opportunity to confront the entity ourselves before it happens. This process of viewers attaining the role of protagonist transcends the limits of the traditional role of viewer as voyeur - we don't

[26] This is also sometimes referred to as dramatic irony in film; when the audience is positioned to know more about what is happening, or what is about to happen, than the characters do. That's usually when we holler at the protagonist on the screen, "No, you don't want to go in there, man!"

always need a surrogate object to vicariously relate to. We follow Matthew and Elizabeth through this labyrinth of mystery and speculation, but we also relate to our own expectations and anticipation of the situation, drawing on our own experiences in real-life to validate the fictional rendering we are seeing unfolding on the screen.

It is important to note here that scoring is nearly absent during the film's first half. The first hour relies heavily on silence and diegetic sound effects, drawing the viewer deeply into the diegesis. Sound effects like the clock ticking lead the scene with Elizabeth and Geoffrey, while the restaurant scene also employs diegetic sounds like clinking of dishes, doors closing and the rattle of the glass as Matthew turns on the windshield wipers and starts the car. As he pulls into traffic, the radio in his car is playing but it is muted; there is only a muffled male voice announcing something that sounds vaguely official. This, coupled with the siren on the police motorcycle, aligns strongly with close proximity to Matthew in the front seat, as we share the darkness and the discomfort with him. Significantly, there is a sound bridge into the next scene of a phone ringing; Elizabeth picks it up and it is Matthew, calling to tell her about his experience at the restaurant. Relying on diegetic sound at this point, the viewer is effectively drawn with Matthew towards the realm of reason and order; the phone in the film's first half, until the on-screen confrontation, is still intact, and is closely tied to Matthew and Elizabeth, the two main survivors. The two converse and say goodnight. Silence becomes an element of the implied presence; we hear much more in this way than what we would with a constant accompanying score. Lack of sound creates that negative space discussed earlier, encouraging the viewer to expect or anticipate something to happen. Yet with these editing choices, we are kept a certain distance from the mysterious approaching entity, but still, we know it is there and growing. Kaufman uses silence

here to steer everything in a certain direction. It will be when the survivors begin to face what they still cannot see that there will be more non-diegetic sound effects and score employed to accompany their transition into survival mode. The phone, though, remains a constant.

The next morning Elizabeth wakes up to see Geoffrey cleaning glass from the floor. It is the glass the flower was in by their bed. She tries to talk to him but he doesn't respond, taking the garbage out. Elizabeth's response to this reflects an immediate knowledge of what has happened; he is now a replicant and she is alarmed. She goes to the window and watches him approach the garbage truck, the attendant standing there waiting for him. This behaviour is abnormal; it is common knowledge that sanitary workers collect a city's garbage one door at a time, that which has been left on the curb. It is a long high angle POV shot of the worker and Geoffrey at the truck's open rear end exchanging a brief glance, much like the teacher and the priest do earlier; Geoffrey dumps the bin into the back of the truck and a small cloud of dust plumes from what came out of the bin. The shot is close enough that what appears to be dark grey dust has filled the inside of the truck's receiving cavity (13:27). The mystery of the discarded material serves to paradoxically inform that a replicant has been made and Elizabeth is now in more danger, and also cause wonder about how the replication is done – this the viewer can certainly suspect, but not entirely know, other than the flower Elizabeth brought home the day before is now gone. The dust becomes symbolic, a motif; it is a return to Earth, an ending… death. There is a lot of symbolism in the film for both birth and death; the pod formation will be explored later, and until then the accumulation of dust as aftermath, which will be shown as former human vessel in decomposition processes.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 10

Over this sequence is the sound of the clock ticking again. It may be assumed diegetic, the clock in Elizabeth's house. The next shot is a close-up of Elizabeth's worried face looking out the window and the ticking increases in volume. Then she jumps and spins when the clock on the mantel begins to strike (14:00). The very next shot is a medium (jump-cut) shot of a man sprinting in a panic across the street outside the Department of Health building. A church bell is ringing. Elizabeth walks to work, but in a hurry. She seems now uncomfortable in public. This jump sequence signals both an end and a beginning. Human anthropocentric understanding being the sole dictator of the *World For Us* has now been compromised by mysterious changes, while *The World Without Us* has begun to present itself. The invasion is in motion.

As the next scenes progress more and more people watch Elizabeth and Matthew. Kaufman stresses the implied presence by framing them in small groups, usually standing still and expressionless, dressed in their occupational clothing and appearing to go about their business, but stoically observing; this enhances the human survivors' position of vulnerability (16:05).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 11

As this chapter introduced, the aliens hide in plain sight and the implied presence comes in the form of their increasing numbers, but always with an element of doubt; it is key to never be sure who has been changed and who hasn't in order for the implied presence to work. And the long distance shot used in this framing makes the replicants seem unattainable, unreachable, unfathomable, physically at the edge of human perception as well as intellectually. There must always be the element of wondering who is surveying whom. In this case, as with Carpenter's Shape, Kaufman arranges the implied replicants not to pass through the frame, but *to be passed through* as the camera follows the protagonists; they are positioned behind a closed windowed door, standing by the elevator, etc. Their time in the frame is brief, but they are not given their own cut shots. They not only blend in with humanity, they blend in with the mobile shot frame, becoming part of mise en scène. Yet their blank stare is clearly visible with just a hint of mistrust in their eyes that blurs the line between if they are a human trying to spot a replicant or vice versa.

Elizabeth goes to Matthew's house for dinner and they discuss Geoffrey's strange behaviour. She tells him "Geoffrey is *not* Geoffrey" (18:00). Here is the beginning of an ongoing dialogue between the survivors of the film in which they identify a potential alteration of human

makeup but still remain within the confines of an anthropocentric comprehension. Only the replicant's behaviour and outward identity is singled out – possible reasons beyond psychological or emotional symptomology are as in shadow as they themselves have been framed in the film. Matthew responds by suggesting Elizabeth go to see his psychiatrist friend Dr. Kibner. She agrees. The next day Matthew goes to the dry cleaners to pick up his order. The proprietor tells him covertly that his wife is sick: "She wrong." Matthew doesn't understand. He gets the impression the man means she has a mental issue. The man says twice "That not my wife" (21:50). He exits the frame quickly and Matthew sees her staring at him from behind a hanging plastic bag. On the heels of Elizabeth's comments about Geoffrey, this exchange is an eerie one. Temporally, the shifts the sequences depict are jumpy and rapid. Matthew seems to always be in motion, whether he cooks or works, while Elizabeth seems to be standing still observing her surroundings with confusion. The quick succession of sequences and time-shifts create a physicality for the sudden disoriented feeling that is coming over the survivors. Through discontinuity editing, it is conveyed visually and emotionally to the viewer what the survivors are experiencing. This is a strategy to create a subtle but rising action through the speed of cuts and pans. The viewer is not expected to follow the exact time of day, but more so to react to the sudden passing of time, heralded by the clock and approaching, overtaking shadows. As the film progresses, day and night do not remain so distinct and separate. Time in this way becomes less of a twenty-four hour cycle and more of an approaching ending.[27]

[27] It is a subtle shift in attention; many humans are conditioned to constant movement, work, drive, eat, talk, television, etc., continual sensory input. When we stop and observe the world around us, we become aware of the world looking back at us, and time passing. A key comment Kaufman seems to be making in this film is that in silence we see and hear more and more.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 12

And again, there is a sense of deviance in societal behaviour; “She wrong.” The dry cleaner proprietor telling Matthew, ironically a seeming authority figure, that he suddenly does not know his wife, signals that there has been an interruption in not only the domestic sphere, but in the structure of society at large. An implicit signal that will become explicit in time.

The plastic bag, sort of a curtain, in the close-up shot of the man’s wife serves two functions: it suggests a separation between surviving humans and replicants and also its translucence keeps the continuing doubt intact and at the forefront of the survivor’s perception; replicants look like humans but there is something unfathomable about them, something different. The survivors can see it but not explain it. The translucent curtain in this pivotal shot then represents the thin membrane between human and replicant, and how difficult it is for one to spot the other.

The next shot is Matthew standing outside with a puzzled look on his face, obviously remembering what Elizabeth had said to him the night before. He is positioned frame-right, next to the open maw of a garbage truck with a worker at the lever. Matthew isn’t looking but it is clearly displayed what is right beside him (21:60).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 13

Inside the garbage truck is a closer view of the grey material from earlier in the film with Geoffrey. Kaufman arranges Matthew and the sanitary worker with the rule of thirds, to add balance in the frame for the importance of the viewer's eye moving to and staying with the truck's giant mouth. Red is an apt choice for the truck as well, a clear sign of danger, alarm and death. From this medium shot the material resembles stringy husks of some kind, some kind of wrapping that has been discarded. Kaufman has been careful to use a material that is not easily identifiable. The two scenes so closely edited together and so parallel to each other, even with Matthew still in disbelief, position Matthew and Elizabeth as drawn closer together in a survivor's role, while around them the aliens' numbers are growing. In this way the fulcrum mentioned earlier is shifting position; the villainous entity is literally right there in front of the survivors, much like Carpenter's Shape is at the window looking in while the protagonist remains unaware. The closer the entity can get to an unsuspecting protagonist without being suspected and before an attack is made, the stronger the role of the implied presence is. In this particular scene, what is being depicted arranged in the back of the garbage truck is the end of humankind.

To more deeply illustrate the point of the inability for humans to comprehend the presence of non-human beings (beyond a fictional speculative realm), Elizabeth finds Matthew at the elevator in the Department of Health building. She is crying and he is very concerned. In the car she tells him she has been seeing changed people everywhere. The survivors can now identify a growing number of them. Yet her statements to Matthew embody the futile search for reasoning in an unreasonable situation: "I keep seeing these people, all recognizing each other. Something is passing between them all. Some secret. It's a conspiracy" (24:00). The word conspiracy is a key one; it signals paranoia, a recognition of difference in an otherwise ordered and patterned society. Elizabeth sees not only a difference in behaviour, but a secretive one, something kept within the confines of mysterious communication that seems forbidden. What indeed is passing between them? There is in this response the recognition of an Other, an oppositional split in the urban centre's dwellers. Yet she cannot penetrate the lack of understanding past the line of deviance. In order to compensate for this, she transfers her fear to mistrust, singling out those she feels have changed. In a quick flashback sequence she tells Matthew she followed Geoffrey as he met with people she didn't know who behaved similarly to him, stoic and expressionless.[28] Through this sequence there is a non-diegetic low, dissonant thumping sound, resembling a heartbeat. The implications of the shifting fulcrum of numbers and the evolving accompanying sounds of ticking, gonging and now a heartbeat, now more explicitly represent the approaching,

[28] There is gender stereotyping at play here. Elizabeth's responses to a conspiracy could suggest the hierarchical convention, however archaic, of women displaying a tendency towards hysteria, while men, either stoic or pensive, as Matthew is, representing reason and order. Ironically this interplay between Elizabeth and Matthew shows her as facing an apparent new reality while he remains deflective and dismissive about it. Even though Matthew loves Elizabeth, he still won't allow her theories to become real until it is too late. This is part of the reason I argue he hasn't changed at the end, but instead resolved himself to "become" a replicant in a much different way; he is still human, but he has lost his own humanity through his guilt of failure.

arriving and growing presence of the alien species. Matthew of course, tries to reason with her but she is adamant that something is happening but she doesn't know what it is.

There is a lot of moving from one location in the city to another in this film. At the risk of crowding the narrative with constant movement, the viewer is brought along with Elizabeth and Matthew as they navigate San Francisco, trying to live their lives, which have now become compromised. Yet I believe Kaufman includes so many locations because we need to see that the whole city is becoming affected by the replication process. The film begins with the basic locations like home and work; but as the film progresses there is revealed more and more of the city itself, eventually the back streets, alleyways and even the harbour. We see and feel the fulcrum moving and the film's pace and location reach accompanies this.[29]

Elizabeth accompanies Matthew to a bookstore where Dr. Kibner is signing his latest book and offering advice to readers. There, Matthew calls the police to report a hit and run they observed en route but the police seem to have no record of the incident and dismiss Matthew's report. In this scene Matthew's friend Jack is introduced, a tightly-wound but friendly writer. He complains about Kibner's book while Matthew tries to talk on the phone. Behind them is a tall mirror. While it is conveyed that occurrences that are usually news items are now being covered up and dismissed, Matthew's and Jack's images in the mirror are distorted and elongated. The mixture of distorted reflection and the anxiety in both men's voices present two implied pres-

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[29] There is a fair amount of scholarly commentary on Don Siegel's adaptation but not much on any of the remakes, which is expected since there are so many of them. Yet Michel Chion in *Audio Vision* ascribes to Kaufman's film a rendering of sensations, "weight, speed, resistance, matter and texture" (154). He is speaking of an aural assembly, but I agree that texture is significant in this way, specifically with the constant shifting of locations and absence of score earlier in the film. There is a dynamic experience of the city and how, as the population of replicants grows, it seems to live and breathe. This contributes to the growing presence of the World Without Us that Thacker discusses. It also creates a sense of the uncanny, as familiarity of the home town becomes increasingly distorted.

ences simultaneously: the overtaking nearness of the replicants (a woman is crying nearby that her husband is not her husband) and a suggestion of how an alien species might see human beings. Again, we have no possible way of knowing how this would be, how an alien would see us – but the timing of the phone call in the place where Elizabeth is supposed to get reasonable answers and their framed distortion in the mirror now positions them as the opposition. This is evidence of the replicant's numbers becoming larger and the survivors' numbers becoming smaller. Matthew at this point is still adamant that there is a rational explanation for what people are claiming; but Kaufman is steadily positioning him as the one survivor who will signal that the paranoia they feel is actually real, thrusting everyone into the realm of forbidden knowledge. The survivors go to him for answers, assigning him a kind of leader-role. He tries to find anthropocentric reasoning for what he is told is happening. But the mirror scene here is a pivotal one - it signals the beginning of Matthew's doubt, which quickly turns into rejection, and then as quickly to survival. When he doesn't get answers from those in authority (police for example), as will be discussed in *The Changeling*, the protagonist assumes the role of authority themselves. The phone, presented in a one-way take (no cross-cutting), gives us a sense of incompleteness - Matthew tries to speak but he can't hear who he's talking to very well and he can't seem to get more than two words in at a time. This scene parallels one later where he is on a public phone and becomes frustrated because he's not being listened to. As mentioned earlier in reference to Clover's distinction of technology and the lack thereof, the telephone becomes simultaneously an agent of communication and also surveillance; later in the film, when Matthew calls the government, they already know it is him. This couples with the surveillance of the replicants following and monitoring survivors; the phone itself becomes villainous and ineffective (29:30).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 14

The phone represents disconnection, ironically through an aural connective device, but via an unrecognizable, unidentifiable communication. Matthew, placed in the centre of the frame, is the last voice of humankind. He speaks into the telephone in these two scenes to a voice that will not help him. We don't hear the voice on the other end of the phone. Sometimes an effect in film post-production, to inhibit the audience from identifying a dialogue speaker and blur the line between diegetic and non-diegetic sound is what is called *futzing sound*, like we would hear via radio, television, outside walls, or telephone, fuzzy and distorted. Yet Kaufman's scene here maintains for the viewer silence on the other end of the line as Matthew tries to explain what has happened. His sudden pauses convey he is being interrupted. Then put on hold. It is equally important to hear the woman at the same time telling Kibner in the background that she doesn't recognize her husband. Here technology signals a fragmented and compromised urban centre.

Kibner consoles the crying woman while Elizabeth observes the room's activity. She is not convinced by his telling her that her husband is indeed the man she married. Looking around she sees several people expressionless, exchanging glances with one another. She is in a panic

while Dr. Kibner tries to explain to her that what she is experiencing is fear of relationship commitment and a subconscious need to escape it. This is a rational explanation and Elizabeth tries to grasp it. It calms her for the time being. Matthew, worrying about Elizabeth and trusting his friend Kibner, accepts the explanation also. This positions Kibner as the (temporary as later scenes will show) voice of reason – as it turns out, also a foil for the human attempt to identify an inhuman threat. Having left the book party they have been talking in a quiet street. Matthew drives away with Elizabeth. Kibner, now alone, watching them depart, steps back and leans against a garbage bin. Referencing Matthew's unawareness of the material in the garbage truck, this now signals the viewer's attention to the casual physical contact Kibner makes with the bin as the material inside is evident; the same grey discarded husk material. Kaufman carefully places this material in such a way as to suggest very subtly who might be human (alarmed or oblivious) and who might be a replicant (unfazed, casual). This prop may now act as a signal for the viewer to participate in the guessing game of who is and who isn't, as it is now depicted how certain characters interact with it. Viewers are presented with a personal and individual level of doubt that continually questions the limits of anthropocentric perception and raises questions: What is this material? How are people changing? Who is changed? And the garbage bin, like the truck, is the same deathly red. Red in this instance may definitely be interpreted as danger. It is significant that the garbage truck and the bins are the same stark shade of red that really stands out against the mise en scène. Red is also connected with the thread of simultaneous life and death; with the replication process, red becomes a symbol of both newborn existence and a stoppage of human life, especially assigned to an inert vessel like a waste bin, symbolic of death.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 15

The placement of shadow as vulnerability, now also more clearly indicates human blindness. Matthew drops Elizabeth at home, but is nervous to let her go in on her own. A medium shot through the cracked windshield (representing a compromised perception of reality) frames both of them equally positioned in a two-shot. They sit in Matthew's work vehicle, his safe place of reason. The key light in this shot is suggested to come from a streetlight above them to the left. Its cast shadow falls across the rear view mirror and onto Matthew's eyes, encasing his vision in darkness (40:00). Elizabeth, being convinced something is wrong, looks at him and tells him she'll be all right. Here is a brief separation of perception between them. Matthew is suddenly unsure; his own reasoning is that Geoffrey might be beating her. This subtle shadow placement indicates Matthew's refusal to look ahead to what might be happening, and also his inability to grasp the possibility of what Elizabeth is proposing. It is clear at this point in the film that he loves her. This is an implicit enhancing of the role of the survivor, unable to see past human reasoning and making them more vulnerable to what is yet to come. Matthew's car is a company car and the Health Department job is not only his occupation but his way of forming and main-

taining a grip on reality. This is why he keeps returning to it and he doesn't want her to leave it. The car is a physical form of his sanity, and an order that can be damaged but not broken.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 16

Jack's wife Nancy runs a mud bath complex in the city. After the book party Jack goes there, annoyed that no one wanted to hear his poetry. He takes a booth to lie down and think. There is a long shot of Nancy walking a client to the front door while she thanks him for the plant he gave her. The word "plant" now signals a potential replicant, either one that has been hatched or one that is soon to be hatched. The covert, or overt, intentions of placing a pod in an opportune location, creates suspense with a more visual suggestive leitmotif; "plant" works also for this act of subterfuge, setting up the opportunity for a pod to form. As with the Shape, absence signals something implied; an object, much like the open door or window, acts as evidence of a looming presence. At the end of the night Nancy, closing up, finds Jack covered up and thinks he fell asleep. She uncovers the figure under the sheet and finds not Jack, but a featureless and motionless humanoid figure, appearing to be dead. This is the first time anything beyond an expressionless human is shown. She screams and Jack, the real Jack, comes stumbling half asleep to her (41:26). His nose is bleeding.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 17

The bath house sequence is the first time a replication in progress is shown. It is also the first real step towards the protagonists' confrontation with the entity. We now actually see a half-formed replicant trying to form itself and understand that the process is a duplication while the human is asleep. We also come to know in this sequence that if the human awakes, the process may be stopped. The figure is half-formed, resembling Jack in some ways but not developed yet. They call Matthew and he arrives to inspect the body. He and Jack take a clinical approach, identifying what the figure has (nose, mouth, lips, fingers), but also what it hasn't. Jack notes "It's un-formed… no fingerprints" (43:27). Matthew, puzzled, responds, "Like a fetus." Nancy, quite un-comfortable, tells Jack not to touch it: "You don't know where it's been." Here there are present-ed three very different human perspectives, one an imaginative poet, one a sanitary officer and one a grounded and practical, even earthy, therapist. All three examine something that may very well be alien – but none are able to see beyond terrestrial association.

Yet it is here that Matthew's reasoning reaches a breaking point. He asks Jack how tall he is and how much he weighs. When Jack tells him they look again at the body. Nancy, waving her hands in front of her in a gesture of refusal, says "Oh no. Oh… no, Matthew" (43:53). Matthew

goes to the phone and calls Elizabeth. It may be inferred from his immediate shift back to Elizabeth that Matthew suspects something is afoot, but it is still Geoffrey he targets as the threat. He communicates this through because of what they are seeing here, Elizabeth is in danger. Because he loves her, he is able to at least believe she believes it. It is still clear he does not yet grasp the idea of a conspiracy, because he tells Nancy and Jack to call Kibner, but the mysterious figure in the bath house allows him to believe Elizabeth. When she doesn't answer he goes to her.

I have been following the plot's presentations of the implied presence to show how Kaufman places us in position to confront the entity before we actually see it. This is the point where Matthew, still assigning his fears to the task of rescuing Elizabeth, begins to develop his own version of conspiracy that Elizabeth presented to him, Matthew's being about what Geoffrey is doing and hiding. Yet his love for Elizabeth and his need to rescue her, coupled with the absence of any outside authoritative acknowledgment, forces Matthew to assume an authority role himself and he chooses to go to Elizabeth's house and remove her from it once and for all. From here I will examine four things: the rescue sequence and its expressionistic use of chiaroscuro and sound, Kibner's mysterious duality, Matthew's confrontation with his own half-formed replicant, and the famous ending scene, where I argue that there is definitive evidence that Matthew has not changed. The implied presence to to this point in the film will now serve as the bridge from anticipation to confrontation, which, as explained earlier, is the path from terror to horror, but also keeping the individual level of doubt for each viewer still very much intact.

At Elizabeth's, Matthew peers into the window and sees Geoffrey sitting in the chair with headphones on, staring at the television. It is night. Once Matthew breaks in through the basement window, the diegetic sounds are joined by low dissonant feedback sounds, much like from

the film's opening credits, signalling that he is entering alien space. Matthew must climb two sets of stairs to reach Elizabeth. Two important elements are at work in this sequence, staircases and placement of shadows. I have pointed out the significance of being encased in shadow versus casting shadow. Kaufman assigns both to Matthew in this scene.

He peeks into the living room and sees the replicant Geoffrey watching television. On the screen is an image of what appears to be pressure gauges. The sound of ticking is stark. He reaches the top floor and sees Elizabeth's replicant forming in a small greenhouse just off the bedroom. The real Elizabeth is sleeping in bed. When Geoffrey opens the bedroom door Matthew hides in the closet. In a completely black frame only a portion of Matthew's face is visible, significantly, only one eye. This displays he is confronting the entity and so is forced to face what he cannot accept. But he remains in rescue mode, determined to remove Elizabeth from danger. His perception is fragmented, half in reality, half in disbelief, but clinging to reality.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 18

In this shot he is situationally encased in shadow, but motivationally, partially stepping out from it. There is no ticking of the clock in this room. It is completely silent. When Matthew carries

Elizabeth covertly but hurriedly downstairs, on the stairwell, which is tall and multi-directional, they both move through shadows and simultaneously cast their own (50:50).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 19

Being both partially encased in and casting shadows at the same time suggests a balance in perception; Matthew sees what Elizabeth feared and is now positioning himself as protector. He is still in disbelief but able at least to acknowledge the danger in front of him. The main protagonists have entered survival mode. The shadow simultaneity suggests perceptually moving towards something but also leaving something behind. Shadows are cast fore and aft.

The importance of the stairwell lies in how it represents a liminal space between human and alien environments, albeit the distortion of the familiar home, becoming uncanny. The stairs symbolize a border Matthew must cross to rescue Elizabeth, but also to be able to confront the entity. This is, in a perhaps morbid parallel, a process of becoming for Matthew, as he sees Elizabeth's fetus trying to replace her and stops the process by removing her. Lotte Eisner in *The Haunted Screen* discusses the stairwell in terms of Expressionist post-war films, referencing a psychoanalytic analysis of sexuality. But for my argument, I reference the point she makes about

Werden (becoming) versus *Sein* (being): "stairwells represent an upward movement, the degrees of which are represented by the stairs themselves. And we can perhaps infer from the striking German respect for symmetry that the symmetry of a staircase embodies ideas of balance and harmony" (121). Indeed the sequence in *Invasion* is quick but strikingly balanced. Matthew creeps up, avoids Geoffrey, goes into the closet, comes out, creeps back down with Elizabeth, avoiding Geoffrey, and goes out with her the way he came in, through the basement. And during this process there is a change in Matthew's behaviour. He is stoic, mask-like, determined. He is displaying more than an instinct to flee; navigating the stairwell and darkness around him, he *becomes* a survivor. I believe if Elizabeth were on the first floor this scene would be far less important; he must navigate the darkened labyrinth to reach the other side of perception. He gets her into the safety of his car and drives away. Once they are outside there is a two-note string score accompaniment. When they pull away we hear the first of the aliens' scream, which I will move to shortly. The scream also signals the survivors' confrontation with the entity.

Dr. Kibner is a psychiatrist. Ironically he represents reason and rationality, but also he becomes the vocal representative of keeping the survivors in the dark about what is happening. It is not clear if he has changed or not until the second bath house scene suggests so. After Matthew rescues Elizabeth, there is a cross-cut return to the bath house, where Kibner is telling Jack and Nancy there is no body. The half-formed replicant has vanished. Nancy, hearing a rumbling noise outside, goes to the window and looks out. She is positioned in medium close-up, but through the window a sanitation worker is clearly seen loading more grey husks into the garbage truck's maw (53:40). Remembering Kibner leaning against the bin and presumably taking a look around the bathhouse on his own, the viewer can infer that he has disposed of the unsuccessful replicant,

which would make *him* a replicant. The grey husks become a stronger key to position characters as either potentially changed or not, important for the implied presence; the aliens are always around but it is never totally clear where (or whom). It is always hinted.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 20

If assumed that Kibner is a replicant this becomes ironic. It would not just be an isolated incident with Geoffrey, or not with strangers representing an unknown quantity of changed humans; Kibner is Matthew's friend and the man who is supposed to represent rationality he fears is now gone. Like the safety of Matthew's car, Kibner is assigned the role of order and normalcy. Kibner's change signals the beginning of chaos. It is at this point in the film that the fulcrum has reached the centre, coincidentally as well the middle point of the film itself. Matthew tries to tell the police that he saw Elizabeth's double but of course Geoffrey has disposed of it already. Matthew insists that he removed her because she wasn't safe, reinforcing his adherence to rationality and protection. He is becoming unstable though; authority it seems has become unreliable.

At Kibner's office the survivors plead with him to accept their notion that people are changing and bodies are forming into duplicates. They admit to it sounding crazy but they are desperate to find answers. Ironically it is Kibner lying on the couch. He wears a strange brown

leather brace on his right hand throughout the film (57:45). It is unclear what this is and why he has it on, but my interpretation of it is based on his motivation and role in the narrative:



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 21

If it is assumed he is a replicant, it resembles an archery glove. This would position him as a targeter, or a hunter. Later in the film when Matthew and Elizabeth are caught, it is Kibner, wearing the brace, who is the leader and tells them they will be evolved into a new species when they are changed. But here it suggests a creepy sense of predatory intent. Yet Matthew still trusts him. They gather at Matthew's apartment and Kibner gives Elizabeth a sedative to help her sleep. At this point we are hollering NO!, knowing the replication process occurs during unconsciousness. But the implied presence we have experienced during the film has positioned us to confront the entity through our own levels of doubt. Here in the narrative Matthew will come face to face with his own duplicate. We as protagonists ourselves, are prepared.[30]

[30] We can see this as dramatic irony, an audience awareness of impending situations that precedes the characters'. We know one or all of them will confront the entity at any time because we already have through the implied presence. Suspense is intact because we are anticipating and expecting the horror to happen. Kibner has become poisonous because he represents the threat so close to human safe zones (the car, the apartment), an invasion framed inside an invasion and a danger to both the home and society.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 22

The sequences right before this scene with Kibner and Elizabeth are placed strategically. Matthew, caught in a dizzying 360 degree whirl pan inside a phone booth, tries to get someone official on the phone; the replying voices of his multiple calls are mixed together in the montage, overlapping, and with a dissonant heartbeat sound overlaid, create a sense of panic that Matthew must be experiencing. At the dry cleaners, he backs up fearfully as the proprietor, his wife standing behind him, says "No no, she better now. Much better now" (106:55). Again, the red truck is outside as Matthew leaves the store. Matthew becomes further isolated and alienated.

From this point on in the film the survivors flee from the replicants, who now control the city. The fulcrum has passed the centre and the conspiracy Elizabeth first warned about has come to fruition. After Kibner gives Elizabeth the sedative, he leaves; everyone lies down to rest. Matthew goes out onto his terrace. It is night. He sits down in a chair and puts his head back, gazing at the cityscape, which has a green tinge to it.[31] He is fighting to stay awake but he can't do it. He falls asleep. Green tendrils reach up from the ground and attach themselves to his hanging, limp hand and arm. The special effect is achieved by pulling the tendril material away from

[31] Green is often used to signal an alien presence, little green men and so forth. Ridley Scott's *Alien* films and John Power's *The Tommyknockers* are examples. Here, the green cityscape suggests the takeover is nearly complete.

him and editing in reverse to give the appearance of an autonomous forward motion. There is a sound effect added that is eerily like a heartbeat heard through an ultrasound machine, also suggestive of a birth trying to occur.[32] There are pods for all four of them in the apartment, now asleep, all trying to hatch and form. This is the first time both the fresh pods themselves and the replication process in motion are shown in their entirety (1:11:40).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 23

The diegetic sound effects are loud, engulfing the moment in the event, sounds of ripping, crunching and rending as the pods open to reveal the half-formed replicants crawling out. They grunt and screech, covered in a gelatinous goo that resembles placenta. Matthew's previous observations at the bathhouse seem to be correct; it really does resemble a fetus, in this case in the earlier stages of development. Yet the replication process takes in this scene only a few minutes plot-time, and the one closest to Matthew has taken on his human form. Matthew's skin begins to deteriorate. The close-up over-the-shoulder two-shot of Matthew and his duplicate brings the viewer to the apex of what the implied presence has been guiding towards: the horrific con-

[32] This sound is also like when you have a cold and you can hear your own pulse in your plugged ears going *bow, bow, bow,* how it permeates your hearing.

frontation with the entity. It is one thing to confront the entity in the shape it desires to suit the individual's fears; another to confront the entity that takes the shape of the individual. It may be argued in this position that Matthew fears the loss of himself most of all. His reaction to the changed Elizabeth will illustrate this.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 24

The mirroring in this shot serves a dual purpose. It frames left and right a meeting of two beings vying for the same role in their urban society. One will live and the other will die, since there can only be one. And the inversion of the replicant Matthew signals the merging of two worlds, one a skewed version of reality, literally upside down. This frame positioning also references that the aliens have come from above, out there, from another planet, descending to Earth.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 25

Nancy calls to him from deep within his unconscious: "Matthew….. Matthew…." Then, "MATTHEW!!!!" (1:14:50). This brings Matthew out from his avoidance of the situation to come face to face with the entity, which in this instant, is a replicant, but also himself. He reacts quickly but still rationally, calling the police, but to no avail. The city's replicants have already barricaded the street outside his apartment.

Matthew tries to call Washington (he has a friend in the Justice Department), still clinging to some semblance of reality. When the call is redirected he hangs up and the survivors go out the back door. Matthew stops on the terrace, grabs a shovel and raises it above Elizabeth's replicant. He pauses and cannot deliver the final blow; instead, he holds it above his own nearly-formed replicant. This is a moment of one staring at one's own self but not through a mirror this time; a confrontation with the doppelgänger, an intruder in this case, an imposter.[33] Possibly the most important moment in the film, this is also the encounter of one literally seeing one's own self with one's own eyes, flesh and blood (so to speak), beyond a reflection or a projection.



[33] The doppelgänger theory is vast and does have some bearing in this instance; I am preferring though to stick with the double as the imposter, a lookalike designed as an antagonist, posing as the original human. Matthew sees this killing as suicide in a way, staring at his own helpless face beneath him. In this moment he is, in the horrific act of confronting the entity, confronting himself.

Mentioned was the impossibility of humans understanding how an alien would see us - we can now address the opposite. How could we possibly see our own alien self in front of us, let alone destroy it to survive? Kaufman doesn't offer anything of the real Matthew's thoughts, allowing for an attempt to fathom confronting not only a villainous entity, but one's self as the villainous entity. This is a colliding of Thacker's The World Without Us and The World For Us, in that Matthew must destroy his own duplicate in order to restore order. This confrontation suggests the removal of humans from the planet, which lies at the heart of The World Without Us; Matthew is being forced towards that brink. Yet he has just enough rationality to strike back and run before the madness of it engulfs him. The theme of confronting one's self is certainly the strongest in this film, more than the other films discussed in this dissertation; yet it is a thread that sustains through the films nonetheless. It is the fear of what the entity represents and how it mirrors humanity that Matthew confronts. The replicants are not humanity, but they embody the removal of humanity - this is why Matthew, the most rational survivor leader, chooses his own replicant to destroy before escaping. He is not rationally able to attempt to attack the idea of human takeover, so he instead attacks the idea of chaos from order, trying to preserve The World for Us. This is as close as Matthew can come to glimpsing behind the veil into forbidden knowledge.

The avenue for which I extend Clover's point about weaponry in the Slasher film being pretechnological is formed through the protagonist's tendency to revert to a more basic sense of instinctual response to the confrontation with the entity. Clover points out that "Such [pretechnological] instruments serve well a plot predicated on stealth and the unawareness of later victims that the bodies of their friends are accumulating just yards away" (31). Yet I argue that the choice

implements then become a reflection of such an animalistic participation, and in the case of *Invasion*, Matthew's grabbing a shovel or a rake, garden tools, shows not only that the replication is taking place in a garden environment, but it should be confronted with appropriate weaponry. And as well, shooting his own replicant with a revolver would become, in its very gesture, incorrectly concurrent with his state of mind, on the heels of a failed telephone call to authority. If the police have become non-existent, why would a pistol even be considered? Matthew has been left without the umbrella of authoritative control; therefore, his self preservation becomes motivated by the simultaneous birth and death location of the earth's surface. This is further supported by his awareness of his friends' bodies accumulation, in this case their deaths predicated on the birth of their replacements from plant pods. It makes perfect sense to choose to destroy his own replicant emerging from a pod with a garden tool. Linked to the absence of the entity to formulate the implied presence, the absence of a specific weapon like a pistol signals the presence of danger. The noise of the weapon itself is replaced with the noise of the vocal warning from Nancy. Matthew, retaining reason at all costs, reaches for the most reasonable weapon.

It is quick but gruesome. Puppets and fake blood are used to create an organic feel to the impact and crushing of the head. The sound is difficult to decipher, but sounds much like an axe hitting a watermelon. Generally there isn't, especially in a 1970's film, much more than an infinitesimal (maybe one frame) insert of the actual impact, but here there is a half-second three times. This magnifies the sound of the impact and heightens the sense of confrontation and repulsiveness. Stephen King, in his 1981 book *Danse Macabre*, mentions this moment in Kaufman's film, noting the dual impact of the visual and the accompanying sound effect: "Donald Sutherland uses a rake to smash in the face of a mostly formed pod. This 'person's' face breaks

in with sickening ease, like a rotted piece of fruit, and lets out an explosion of the most realistic stage blood I have ever seen in a colour film. When that moment came, I winced, [and] clapped a hand over my mouth" (5). This moment also offers the first visual of the replicants pointing and screaming at a human (explained below), a hailing of sorts, to call out to all replicants the spotting of a human. The rest of the film will be a stark and distinct (until the final scene) differentiation between surviving humans (not many) and replicants (almost everyone). The hailing gesture in the film, a literal form of sanctioning (penalty), is a form of subjectification (identifying and singling out) in this way, as the replicants, now large enough in numbers to no longer be hiding, are in position to single out surviving humans for capture and forced replication. I use the term hailing, not to follow Louis Althusser's notion of interpellation into economic and/or political societal structuring, but on a more rudimentary and suggestive level in terms of survival in the film's narrative. The actual forming of a new identity is through the replication process; but the hailing acts as the identification of a threat; it is simply a calling out. The less survivors there are, the more the replicant hailing is done. As replicants, the expectation of ideology is surpassed by the suggestive function of survival and takeover; the alien race exists as a collective consciousness. A deeper analysis of the gesture itself may reveal a critique on current human practices of ideology or societal hierarchies, certainly a commentary on potential fragmentation, as this chapter has asserted, especially through the critical lens of environmental awareness.

The hailing gesture in the film, the point-and-scream, has colloquially become known as *the scream* in this film. It is an open-mouthed, pointing with one hand, wide-eyed screeching that, with the editing studio's pitch-shifter and reverb effects added, sounds like fingernails on a chalkboard though a PA system. One replicant can perform the scream, or a group of replicants

can perform the scream together with a much louder, chorus effect that in the film's diegesis, seems to make the entire city shake and rattle as the human survivors run for their lives. The main argument this chapter is making with regards to maintaining the individual level of a sense of doubt, comes to fruition here (1:53:55):



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 27

The replicants perform their scream to signal the flight of a surviving human. Their mouths open wide and they point. There is no CGI in this film, so nothing is done to enhance the human mouth during the scream; performance is key. Sutherland as Matthew performs the most memorable shot in this film's final sequence. Kaufman focuses mostly on sound and choreographed chase shots, often in partial shadows, as it is night in the city. But the film's final scream is shot in the daylight, stark and delivered directly to the camera in a forward tracking, long to medium shot. The viewer gets a good look at Matthew's face. He is calling out Nancy, who is crying and panicking, afraid that if Matthew has changed, all has been lost. But it should be remembered that for most of the film's second half, once the fulcrum (numerically) has passed the centre, it is the survivors who pretend to be replicants to blend in and keep living. Here is the main point: John Murlowski's 2019 film *Assimilate*, re-envisions somewhat Kaufman's remake in that the

plot follows many of the narrative turns and steps. CGI is employed to show the aliens as insects, so it is there in the film. But when it comes time for a replicant to point and scream, their chin is digitally enhanced to become elongated, stretching past what a normal jawline is able to reach:

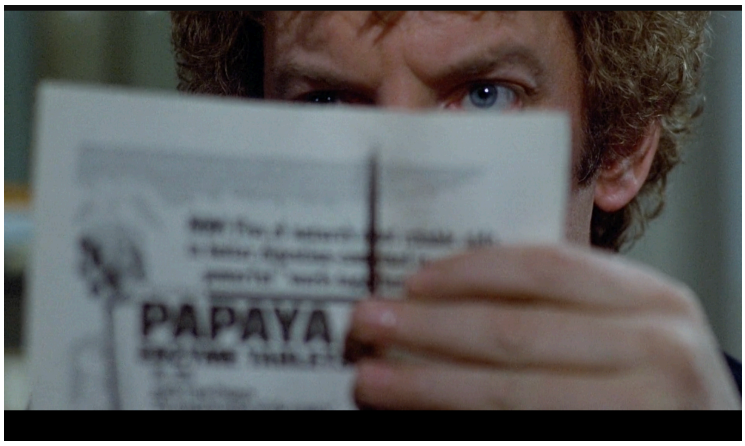


Assimilate (2019) shot 1

When it is clear that a survivor has become a replicant, it lets viewers off the hook; that is, we don't have to, and I even argue that we're not allowed to, wonder who has been changed. Clarity of this removes that sense of doubt that is so vital to both the implied presence and our own confrontational contract with the villainous entity. The fact that Kaufman doesn't create any real tangible physical difference between human and replicant, even when the scream is performed, still leaves the room to wonder if it is a human pretending. Granted, it's a bit of a stretch, character motivation-wise. But nonetheless it is still there, enough at least so that the viewer can still wonder. The narrative suggests who has potentially changed, but the visuals should not be so instructional. From the start I have maintained that it is what we *don't* see that creates our impression of the entity that could very well be right in front of us.

At 10:23 of *Invasion* Matthew sits in his Department of Health office, trying to convince Elizabeth on the phone to come in early in the morning. While he talks he is cutting clippings

from a newspaper. It seems an absent-minded activity since his focus is on Elizabeth, but a close look at the newspaper shows what he is interested in. The columns include *Spider Colonies Fall From the Sky*, a subliminal hint at what is happening right under everyone's noses. The climax of the film leaves everyone except Nancy, and I argue, Matthew, unchanged. They are the only two characters we don't see get caught. The film's final five minutes begin with Matthew returning to work, acting unemotional and stiff-legged, like the replicants. He sees Elizabeth, now changed, at her desk, and stares at her. Kaufman uses a lingering close-up of Matthew's stoic expression as he watches her for a moment and then the shot cuts to his office. The next shot is a close-up of Matthew behind a newspaper page, cutting a clipping out. His eyes are visible just above the page, staring at his office door. The only sound is the scissors cutting the paper, slowly and deliberately. The effect is enhanced so it is loud. Focus is racked deep, meaning the viewer cannot make out what is on the newspaper page but can see his eyes clearly. This is, albeit without the phone call to Elizabeth, the same seemingly absent-minded activity the real Matthew does near the film's opening. At this point it isn't important what he is clipping out from the paper; the activity itself and the intent stare are sufficient to maintain enough doubt to encourage looking closer for more signs of evasion. The parallel is a key one for this moment of hesitation.



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 28

Matthew's office door is indeed open. It is framed in a medium shot and the workers walk stiffly past, including Elizabeth. One worker turns and looks at Matthew, passing the doorway but no words are spoken. Only diegetic sounds are heard, the clocking of shoe heels and the folding of the paper clipping Matthew puts in his pocket. He rises and steps into the hallway to join them, a few paces behind Elizabeth. As he is exiting his office, to the right of the doorframe a sign reads *Run: A Race Against Time*. The word *Run* is large, and the only word on the sign that is clearly legible. This is a subliminal message to the viewer that there must be a sense of urgency, especially right after the one worker looks at Matthew from the hallway (1:52:10).



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 29



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) shot 30

There is an eerie high-angle extreme long shot of the hallway with the workers all walking in the same direction, their reflections on the marble walls on either side. The hallway resembles a tunnel in which everyone is heading for the exit. Matthew is on the right, completely blended in. Outside of the diegetic sounds mentioned, the shoes, rustling of clothes and the dinging of the elevator, the scene is silent (1:52:50). Silence in this context is stressed to represent secrets, caution, and as with the replicants at the film's beginning, hiding in plain sight.[34]

Matthew appears as if he is leaving the building like the rest. But he stops at the elevator and watches Elizabeth get in. His gaze is clearly on her, her face seen through the elevator's now closed door's one small window. Kaufman frames her in this small window so only she is visible to him; this shows that Matthew is able to focus his attention on one person, replicant or not, and the viewer knows the real Matthew loves Elizabeth. She has changed, but he is still exhibiting attention towards her. He stares at her (she doesn't look at him) until the car is out of sight. There is then a sound bridge into the next sequence of the San Francisco City Hall's front walkway where Matthew begins walking towards the building's entrance. The song being played is a dissonant and somewhat discordant version of Amazing Grace. Matthew walks alone up the path. Around him are flagless poles and pruned trees that appear to be sycamore trees, both suggesting the absence of humanity. A gull cries in the distance, helping to suggest a barren environment, nearly void of humanity. Then a voice tentatively calls "Matthew? Matthew?" (1:54:01). It is Nancy, still alive and standing next to a mailbox. Matthew turns to look at her. Nancy assumes he

[34] Does this make Matthew a villainous entity? No, since the replicants are not scared of the humans anymore; their extinction time has passed and they are thriving. Yet to the few who tried to replicate the survivors and were destroyed, they might assume the role of entity - the confrontation could go both ways.

is still human, smiles and approaches him. This is the moment of the film's famous Sutherland scream. Nancy claps her hands over her ears, shakes her head and cries [35].

There are strong indications that humanity has been lost, and if Matthew, the glue that holds the survivors together, is gone, then so is all hope. The film ends there, and this is a decent cliffhanger of an open-ending, designed to leave the viewer with simultaneous feelings of dread and curiosity. Narratively the climax meets its objective; but there have been given enough suggestions in the film's last five minutes to wonder if Matthew has really changed or not. I argue that Matthew's becoming is a different type, one of personal decision adhered to his unbending sense of reason and choice. He could be signalling the scream to scare Nancy to retreat, not wanting to be caught himself. Or perhaps he is pretending to be a replicant on a more self-preserving level, which would go against his previous character of helping others; yet the human Elizabeth is gone and so a part of him went with her. It is never clear. And this is the point. Matthew's changing is not of the biological kind; it is the fragmentation and compromising of his rationality and emotional solidity, a blueprint for society's brittle and vulnerable collective identity, that embodies the metamorphosis on a more psychological level. He is able to exist in the new society in the defeated state he is in. Matthew changes in a different way. Kaufman's choices depict surviving humans and changed humanoids; there seems to be a one-way street from one to the other. But what if there was suggested a middle ground existence? Perhaps humans who were never duplicated but developed the ability (and as importantly, acceded to a new reality) to continue to live as human, but secretly among replicants? If it is accepted narratively as tem-

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[35] "Amazing Grace" is interestingly used in this scene. Ironically it signals or suggests hope in the face of seeming hopelessness; yet it also suggests a subversion of salvation, especially with it playing from the docking boat. For a moment Matthew thinks he is saved. Then in the final scene, he doesn't seem to acknowledge it. So the melody moves from one of hope to funereal, with the pruned trees and abandoned city hall.

porarily possible, can it be accepted as permanently possible? If so, this would provide the platform for Matthew's behaviour in the film's final sequence. His hailing Nancy reflects his solidified internalization of guilt that he feels for failing to save Elizabeth. His rationality, having dismissed her first cautions, now causes him to live like a replicant, but still be human, so he can both sustain the human love he feels for Elizabeth, a compensation for the guilt, and to possibly try to find a way to reach (or develop?) a human element of her to reciprocate. In this thread of reasoning lies a defiance of the narrative's suggested closed ending. Humanity may be doomed, but not yet dead. Murlowski differentiates clearly and definitively who is a replicant and who isn't. Kaufman never does. So an individual sense of doubt and wonder is always with the viewer, the cues at *Invasion's* ending carrying that doubt even through such a stark final shot.

This chapter has been discussing duplication as a process of elimination, a takeover of one species against another. What does it mean in this context? What does it represent? In the context of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers,* the implied presence gives viewers access to a protagonist perspective, creating a confrontation with the villainous entity before the horror actually occurs; key to this is the binary opposition of order and chaos. Matthew especially represents and even embodies, in his decisions and actions, order and rationality. His vehicle and apartment and office are his safe zones, spaces in which, even though at times confused, he can feel in charge of the events around him. He is closely tied to the telephone, the main line of communication from individual to collective representation.[36] When the ratio of humans/replicants passes the centre

[36] Matthew uses the phone often. With Elizabeth, calling the police at Kibner's book release, the dizzying sequence at a pay phone where the camera circles the booth as he calls several official representatives of the city and department of health, at the confrontation scene on his terrace when he calls Washington. He is constantly trying to establish an official channel of communication that will maintain the order he relies on. When the conspiracy Elizabeth calls out reaches the phone lines and no one listens to him anymore, order is compromised.

point (becoming more replicants than humans), order begins to break down. Authority begins to become untrustworthy and people become suspicious of one another. The line between safe and vulnerable for Matthew is blurred. There is a constant synchronicity at work here, yet the causal connection is more prevalent than appears. Much like Carpenter's Shape, the aliens represent chaos, but they also represent, in their own way, order, in this case a new order that presents itself as chaotic in its functioning defiance of human understanding of evolution. The replication process is developed through a plant-like pod structure, obviously much different than human development, but the fetal development implied in this process echoes womblike incubation with the tendrils that reach and touch the human target. When the replicant is "born," the human target dies. Both occur simultaneously. The tendency to interpret birth as order and death as chaos becomes challenged; in this diegesis, birth and death and order and chaos are one and the same.

The viewer can experience this simultaneous confrontation with the entity and chaos/order through the cinematographic strategies Kaufman utilizes. When Matthew destroys his own "self," the nearly-formed duplicate, the *bow, bow, bow,* sound effect mentioned resembles a heartbeat. It is possible to interpret its dissonance and distortion as an alien heartbeat, since there are both a birth and a death occurring at the same time; but it may also be interpreted as the last surviving human element in extremis. The heart is the last sign before death. When the heart stops beating… dead. When we witness this scene and confront the entity with Matthew, our own heartbeat is able to match the sound effect's rhythm, drawing us closer to the horror in a physical way. Michel Chion calls this "objective internal sound," physiological sounds coming from within a character. Chion also refers to subjective internal sounds, voices and memories (*Audio Vision*, 76). With the replicant killing scene, we as the viewer/participant protagonist are placed in

position to experience both but more so subjective internal sound, since we feel, as we are alive, subjected to the heartbeat of survival. The awareness of both human and replicant creates tension, anxiety and cultivates a growing sense of uncomfortable closeness, indicating the heartbeat of the replicants as a collective, as if they are one. And their scream certainly illustrates that, as they act at times in near-perfect synchronicity.

As with Carpenter's Shape being a constant, always there, lurking, hiding and stalking, Kaufman's replicants also are a constant. They exist in plain sight, and the transition from terror to horror is signalled by their slowly increasing collective presence. In this way the film presents a villainous entity represented not by strength, but by the replication process itself. Numerically, the replicants must outweigh humans in order to complete the takeover. Their presence themselves is enough to cause dread and doubt on varying levels; but, returning to Thacker's three modes of perception, the replication process functions to destroy The World In Itself, and more importantly, The World For Us. When the World In Itself is destroyed, the planet deteriorates; when The World For Us is destroyed, it is us who deteriorates… and dies. And also, like the unkillable Shape, their utility of replication is also a constant, enabling them to become an unstoppable force. Ironically, they too are surviving, vying for control over an inhabited planet. Watching Matthew screaming at Nancy at the film's ending invites wondering about more than just alien invasion. There is encouragement to consider our own society's potentially fragile foundations and how we as individuals affect those foundations based on our own. The confrontation with the entity is gradual, always occurring, and increasing in intensity. The linear transition from terror to horror is blurred as well - there really isn't, apart from the first visual scream, a sharp turn from one to the other. It seems to be always occurring. This strengthens the implied

presence and our own confrontation with the entity. This is what the implied presence does; it positions us to wander intellectually towards the outer rim of our human understanding, our anthropocentric conditioning. We approach that rim and tentatively peek outward, knowing what is beyond is unfathomable. Yet we cannot help but think *what if this really happened? What would I do? How would I know?* Would *I know?*

Is it happening right now?

Chapter 3: The Ghost: Peter Medak's *The Changeling*

Peter Medak's *The Changeling* (1980)[37] is a unique film when discussing the implied presence in horror cinema. I have been discussing *Halloween* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* in a somewhat linear fashion; that is, exploring the implied presence of the villainous entity during the films' setup and lead-up sequences, before the confrontation occurs, the key for us being that we are afforded through what we don't actually see. This presents the viewer with the opportunity to create and experience the confrontation, the transition from terror to horror, before it actually happens on screen. This film is a bit different; it offers us the same opportunity, but bookends the implied presence on either side of the on-screen confrontation. We do see the villainous entity, but the implied presence at that point, around the film's halfway mark, instead of stopping, continues. This unique approach allows the confrontation to happen yet also keeps the entity at the level of a momentary encounter, a glimpse through the eyes of a POV sequence of perceptual subjectivity. We are encouraged through the film's cinematography and sound editing to continually ponder the reliability of the protagonist's state of mind and perception, a tactic that enables that sense of doubt, that has been a theoretical thread throughout this dissertation, and allows the implied presence to continue after the on-screen climax has occurred. Even though we come to know who the entity is, our anticipation is never wholly met; the usual linear path of terror into horror, past a point of no return, is challenged with this, as anticipation continues to fuel the viewer's opportunity to participate in the film's diegesis on a more personal and active level.

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[37] I know I included the date with this film's title, but I want to be clear that it is the original film with George C. Scott, not the more recent film with Angelina Jolie. Medak's film is based on the experiences of writer and playwright Russel Hunter (1929 - 1996), who served as co-writer of the film.

This chapter will show how the implied presence is utilized in the presentation of mise en scene, most specifically actor performance.[38] It is George C. Scott's and Trish Van Devere's facial expressions that communicate to us the most important cues we need to anticipate the presence of the entity before we see it. Sound editing works closely with this, since it is mostly sound effects that the performers are responding to. Medak is careful to show quite a lot of this and much less of what they are seeing; we of course, hear what they are hearing, which brings us to a closer level of a protagonist experience with them. POV shots, many being high-angle shots from the mansion's darkened upper floors position us to see, it is implied, from the entity's perspective. For much of this film, I am arguing, we are positioned as an additional resident in the house where the paranormal activity occurs. Unlike Carpenter's *Halloween* though, the protagonist John Russell is not being pursued; but he is being communicated to, pleaded with, on a deeper level, forcibly implored. We are aware of the communication being made by the entity, and how John responds with both facial and body expression and dialogue. This chapter's main point is to show how *The Changeling* utilizes the implied presence up to the climactic confrontation scene, and then, a rare approach, continues the implied presence after it, right until the film's closing sequence. This bookending retains enough doubt for the viewer/participant to never be satisfied with the plot's outcome (always anticipating, expecting), and always question John's reliability as a protagonist. Even placed in the middle of the film's plot, the revelation does not compromise the implied presence at all.

A key theorist for this chapter is Michel Chion, from his book *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (1994). Chion separates sound from image and acknowledges both as independent but

[38] I mean *actor* to cover all genders. I don't want to differentiate actor from actress and so on. So actor will include everyone.

working together, encouraging us to consider sound as its own communicator, not reliant on visual image. He prompts us to pay attention to aural perception, how we receive information from both diegetic and non-diegetic sound and how they inform the image before our eyes. This is important when we examine offscreen sound as it pertains to the implied presence. A term Chion uses is "acousmêtre" (129), an "acousmatic…voice-character that derives power from being heard and not seen" (221). Not all of the offscreen sounds are acousmatic, as some of their sources we do see, but these sources are assigned an autonomous role (a piano key descending on its own, doors opening and closing, a ball bouncing across the floor). I like acousmêtre for this argument though, because it helps us better understand how to recognize that a sound is essentially controlling the scene and without it, if the sound were turned off, the visual alone would be insufficient to connect with us on an emotional level (the seance scene with the entity's voice coming through the white noise on the tape recording is a good example of Chion's more strict acousmêtre). I would extend this to suggest that *The Changeling* operates in this way, with sound and image, as a call-and-answer communication, much like blues music does. Sound calls and the character answers (at one point in the film John yells at the empty, echoing house, "I did everything you wanted! What do you want from me?!"). Questions that will be asked and answered involve the relationship between mise en scene and sound: *How can an environment literally speak to us? How can sound create the implied presence without relying on an image to do so? How can the implied presence continue after the horrific confrontation occurs? Can there be a return to terror after horror?*

So the implied presence in *The Changeling* is primarily through sound. But as far as image goes, I mentioned there is a confrontation with the entity about halfway through the film.

Here there is a visual of the spirit haunting the house and what happened to them in extremis. It is brief though, and comes through a vision John has that is incited by listening to a recording of a seance. Beyond perceptual subjectivity, there is no shock value to exploit the emotional investment that is key to determining what is happening. I will discuss Takashi Shimizu's 2004 film *The Grudge*, an entertaining film with some narrative parallels, how it utilizes CGI to present the haunting spirit in stark clarity pretty early on; this compromises the doubt that *The Changeling* relies on to be able to bookend the implied presence around the confrontation the way it does. *The Grudge* is a fun film, but it's not the same experience as *The Changeling*.

In *The Changeling* John Russell is a composer from New York. After having stopped on a remote icy highway with a broken down station wagon, he locates a nearby pay phone to call for service while his wife with their daughter, who is about ten, play in the snow. A truck rounds the bend, loses control and careens into the wagon, crushing both wife and daughter under it in an instant. John bucks frantically inside the booth, unable to open it and watches this horror unfold. Freeze and fade to black and then back in of John returning home to their packed up apartment while running opening credits. Then a quick airport escalator shot and he is in Seattle six months later, confiding to university colleagues about his need to get back to work. They arrange for a meeting with the Historical Preservation Society for renting a house. The first shot of the house in question presents a very old and gigantic mansion (9:01). The film's first eight minutes gather in one swift motion all the ingredients for the recipe of a dual haunting, that of both house and guilt-ridden mind as vessels. John moves into the mansion and begins teaching music, attempting to rebuild his life as a musician, although still, after months, struggling with the loss of his family. And pretty much immediately the activity in the house begins.

As mentioned in the introduction, much of the villainous entity's activity is built around absences. The house in *The Changeling* is gigantic, several floors and wings, beautiful but certainly the perfect environment for a haunting and a motif for the haunted house film. John asks the HPS agent when it was last occupied and she tells him about twelve years ago:



The Changeling (1980) shot 1

The house itself, even after John moves in and fills it with elaborate furniture and a grand piano, still gives the impression of a large number of rooms potentially unoccupied, especially for one tenant. The camera angles and subtle cuts create the impression of a labyrinth; there is a basic sense of the house's layout, but beyond that, the stationary placement of the camera as the characters move around (and away from) it, add a feeling of vastness and the potential for being engulfed by the house. There are shots of darkened areas of the house. And an awareness of these darkened and unoccupied spaces in the house is necessary to anticipate what is to come. Medak, with this quick circumstantial sequencing to narratively bring John here, and mise en scene scaling (which is also in this way implied), creates the hiding place, the *lair*, of the entity.

Jason Colavito's discussion of the role of knowledge in the study of horror stories brings him to suggest a collision of our perceptions of real life and our tremulous search for understand-

ing through a larger lens, my interpretation of a metaphysical level, but nevertheless what he calls a "prism": "Horror stories may deal directly with knowledge within their plots, through characters engaged in science, the occult, or skepticism, or indirectly by reflecting external, real-life developments in the scientific understanding of the human body, the human mind, or the cosmos at large" (*Knowing Fear*, 2). This is important for an examination of this particular film because a constant thread that holds both the plot and our own search for knowledge is through John Russel's seeming inability to fully accept the tragic event that brought him to the mansion, even as events unfold around him that defy a sense of rationality. John, as will be explained, becomes an authority figure in this way, a professor in the plot but also helping to convey the relationship he has between one world and another, corporeal and spectral realities; and through the lens of a grappling traumatized mind, neither is quite graspable.

This brings us to forbidden knowledge. The line between the living and the dead is thinned as John experiences encounters with a force residing in the house. What is forbidden then? Knowing or perceiving the "other side" as it were? For us impossible.[39] *The Changeling* as far as science goes leans more towards spiritualism than technology, although it is an old-fashioned reel-to-reel tape recorder that offers the white noise John sees the entity through. The seance provides a pivotal turn in the film, one that suggests there is room if not to know, then at least to hear, or on some level, peek. To that end, John comes to know what happened to the entity while it was alive, but not what it wants from him after death. The answer to that is shaped

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[39] It has been attempted in film though. Joel Schumacher's 1990 film *Flatliners* has medical students help each other literally die and then bring them back to life so they can explore what is beyond death. Douglas Trumbull's 1983 film *Brainstorm* has a team of scientists develop a device that enables one person to actually experience feelings and sensory reactions of another; when one of them records their heart attack death, another goes to great lengths to play it out and experience it himself. *Brainstorm* will be discussed in more depth later.

from his own response to the death of his wife and daughter. So the entity may be seen again as having a space to hide, within the realm of unknowability. The Shape hides in the dark, where we cannot see, the aliens in plain sight, imposters of us, the shark in deep frigid water, in which humans cannot survive; the ghost hides in the afterlife, which we cannot (and should not?) access unless we ourselves are also dead. Conjunctively, each of these films suggest a gateway between these worlds for communication or confrontation, a liminal space of transition for the protagonist which places us in position not only to confront the entity on screen, but to confront our own versions of it. The boat that is too small, the empty house no one has lived in for years that harbours secrets, the stairs that seem to always be wrapped in moving shadows and must be climbed and then descended. Allegorically they might suggest feelings of alienation, class struggle, mental instability, or even political greed. John's music plays a sort of role as gateway in *The Changeling* as well; the music he writes he will discover isn't his own composition after all, and the tape recorder acts as communication device that becomes key to allowing the implied presence to continue for the second half of the film. In the end John's adherence to justice keeps his knowledge on the living side of things; but through the implied presence the viewer is afforded a very good suggestive glimpse of what's happening on the other side.

When John returns to his empty New York apartment, the last of the boxes ready for transport, he stands at the window. There is through perceptual subjectivity a memory of piano music as he stares out the window. Cut to a flashback scene of him playing the music we hear (a sound bridge); his daughter enters the room and says "Daddy! Catch!" She bounces a ball towards him. A hard cut with a graphic match as John turns around, roused from his memory from the housekeeper moving one of the boxes. The same ball falls from the box and bounces toward

him in an identical trajectory (6:12). It is important to keep this sequence in mind when considering the significance of the ball in the mansion later on. The ball becomes a key object that positions John on a bridge of his own between the ghost of the mansion and the pain of losing his wife and daughter. John puts the ball back with his things and so we know he has it in Seattle.

When John and Claire, the HPS rep, first step into the empty house, she explains the house was considered to be turned into a museum, which didn't happen. She comments that the house was meant to be lived in. There is the first of many high-angle shots from the above floors looking down. With our expectations of the house being haunted thus far, we may easily interpret this to be a reverse - POV shot from the entity's perspective. They are both looking up towards a momentary position above them. The dizzying spiral and inter- framed unity of the shot's composition also suggests confinement and confusion (9:46).[40]



The Changeling (1980) shot 2

[40] It is a common gesture to look up when thinking of passed loved ones. This particular shot immediately positions John as the new occupant of the house, watched by the entity, and also reminds the viewer of his continual acknowledgement of his lost family.

After John moves in he is playing a composition on the piano. He discovers one key is dead. One of the maintenance workers interrupts him to inform him of a delivery. (Mr. Tuttle) "Sorry to disturb your composin'." (John) "That's all right Mr. Tuttle, this has already been composed." It is assumed because John has already written it, and he has. But John's reply foreshadows a scene later in the film where what he writes has indeed already been written. He gets up and the camera pans left as he exits the room. Then it pans right and zooms in on the keys, where one key, the key that was dead, depresses and the note rings out.[41] Otherwise the shot is silent, with only the diegetic sounds of John's footsteps crossing the room. After the key rings out, there is a low dissonant organ chord, a sound effect, to signal a spiritual presence (12:20).



The Changeling (1980) shot 3

Narratively there are tie-in sequences of John teaching a composition in a college class that sound bridges/cuts to the Seattle Symphony Orchestra's performance of the same, followed by a speech by Senator Carmichael promoting financial support for the arts. Carmichael becomes an important character, as he is also on the HPS's board of directors. John returns to the mansion

[41] I believe the note is C. Not something I will pursue, but I was curious.

and there is the addition of dissonant violin music as he is positioned in an extreme long shot entering the house, a signal for activity.

The next morning the kitchen clock shows that it is six a.m. John wakes to the sound of a loud echoey metallic thudding sound, like a mechanical heartbeat, emanating from somewhere in the house (it rings fifteen times). There is a brief montage of lower-angle shots towards the empty upper floors while John steps into the hall. The source of the sound isn't suggested so we are to rely on John's facial expression and body language to confirm our expectation that it is a negative, aggressive and invading sound, one that causes confusion, trepidation, concern and the first glimpses of incoming terror. A low-angle close-up on George C. Scott's eyes and mouth display the most. Silence contributes to the implied presence in both sound and actor performance. Silence in the house heightens the effect of diegetic sound; the absence of vocal response from a character allows facial expression to speak instead, which can often be more informative than words. We might find we are expressing ourselves facially the same way as the character (17:56):



The Changeling (1980) shot 4



The Changeling (1980) shot 5

When the thudding stops John frowns, only his brow moving, looks to his left and steps back. His hand bottom frame comes up, as if in an absent warding off gesture; he then moves his mouth to speak but does not. The viewer is encouraged to wonder if the sound came from an entity inside the house or from the house itself. Both sources represent a dual threat, that of an impending danger from the house, and of John's confusion after waking to a sound that might be eerily similar to an automobile impact from inside a phone booth.

I mentioned in my Introduction Giovanni Pezzulo's theories regarding what he calls Embodied Predictive Coding Inference, the pre-determined variables that assign sensory input - a slamming door (a draft) or a creak outside the window (a tree) - towards a more (what he calls) "priming," a determination involving the individual's psychological deduction (an intruder or a looming creature). Pezzulo talks about the priming coming on the heels of watching a horror movie or being in a car accident (904), two apt examples for the point here. The horror movie of course we are experiencing (as we discuss it); the car accident John has experienced in the recent

past. Yet as I've pointed out, John's retention of the accident is still fresh, as the activity in the house reflects. Therefore the inference Pezzulo asserts here is two-fold: John's as fictional protagonist and ours as participating protagonist. Pezzulo points out, and John shows, the relationship between sound and visual. Perceptual sound can generate predicted expectation, bypassing rational variables (like wind or tree proximity) for more irrational (but very real) villainous causes. Medak is deliberate in paralleling the sounds of the six a.m. thudding with the sounds of Kathy's bouncing ball, creating a recognizable association for John as he tries to reason through the apparent paranormal activity. We as well might search for our own association with the thudding sounds, perhaps being trapped under water or inside an empty drum, phobic arenas that certain sounds might awaken. Why is the inference less sensory after watching a horror movie? Pezzulo argues that one's inference engages in a "cognitive bias" from prior events (904), and includes a physiological element that precipitates the inference, such as sweat or high heart rate. This aligns fairly well with Michel Chion's idea of sound effects producing a bodily response in the viewer, as mentioned last chapter. Here the thudding John experiences permeates the whole upper floors of the house, suggesting both the house as entity and allowing the viewer to share with John's own elevated heart rate (made evident through Scott's impressionistic performance). It is this bias that I examine here especially with John's reason for being in the house in the first place, and that the house responds to him as it does; our own bias is influenced by what we interpret is responding to him. Pezzulo asserts that a horror movie can "generate an arousal state that persists after the end of the movie, and this makes more complex the attribution of a body state that you sense now to an event (the horror movie) that ended hours before" (906). Can we extend this hypothesis to include days or even months, and following more complex experiences such as

being trapped in an enclosed space or isolation in a remote environment? I argue we may; if the residual effects of inference include bodily response, and we may connect body and mind together in emotional response to memory, then it is not limited to temporal boundaries. This allows a viewer to participate in one's own inference of what John experiences and also what he is feeling, which in turn influences one's own response. And I point out here that the return to an emotional response parallels narratively with a return from horror back to terror.[42]

The next day John is again playing on the piano (a melody that will become recognizable), and the door to the music room behind him opens silently on its own. He stops and turns. There is a quick dissonant violin note and a hushhh! sound with it, sound effects, but dual in that it may be interpreted as a whispering voice. This is significant because this combines diegetic with non-diegetic sound in the same moment - piano and effect. The whisper would still be non-diegetic, but could also be argued that John hears it because he stops, gets up and goes to the doorway, thinking Mr. Tuttle is nearby. This walks the line between diegetic and non-diegetic, and provides an example of what Michel Chion calls "territory sounds", ambient sounds creating environment, and "superfield," multi-track sound placement (224), which Chion explains in the context of theatre speakers, but it may be considered in the sound scope of the film itself. The door doesn't creak but he still stops playing while it opens, which is a cue of him at least sensing something.[43] John returns to the piano and continues playing. Cut to a high-angle shot looking

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[42] I want to reiterate clearly here that I am not attempting to incorporate Pezzulo's neuroscience theories specifically into my chapter; I am nowhere near qualified to do so. Rather, it is an attempting to incorporate his ideas about cognitive bias and perceptual inference into this discussion of the implied presence and our ability as viewers to participate in a film's diegesis on a more personal, psychological and emotional level. Pezzulo's approach with this aligns so well with my own that I feel compelled to comment on it.

[43] I listened to this part with the sound turned up loudly; there is no creaking that we would expect to hear, and the sound effects are sudden and jarring.

down from the upper floors and again the sound effect, sounding more like a shriek this time than a whisper (19:50). Being given the music as a cue for the entity's presence, as John then presses record on the tape player and plays the full piece to record it, the viewer is prompted to expect it to pick up voices, much as white noise recordings do in ghostly encounters. So the reel-to-reel player becomes then a communication device, a gateway to afford a glimpse into the realm of forbidden knowledge.

Claire stops by with some photos of the house for John to hang up. She notices the antique table and finds the ball inside. Two things tie the entity and John's anguish together here: the piece John recorded is playing when Claire shows up. She notes it sounds like a lullaby (21:00), and finds the ball in the antique desk John brought with him. She holds it up and John says it was his daughter's, which brings an uncomfortable silence. Again there is a culmination of two worlds, both of the past, colliding with a possible present/future. It is in these moments the viewer can anticipate the confrontation approaching, and there is information to begin a conjuring of one's own version of the entity before it is seen on screen. The next morning, again at six a.m., John is crying in his sleep. The metallic thudding awakens him and he sits up, looking around. He asks Mr. Tuttle about it, but Tuttle is adamant that an airlock in the furnace system is the cause. John isn't convinced and neither should the viewer be.

The following evening after John's students go home from a lesson at the mansion, he locks up and turns to hear a subtle sound. As he walks through the house sound perspective is used to indicate when he is nearing the source. It sounds like dripping or crunching. He enters

the kitchen and it is water running.[44] He turns the tap off. But again, frowns, and looks up. Medak's focus on the tapping sound of the dripping faucet and Scott's intense facial expression signal the real source of the sound is from upstairs.[45] We are positioned with John to have to ascend the stairs, as I have suggested, a liminal space, here a space of transition from present to past, as there is a clear communication happening with the entity. Significantly, John's progress through the mansion, searching for the sound's source, is filmed from his front side, with the camera tracking backwards. Moving from bottom to top in the house, this creates the sense of switching back and forth between John's perspective and the entity's as it draws John towards it, creating a confrontation through cinematography and editing before it actually occurs. In this way, we as protagonist get there before he does. Again, there is the POV shot from above, the very upper floors this time, a place it is unclear if John has ventured to before now (26:24).

There is a sort of mystical dissonant music effect playing when John reaches the upper floor, violin and xylophone. A disorienting handheld POV walk down a darkened hallway with the crescent of light behind the slightly open bathroom door. The sound of running water is much louder now. John peeks in and sees the bathtub filling. He turns the tap off and glances around.

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[44] It is a common motif in horror films to have water running; it acts as a beckoning for a protagonist to enter the arena of confrontation, or at least become aware of an invading presence. A filled bathtub is the most common, as we are prompted to wonder who or what is beneath the surface. This is one of the most effective parts of ocean-terror films like *Jaws*: the water's reflective surface shows only a mirror image of our own fearful hesitation. Water is a life-source for human sustainability, but humans cannot breathe immersed in it - so its duality includes a threat of enclosure, suffocation, drowning, death.

[45] Yet "source" is not wholly complete; the source of the sound, but not the cause. There is metonymy with this example; the running faucet signals a reversal of cause/effect. Here effect comes first, then the cause is implied. The sound stands in for the suggestion of a source instead of something identifiable. The strength of the implied presence in this case lies in the viewer being forced to look into metonymy to see the source as unknown.



The Changeling (1980) shot 6

His eyes return to the tub and he sees the blurred image of a child's face under the water. He backs out of the bathroom and down the hallway, not saying a word. Again, Scott's shocked expression and stiff walk tell of the horror he has encountered. Medak shows just enough of the blurry figure in the water to gauge it is a child, which maintains the narrative thread of John's struggle to live with the loss of his wife and daughter. The suggestion of a parallel between personal loss and ghostly experiences in the mansion is a very close one now (27:36).

I will argue that at this point, because this is only a glimpse, and it is not clear what John is actually seeing and what he might be manifesting through his guilt, we are still in the realm of terror. The film's opening scene's uncomfortable accident has John locked inside the phone booth, unable to open the door and conceivably without any possible time to get to his wife and daughter before the truck does. Everything happens in an instant, and in his panic John loses control of the situation, forced to watch from the confines of the booth; consequently, forced to watch again and again through his memories of the event. In the bathroom scene, John becomes

convinced now that there is something trying to communicate with him, but there are questions still unanswered. From here John begins his own investigation with city records.



The Changeling (1980) shot 7

John's decision to assume an investigatory role in the film, albeit a common narrative direction in a ghost story, hinges on his compensation for being helpless (locked inside the phone booth) to stop the deaths of his wife and daughter. With the glimpse of the child under water, John's focus becomes more so on his daughter Kathy, and there is a parallel between his own lost child and the child he interprets is trying to communicate with him. Because there are no answers for him to come to terms with his own tragedy, he assumes command of finding potential rational explanations for what he is experiencing in the house. This investigatory role will strengthen as the activity in the house increases and no one around him wants to talk.

The house in *The Changeling* is in a way a reversal of many house-oriented horror films, in which the protagonist descends into a basement level, highly Freudian for grappling with an unreachable unconscious; here John ascends, moving up staircases and through labyrinthine corridors and doorways to finally reach the very top attic level. John is trying to assume some level

of rationality, reason, trying to pursue, rather than be pursued; in this way he is attempting to manifest a level of power. Yet the long and confusing trek to the top of the mansion indicates that much of the house is, like a trip across an ocean or through a tunnel, as many of the corridors resemble a tunnel, a liminal space where reality becomes skewed and the viewer, with John, becomes positioned on the bridge between present and past, living and dead, afforded a glimpse into the forbidden realm (34:33).[46]



The Changeling (1980) shot 8

In the attic John finds a child's room, with a small bed, picture books and a wheelchair, also small, as if built for a child. The wheelchair looks very old. On the mantel, he opens a music box and a melody begins playing. John realizes it is the same melody he has recently composed and recorded. We are immediately brought back to the reel-to-reel recording machine as communication device between realms, transcending any level of coincidence. John is adamant to Claire

[46] As discussed, Matthew's rescue of Elizabeth in *Invasion* involved him climbing to the top of the brownstone where she was kept captive, a common fairy-tale trope and one that many video games also employ. The avatar must, after defeating enemies and dodging pitfalls along the way, ascend to the top of either a mountain, castle or into the clouds to face the "boss", the last villain character that holds the key to winning the game. It is John's adherence to explanation that compels him to go to the very top of the house.

he has never heard the melody before. It should be reminded that John told Mr. Tuttle the song had already been composed. Even if we believe John having not heard the melody before, there still remains somehow an arrangement of communication through music, even if subconscious on John's part. This connection heightens the presence of the entity with no visual needed to accompany it, and creates the acousmêtre effect in the process. The melody may be assigned to the ghost communicating with John, but through John's own artistic expression. John stands more on the side of what he suggests is influence, but the acousmêtre depends on an unseen source that wields some kind of power through its vocal or aural presence. The linking of the two melodies as the same merges past and present, also linking back to Claire interpreting the melody as a lullaby. The fact that John composes the same lullaby as the music box in the attic suggests it is fate that is bringing the two together, which heightens the awareness of the ghost's presence, as much as catching a glimpse of a boy underwater. Pertaining to the question in the introduction to this chapter, this is how sound can create the implied presence without reliance on an image. Claire volunteers to help John investigate past city records of the house.

As John learns about the family who lived in the house years before, the death of their own daughter in a coal cart accident in the street affects him, making him fearful of what the entity in the house wants from him. "I can't go through this again," he tells Claire (42:30). This encourages us to question John's perception of his experiences in the house. We know there is activity, but waltzing with this is the close connection between the ghostly past and a fragmented and puzzling present. John is trying to put the pieces together but he cannot completely separate his own past from the previous occupants'. Because of this, as the narrative moves through the mystery with John, we too are hindered from deciphering any explanation, and our expectations

are also still on the side of what we will see or hear next. The sense of doubt is still very much intact; because John doubts what he sees and hears, we do as well.

John sits in his office looking at photos in an album of his wife and daughter. He is smiling, nice memories returning to him. There is a thin tapping sound and he looks up. Kathy's ball comes bouncing down the stairs (43:26).



The Changeling (1980) shot 9

John picks up the ball, stares at it, frowning, then looks up. There is a long still shot of the stairs leading to the upper levels but everything beyond the first rise is dark. A three-second shot of the empty stairs, along with the sustained one-note of non-diegetic violin create the space for a hidden entity, waiting for John's response. When John goes to the desk and looks in to find the ball not in its usual place, confirming the one that came down the stairs is indeed Kathy's, our acknowledgment of the entity's actions are undeniable. What would we do in this case? We expect John to call out, or go up in search of whatever tossed the ball down. Instead, there is a hard cut to John in his car pulling over on a bridge. He gets out, stands at the railing, pulls the ball out, and lets it roll from his hand and into the river. The shot of the ball landing in the water is in

slight slow-motion, to emphasize the act of release, a somewhat cathartic relinquishing of an object that represents pain and anguish. Even though the ball came from upstairs, presumably tossed by the entity, it still retains the memory of his daughter, which John seems to be trying to cope with.

Another hard cut and John returns home, coming in the door and putting his coat onto the lower stair banister post. A gesture of exhaustion from such an emotional release. He turns to go back into his office and the ball comes bouncing down the stairs again, this time wet. No words are spoken through these sequences, which is important. There is here a non-verbal call-and-answer; John remembering lost loved ones, the ball coming down the stairs, John putting it in the river, and the ball returning to him. It is significant that John goes to the river instead of simply putting the ball back into the desk, or if he wants to be rid of it, into a garbage bin, or even thrown into the woods. The choice of location involves the same element as where he saw the dead child - in the tub underwater. This is a very strong clue for where John's investigation will lead him. The first instance of the ball coming down the stairs has John approaching it; the second has him retreating from it, to back into the wall, his face drawn in a rictus of terror.



When the ball comes down, there is another sound effect of a child's high-pitched shriek, which John responds to by stopping and turning, again looking up. Then the ball bounces down towards him. The shot is almost a POV shot from the ball's perspective, strengthening the presence of the unseen entity. The sound is orchestral, sharp, two-note, almost with a hint of admonishment. The placement of the lens and the symmetrical framing position the viewer at floor-level behind the ball, which indicates that we have the same "view" as the ball does. This affords an inanimate object the ability to perceive, almost as if it has eyes of its own. John seems to be looking at the viewer become subject in this way, as much as he is looking at the object (45:10).

Actor performance is part of mise en scène. Facial expression and body language are part of actor performance, specifically to convey more emotion than words can. It is common in film that villainous characters display more negative expression, connecting to their/its menacing intentions. With films like *Halloween*, *Invasion*, and especially *The Changeling*, there are moments when protagonists display an ugliness, repulsiveness or ghastliness that defies their "good guy" role. The extreme close-up shots help to establish this, as Scott's and later Van Devere's repulsion at the sight of the entity's physical manifestations, specifically in their moments of emotional outburst (crying, hollering), causes them to respond physically in a similarly negative manner. An extreme close-up shot has the ability to distort, forcing the viewer's gaze to be engulfed by responsive facial movement. In a similar way that perceptual inference functions, the viewer is influenced to respond to the character's engulfing facial expression as much, or even more, than what the character is seeing (that the viewer is not). This creates another strong ingredient to the implied presence and its role in viewer participation. The séance scene is another example.

John gets advice from a professor at the college where he teaches, who specializes in psychic research, recommending he work with a medium. John is skeptical, but he wants to find out what the spirit in the house wants. The seance is the turning point of the film, the axis on which the linear path from terror to horror shifts. John agrees to hold it in the mansion (of course at night with the lights dimmed and the recorder on). The medium, Leah, and her husband arrive. Claire and Mrs. Norman are already there. Leah is small, late middle-aged, and polite but quiet. When she enters the house, Leah is immediately drawn to the stairs, and finds her way to the door leading up to the attic. Again there is an upper angle POV shot, looking down at her, this time from the attic. John starts his reel-to-reel recorder. There is a narrative ellipsis, a cut to a close-up shot of Leah lifting her head from the table, now in a trance. Sparse piano notes accompany the creak of the attic door as (a temporal juxtaposition) Leah closes it, and then a sound bridge through the ellipsis of Leah's wheezing breathing as she goes into the trance.

Chion's acousmêtre applies well for both the ball-return scene and the seance scene, even though not all the sounds we hear are acousmatic; they alternate between diegetic and non-diegetic, maintaining a level of doubt since John reacts to sound effect noises that immediately precede an action we presume to be initiated by the unseen entity: the bouncing of the ball, the creak of a door, the music effects of the piano and violin, and the effect of the shrieking that signals the presence of the spirit. And the ball does represent the unseen entity in this way, because it acts as a parallel object between John's mortal universe and the sorrowful disconnection he has with his daughter. The high-pitched shrieks for example, acknowledge both the entity's presence and a sort of Marco Polo game of hide and seek. With the visual implied presence we are constantly trying to locate, or at least determine where the entity is/may be, seeking the source of the

horror; here we are trying to locate the source of the sound, knowing it is coming from the entity in some way, even if through object manipulation. So we are essentially doing the same thing. John gets rid of the ball. Done, gone, in the river. He returns and right away there is the soft tapping sound from only minutes ago and we are forced to move our attention from release back to threat, doubting at first that the tapping could be the ball's return. But it is, and we reassign the sound to the ball, in turn acknowledging the entity as the unseen source of the sound as well as the act. As the plot unfolds and the mystery offers the fragmented pieces to put together with John, the viewer is kept in a position of hearing as much as looking, more so in this film than others. John turns and frowns, cut to a long shot of the hallway, the bouncing sound heard, and then we see the ball bounce into frame. Medak alternates between sound-visual, and visual-sound (the door silently opening behind John and then he turns when the shriek is heard). This dynamic pairing makes the viewer seek the source in both looking and hearing, both senses anticipating but constantly unsure. One does not necessarily explain or reveal the source of the other. So Chion's encouragement of acknowledging sound and (moving) image as independent but working together is valuable for this examination.

The seance sequence is also a strong example of what Chion calls added value, that is, "the forging of an immediate and necessary relationship between something someone sees and something someone hears… text, or language, on image" (5). As the medium falls into a trance, her husband passes blank sheets of paper beneath her sweeping pencil-holding hand. All sound effects are turned up during this sequence (the scrape of the pencil, the *flak!* of the pages moving), making each fragment of sound take on a lushness, a closeness, like a whisper in our ear, consonants becoming thickly heard. She asks the entity questions and writes the answers down.



The Changeling (1980) shot 11

Her husband says them aloud (49:25). We do not hear any ghostly voices through this, only a one-sided conversation with voice and sound effects of the pencil scraping and growing piano notes. There is another POV shot from the stairs, this time handheld, descending them, suggesting the entity has approached the group (51:21). The medium continues, repeatedly asking the entity if it died in the house and how. A metal cone placed in the centre of the table begins rattling. With the territorial sounds so sharp, creating almost an aural vacuum effect for the scene, the water glass suddenly sent across the room on its own to shatter into a cabinet is wholly jarring. At that moment the seance has ended and there is a quick high-angle POV shot from the attic watching the door close onto darkness.[47] The shattering of the glass and gasps of the group signal that the contact that had been made during the seance has been broken. Shortly after, everyone leaves and John is left alone with his recorder.

[47] It is one of the eeriest scenes I've ever watched. Again, performance is key. Helen Burns as the medium, Leah, with half-lidded watery eyes, blank face and sweeping hand, asks the entity questions in a nearly inflectionless voice. Such physical neutrality makes us expect to hear the entity answer. But answers instead come through the scraping pencil lines on the pages; we see in Leah's writing that the entity says its name is Joseph. This, and the POV cinematography keep the entity in the realm of the implied, yet very close to horror confrontation.

After a long slow forward tracking shot approaching John seated in front of the recorder, finding a spot in the reel to listen to, he replays the medium asking "Are you the child killed by the coal cart?" Before her husband responds to what she has written, a whispery voice replies "No" (54:40). John frowns and rewinds several times, hearing the same thing. He then listens to Joseph responding to all the medium's questions on the tape. John asks now with the medium's recorded voice, "How did you die?" and he has a vision; in it, he sees Joseph, a small disabled boy being drowned in a bathtub by his father. Joseph hammers his fists against the sides of the tub, creating the metallic thudding noise John has been hearing at six a.m. The vision leaves John shaken and weak. He staggers to his office, calls Claire, and collapses.

As noted earlier with respect to horror films, forbidden knowledge is approached, but at the last minute, turned away from it. We and the protagonist(s) never really step over the line; it is attempted, but seldom, if ever, do we experience the full emergence into the realm of what the entity represents. A glimpse is enough for us to form our own version of the entity before we see it. And here, when John replays the recording of the seance, does he get afforded a glimpse of who the entity is. Manuel Herrero-Puertas, in the article "Gothic Access" (2020) discusses the film in terms of disability rhetoric and what access means to usable space, primarily for a disabled boy with a communicative vehicle being a wheelchair.[48] Herrero-Puertas quotes the definition of access from OED online: "[t]he power, opportunity, permission, or right to come near or into contact with someone or something; admittance; admission" (as qtd in "Gothic Access," p. 335). Hererro-Puertas then extends the definition in that access has been reconfigured in this

[48] There is surprisingly next to no scholarly material on this film. Herrero-Puertas comments as well that the "scholarly silence is puzzling" (334 footnote). I am not attempting to form a disability studies argument, but the point about permission and access pertains to this argument.

context to include "gothic access." Key is the word permission: "Joseph's wheelchair neither asks nor waits for permission" (335). Herrero-Puertas' point that "Haunting transmogrifies the house into a topsy-turvy domain where stairs function like ramps and the able-bodied lose their navigational mastery" (335) connects to my own point that both the bathtub and the wheelchair become vehicles for communication on both a level of domestic space (the stairs) and a level of memory (John's lost daughter, Claire's challenging the Historical Society). The wheelchair specifically in this film is able to take on a personification of disorientation for John and Claire, but at the same time, maintain the ability to function as a mirror for them, and the crooked system that caused Joseph's death. Indeed "gothic" may contribute to the ghost story a level of inner contemplation, a confrontation with the self as much as with the entity; in this way the protagonist may even walk the line between protagonist and antagonist. So for my own interpretation of Gothic, there needs to be a mirroring of the human struggle with the physicality of the environment (visual and aural), and we have it clearly in this film. We are always wondering whether John's responses to the experiences he has in the house, even his investigatory motives, are for Joseph or for Kathy. We may argue both equally. John told Claire "I can't go through this again," but nonetheless he is going through it. The tape recorder then acts as a recipient device for communication from the forbidden realm. Joseph communicates via the wheelchair, but also through voice. The medium relays communication but remains a vessel. John's access, his permission to approach confrontation with the entity is afforded through the device that helps define his music, the one thing that keeps him together through the trauma of losing his family. I have said that music is a thread that holds much of the plot together, and the end will show this.

John, through the recording's white noise, does learn who the entity is and what happened to him, but still, not what he wants. We get clues ("well," "medal," "ranch") but that question remains unanswered, and something John must deal with himself; the haunting of Joseph Carmichael, with this still unanswered question, maintains the parallel with Kathy's death, keeping doubt of the origin of the spectre intact. This allows, I argue, for a rare opportunity, to return from horror back into terror, something I expect many scholars to shake their heads at; we are trained it seems to assign horror as the final stop on the train, the confrontation, in extremis as it were. Yet in *The Changeling* we experience the confrontation John has with Joseph, and seeing via perceptual subjectivity, a vision if you will, the cause of death more so than the actual death, we are then able to keep expecting more signs and signals from the entity, as John knows what happened, but not yet what to do about it. We are still in the role of investigator. The return to terror from horror is facilitated by an immediate return to the implied presence.



The Changeling (1980) shot 12

When Claire listens to the recording and hears Joseph's whispery crying voice she is emotional. John begins to talk through the clues heard on the tape, surmising that the boy was

murdered in the house and buried in a well. Claire, unable to hear any more, retreats to the front hallway and turns, seeing something on the stairs. Trish Van Devere delivers the emotion as Scott does, with facial expression. She gasps and becomes stalk-still, wide-eyed, frozen with fear. John approaches and they stare at the wheelchair, now on the landing above them (1:00:25).



The Changeling (1980) shot 13



The Changeling (1980) shot 14

Medak creates three sequential shots that each represent a perspective, or POV. First, if we were to be standing at the door we would see Claire coming to us, transforming the shot from a long to close-up shot, and turning to the stairs. We don't hear the wheelchair coming until she announces it with her reaction. Cut to a long low-angle shot of (John has now joined her) all three of us looking up at the empty but animated object, halting above us in an authoritative position; we now hear the creaking of the wheelchair as it rocks into position. Cut to a high-angle POV shot positioned just behind the wheelchair, looking down on us (we may be hidden beneath the chandelier); accompanying the POV is a discordant string progression, urgent, foreboding. Medak gives us the opportunity to be in the scene as a participant with the angles and framing he chooses. We do not see Joseph, even now that we know who he is; we only see the wheelchair, an object that represents his tragic ending and the possible motive for his murder. The emphasis formerly placed on the ball as communication, now that Joseph has been able to convey more information to John, has now been equally placed, as we shall see, on the wheelchair.

Even though Joseph has communicated to the living world, he hasn't actually appeared in visible spectral form. Medak is careful to maintain a thin veil between John's and Joseph's worlds, neither ever fully crossing it. *The Grudge* (2004), a frightening and thoughtful film, tells a similar story of a murder in a house leaving a spectral presence to haunt subsequent residents. The victim is also a boy, but the most active haunting is done by the boy's mother, who was also murdered. Granted, twenty-four years of digital innovation between these two films provides the space for glittery special effects, but nonetheless the visual appearance of the confrontation with the ghost comes early in the film, and in full detail (23:01).



The Grudge (2004) shot 1



The Grudge (2004) shot 2

Important to note, the ghosts in both films reside in the upper floors of their respective houses. Joseph does descend the stairs, but unseen, and returns once communication has been made. Medak's focus on the POV of the attic door and high-angle landing shots confirm this. Takashi Shimizu, director of *The Grudge*, chooses to have the ghost descending the stairs in full view, but

also the performer's disjointed crawling filmed in stop-motion, which gives it a disorienting effect.[49] It is possible to get this effect with reverse editing as well (1:30:20).



The Grudge (2004) shot 3

Shimizu also allows his ghost to leave the house altogether and stalk its victims wherever they go, on the bus, in the elevator and even in their beds. This spacial freedom carries with it a continual confrontation, immune to the protagonist changing locations for safety, which disallows any return to the implied presence. John's vision, induced by the white noise of the recording, and the absence of Joseph himself in (or even behind) the wheelchair, keeps the horror confrontation just far enough that the viewer is still in the realm of a glimpse, able to turn back and return to terror, the place where anticipation and expectation are still in control. Karen, the protagonist in *The Grudge,* does also see the murder in a vision, but not through a recording; she is temporally there, as if she is a ghost to those in the vision as well. Once the confrontation occurs,

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[49] I want to say that I discuss Shimizu's film because of the choices both directors made in accordance to the level of temporal and spacial control their ghosts have. *The Grudge* is a very good film, suspenseful and knuckle-biting at times. The pace is very quick though, and CGI presents villainous entities, especially ghosts, quite differently. I would argue that Medak chose not to show Joseph in full view outside of John's vision simply because he didn't need to.

there is no return to the implied presence; the ghost appears continually, and the moments it is hidden behind a wall or door are suspenseful, but the veil has been lifted. And again there is metonymy, the wheelchair, as a containment vessel for a contained entity. Joseph we find out, is a disabled boy and the wheelchair becomes his vehicle for communication. The trope of the wheelchair as representative of weakness though, is subverted, as the chair provokes fear and panic; yet the metonymy in this way aids the implied presence as its presence signals the presence of the entity. My argument is that Medak in *The Changeling* never lets us step through the veil, even though it seems like we might. And in a swift three minutes, we return to the implied presence and our expectations again take hold, guiding us along.

The role of detective that John and Claire team up to assume, follows the clues left by Joseph during the recording of the seance. "Ranch," "well" and "medal" become keywords that frame a direction for John to take of his own volition. Later a police detective warns him not to cross civilian lines and break the law, but John is not deterred. Even after Claire is fired for her part in digging up secreted information from city records, the two continue to search for answers to Joseph's death.[50] John finds the location of the ranch but there is a house on the property now. John and Claire meet with Mrs. Gray, who lives in the house with her daughter. Mrs. Gray tells them the only reason she agreed to the meeting was because the night of the seance, her daughter Linda had a nightmare about a small "gnome-like" boy trying to come up through the floor towards her (109:05). Linda's bedroom is of course wood-floored and carpeted, like we would ex-

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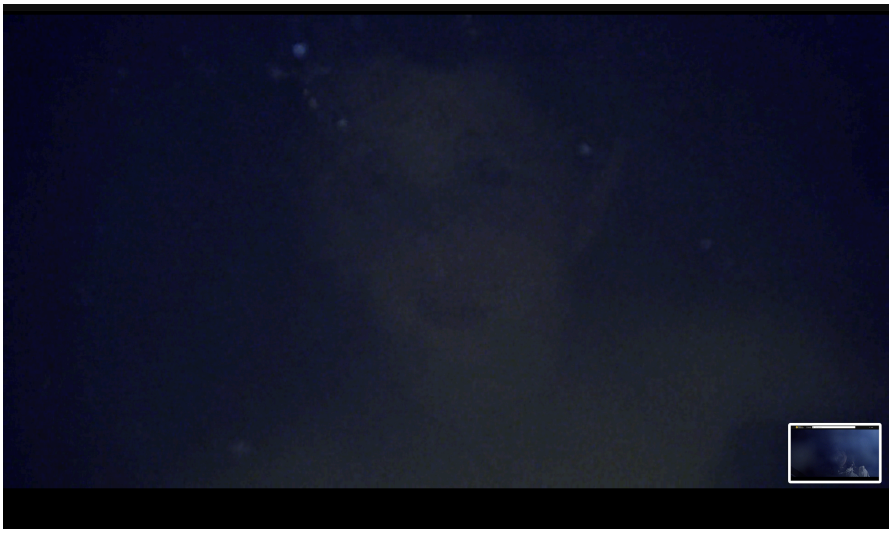
[50] There is a whole conspiracy game afoot in this film, with the Senator being a changeling orphan who was brought oversees during WWI to replace the real grandson of a billionaire. The father, destined to be monetarily bypassed, murdered his arthritic and crippled son at the turn of the century, a move to steer inheritance proceedings. I am not going into the plot this deeply, but I will touch on parts of this as I continue to discuss the implied presence.

pect any bedroom to be. But here there is not only an implied presence through the testimonial of a witness, but a corresponding one from the same night as both the seance and John's vision of Joseph's death. The arranging of two ghostly appearances at the same time in the same night causes a small retreat from the confrontation with John's vision, to allow for a second one happening elsewhere, unknown until now. I said recently that Joseph doesn't change locations to pursue the protagonist; in this case he still doesn't, as the well is beneath Mrs. Gray's house, the place it is now clear he was buried, connecting with the mansion in this way.

That night begins with a handheld tracking POV shot approaching the house. Similar high-pitched sound effects from the film's previous ghostly visits are employed; the viewer is encouraged to see this approach as Joseph moving between his two spectral domains. Linda, sleeping with her mother, is drawn from the bed, as if in a trance, and to her own darkened bedroom, where she looks down at the floor and sees the image of Joseph under water, much like what John saw in his upstairs bathtub. This parallel ties together Joseph's two domains (1:11:20).



The Changeling (1980) shot 15



The Changeling (1980) shot 16

Linda moves like she is sleepwalking. There are tears running down her cheeks. When she screams there is a stark parallel between Joseph appearing to John through a vision and to Linda through sleeping/waking (un)consciousness. Her mother appears and hugs her away.

John and a police team dig up the floor in Linda's room and find the bones of a child in a well-shaped hole beneath. There is no medal though (the Christening medal the boy wore until his death - John sees it in the vision), and John thinks it is there; he wants it for proof that the remains are indeed Joseph Carmichael. John wants to confront the Senator and the medal will be his weapon against the conspiracy. There is another parallel from before the seance sequence as John returns later to the now empty house (the police and family have left), and breaks in, once more pursuing the entity, this time descending instead of ascending, from place of death to place of burial. Again, the approaching POV tracking shot through the trees towards the house.[51]

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[51] This type of shot Carpenter uses quite a lot in *Halloween*; but it is long before the Shape appears in full view. After that, there is no more need of them since the action has started. But here Medak uses a similar one to bookend the approach of the confrontation on either side of the seance axis. Joseph is still approaching, and the viewer is still anticipating.

It is a shot run in reverse that produces the medal, creeping up out of the dirt at the bottom of the hole, as if Joseph is pushing it up through the ground for John. With this is an eery, dissonant high-pitched sound similar to the approach POV shots, suggesting that this is indeed Joseph controlling the object. When John returns to the mansion, as soon as he is inside, all the doors in the place slam closed one after another. Medak uses whip-pans to heighten the dizzying sensation of travelling echoing sound and John's alarmed state. They are edited together to create almost a 360 degree spin, which also creates the feeling of encapsulation and being surrounded.



The Changeling (1980) shot 17

This is where John yells "What do you want from me?!" But significantly he is directing his frustration upstairs, looking up towards our POV high angle once again. Long after the opening sequences we return to the same spot of the entity looking down from its hidden place. John's voice echoes through the upstairs hallways behind us as we are placed at the camera eye.

Where in a shot the camera is placed and facing determines where we as the viewer are as well. It is not simply a matter of where we are looking, or prompted to look via cues and gestures. Medak is careful to place and move the camera, subtle reframing and slow forward and backward tracking shots, to allow the sensation of actually moving within the frame, hence in-

serting the viewer into the diegesis. I have suggested a few times that we may be standing here or there; but I mean to transcend the voyeuristic gaze and argue that with such careful presentation of the implied presence and camera placement, the viewer becomes part of the scene itself, able to move in and around, adopting the role of supporting protagonist. The jump cuts and disorienting mobile framing that varies in speed and rotational distances link the viewer with John's disorientation in the house; we cannot control the camera movement and editing discontinuity, and because they imply the presence of Joseph, we cannot control Joseph. This way we may step closer to our own version of the entity without having seen it, but having all the negative space around it to create what it means to us, in the environment it resides in. The upper floors in the mansion are almost a character in themselves, lurking and seeming to move on their own, retaining voice and acting as a doorway, a liminal space, a labyrinth, between realms of the known and the unknown; the living and the dead. The attainable and the forbidden.

Not all the voices and sounds in this film are acousmatic, as I have stated. Yet the "voice" of Joseph is a constant, heard through the territorial sounds of the objects he moves, echoed in the sound effects heard of shrieking and tinkling while John is moving about the mansion, and through the speakers of the recorder after the seance. Of course, the disembodied voice of the entity in the recording is indeed acousmatic, being heard vocally and still the physicality unseen by the protagonists; but Medak continues the call and answer strategy between John and Joseph via mise en scène and actor performance, beyond the confrontation and to the film's end. Chion discusses acousmêtre in accordance with the phantom body, a-la *Wizard of Oz.* He assigns to it "the power of *seeing all*…the power of *omniscience*…the *omnipotence* to act on the situation" (*Audio Vision*, 129, 130, his italics). If we accept the phantom body as exemplifying the acous-

mêtre, can we also include the phantom sound and the phantom voice in this way? I believe we can. The entity in *The Changeling* never appears wholly; but it first informs the viewer of who it is, or was, in its former human life, and then it manipulates objects to communicate with John and with the viewer, choosing each purposefully, the objects reflecting the role the human counterparts represent in the diegesis. John's piano, recorder and the ball are all objects designed to connect to a past that brought him to the mansion in the first place. For Claire, who becomes a loyal and valuable partner to John in the film, it is the wheelchair. When she first sees it she remarks how small it is, like for a child. It appears to her on the landing when she can't take the truth of what happened to Joseph. Yet she knows more than she lets on, and when she is fired from her position with the historical society, she becomes somewhat crippled herself, caught in a web of deceit and secrecy that has cost her career and wellbeing.

The end of the film is a cross-cutting sequence between John's mansion and the Senator's. Senator Carmichael comes and goes throughout the film, but it becomes clear he is not only is a US Senator, wielding power, but also a head of the Historical Society; he also owns the house John is living in. When John and Claire discover the connection between Joseph's death and the Senator's inheritance of his fortune, John tries to confront him, but to no avail. He takes the medal from the well to confront him with it, believing the Senator has a matching one, but he is forced away.[52] His lease is cancelled on the house, Claire is fired, and a police detective tries to corner John, who evades questions. The film presents events that operate as effect without a cause, which provides the platform for the implied presence. A stone crashing through an upstairs

[52] The Senator is the changeling in the film. Joseph stood to inherit the fortune, but only after he turned 21, which, because he was disabled and sick, incited his father to murder him and replace him with an orphan (Wikipedia). It is suggested that Joseph was buried with the medal while the changeling wore an identical one to aid in the impostor positioning.

window to land on the ground at John's feet (30:00); the glass sent from the table into the wall at the seance; shortly after the police detective leaves the house, his car overturns and he is dead, with no explanation for the cause, and no other vehicle around his. When the Senator hears of the detective's death he agrees to talk to John. John presents his findings to the Senator, along with the tape of the seance and the medal (1:20:00). Now that everything is out in the open, so to speak, there develops a strong sense of urgency to return to the house; what will be Joseph's response? The sense of urgency is a return to terror; the viewer, along with John and Claire, from different places, all quickly converge to the place of activity, the lair.

While John is with the Senator, confronting him with the medal and the secret about Joseph Carmichael, Claire goes to see John, unaware that he isn't home (yet) (1:34:50). As she raises her hand to knock on the door, the door opens. Wary, she steps inside, calling for John, who isn't there. There is a dizzying sequence that resembles the slamming doors earlier that has jump cuts of handheld shots of empty rooms around Claire as she whirls in a circle, realizing the house is active. The front door slams shut behind her, confining her, and the dissonant high-pitched violin notes resume, along with murmured voices from above. This time the POV shots are moving upstairs as she ascends to the upper floors, calling for John but quite nervous, which places our perspective with her as we head to the attic. The final staircase returns to a high-angle POV shot, placing us ahead of her; the viewer is informed enough to know where she is going and that something will happen when she gets there. With our back to the attic room and the house active we are positioned to be as nervous as she is. Forced to look at the exit door we cannot see what is behind us and she cannot see up the stairs, so we are vulnerable, which helps to reform terror. Claire reaches the top via a forward POV shot moving up the stairs and crosses the

attic threshold. Again the camera is placed behind the wheelchair; Medak continually repositions the viewer through these sequences of terror, with the protagonist, with the entity and then again with the protagonist and so forth. This constant repositioning prohibits us from controlling the environment around us, and maintains a level of disorientation that keeps the entity at arm's reach; we are always approaching the entity, the veil between known and unknown, earthly and spiritual, but we are never allowed to cross it. This back and forth also acts as a visual call and answer as discussed earlier with sound; we gain a level of omniscience in this way, able to see from both the perspective of the protagonists and, to a certain degree, of the entity. As a viewer we are no longer just a voyeur - we are a participant.

Claire looks around the room and at the wheelchair. Immediately it turns to face her, its wheels grinding on the floor, the enhanced sound effect making it sound like a monster's roar. She reacts instantly, screaming and turning for the stairs (1:36:25).



The Changeling (1980) shot 18

The wheelchair pursues her all the way down to the first landing, where she falls and tumbles down to the front door. Then the central entity POV shot, from the seat of the chair itself.



The Changeling (1980) shot 19

The chair collapses on the floor beside her and becomes inert. Suddenly John is there; he leads a hysterical Claire outside and goes back in. This is the final confrontation scene between John and Joseph. It may be tempting to see it as between John and the house, but when John steps back inside, the chandelier is shaking and a wind has appeared from the upper floors. John hollers "Joseph! No!" (1:37:42). For the second time in the film, Medak has created a face-to-face confrontation with the entity onscreen, in the realm of horror.

The wheelchair becoming inert when John arrives supports its role as vehicle for communication with Claire. As with the ball for John representing his wounded past, the chair for Claire represents her connection to the house itself, and her closeness to its secret past. It is significant to note that the ball approaches John while the chair approaches Claire. When Claire picks up the ball, it is just a ball, much like the chair being still when John is around it. As a representative of the Historical Society, she has more knowledge of the house than John does, but has been kept in the dark about its secrets. Unable to take an investigatory role as much as John has, she is confined to a supporting role, but one that is disabled from performing much change;

this is why the chair, a clear indication of Joseph's inability to defend himself, is the object that interacts with her. The ball is a reflexive and rebounding object, built for propulsion, exemplifying John's constant mobility but also in unpredictable trajectories. The wheelchair for Claire suggests controlled mobility, but only under the power of a mechanism, in her case, a societal one.[53] It is significant also that both items similarly descend the liminal space of the stairwell.

The length of time in the film with John and Claire as they navigate the labyrinthine house needs to be significant because it prolongs the on-screen confrontation, which gives us time to formulate our own before we see it. As Claire walks up the stairs, nervously calling for John, who, we can argue she already knows isn't there, but is clutching blindly at the possibility that he is the one murmuring above, to save herself from accepting that she is alone with the entity, we have time to wonder what is waiting for her when she gets to the attic. We've been with John alone in the house, but not yet with Claire. Stephen King, in his non-fiction book *Danse Macabre*, discussing *The Changeling*, points out the separation between on-screen scare and that which manifests itself before it happens:

> The audience watches, mesmerized, as [Claire] climbs to the second floor; the third floor; and finally she negotiates the narrow, cobwebby steps leading to the attic room […] [T]he dead boy's wheelchair suddenly whirls around and pursues her, chasing her screaming down all three flights of stairs […] The audience screams as the empty wheelchair chases the lady, but the real scare has already happened; it comes as the camera dwells on those

[53] Claire may also be an embodiment of a fractured society; she is the one who speaks as a go-between for John and the Historical Society. When she helps John learn what really happened to Joseph and the Senator, her firing reveals a crooked ring of wealth and power. She is the one who sees the detective dead in the road and calls John. She is simultaneously a threat to a secret society and a scapegoat for its undoing.

> long shadowy staircases, as we try to imagine walking up those stairs toward some as-yet-unseen horror waiting to happen (110-111)

Indeed, the time we spend with Claire ascending the staircases allows us to conjure our own version of the entity, preparing ourselves for when we reach the attic and what might be waiting for us; Trish Van Devere's acting performance makes it ever so much easier to do this, as she conveys a strong sense of fear, but also apprehension - it is clear that she doesn't want to go up there, even says so out loud. But she does anyway, and the viewer goes with her. This scene happens far into the film; under normal narrative circumstances such a scene would come much earlier, just before the on-screen horror confrontation, which for most horror films, happens about three quarters into the film, and then it is left behind as the scramble for survival takes over. Here it is nearly at the film's ending, which strengthens the importance of it and what it suggests; this shows the implied presence is maintained all the way through the film.

John tries to ascend the stairs but the heavy wind coming from above prohibits him from going any farther than the first landing. It pushes him through the bannister to fall back down to the front door. This may be interpreted two ways: Joseph unleashing his temper to respond to the conspiracy now uncovered surrounding his secret death, and either attacking John or sending him back in order to protect him from what comes next. I argue the latter. Trying to climb the stairs, assuming to reach the attic room, the lair, John seems to be trying to reason with Joseph, not to invade or confront; in fact, John hasn't displayed any level of confrontation with the entity all throughout the film. John's motivation is to uncover the mystery, to find out the truth behind what happened to Joseph. He is no threat. Based on this, and what follows, Claire's banishment can be seen in the same way (1:37:54).



The Changeling (1980) shot 20



The Changeling (1980) shot 21



John falls to the floor, and again a call and answer between the POV of the entity from above, and then from John as he lies and watches a line of fire descend the staircase bannister. Based on the implied presence throughout the film, and the fact that even in this more extreme confrontation scene, we still do not actually see the entity, the descending line of fire is another metonymy, especially after the refusal of John and Claire from going up. It may appear that Joseph has descended from the attic again, this time to destroy the house (1:38:38).

The film's fascinating final sequence is a cross-cutting approach, but one that also blends two environments together, as well as two perspectives. The fire takes hold of the house; the Senator hears Joseph's voice calling "My medal" (1:39:40). Hard cut to John's POV from the floor of the house and the Senator begins ascending the flaming stairs, with a deep rhythmic string and reed instrumental accompaniment. Diegetically, the tinkling sound of the swinging chandelier on the ceiling is every bit as loud, as is the snarl of the flames. Impossible for the Senator to be in two places at once, the viewer is to assume the Senator's presence is ethereal, or spiritual. In his own mansion the Senator has a vision of Joseph's death, but his spirit self has reached the attic and is watching the murder unfold. When Joseph dies, the Senator, his physical self, in his own mansion, clutches his chest and collapses. Simultaneously, the attic explodes and the house is engulfed. This simultaneity of realms gives us a culmination of horror confrontation and an end to the mystery. Yet Joseph's physical presence remains, as it was for John, in a vision, not having crossed the veil. Even in this in extremis finale, Joseph remains contained within the spiritual realm, choosing to, as he did with John, not approach but beckon. The attic is a place of ending, of truth, and of forbidden knowledge. John, barely conscious but alive, is allowed to es-

cape via the now unsealed front door. Joseph's selection of beckoning and banishment indicates choice; his choice of who to confront and who to send away maintains the level of unattainability discussed earlier. As John and Claire are sent from the house, John's duty being fulfilled, we are also sent away. We move with John and Claire and watch, as they do, the house burning to the ground to set up the film's final shot at the credit roll.

Because the entity in *The Changeling* does not cross the line between living and dead, does not afford John or the viewer more than a glimpse into forbidden knowledge, it must control its environment, in essence, embody its environment, in order to communicate. Medak maintains the implied presence all the way through the film, establishing and painting the spaces around the entity to form the entity itself. In the film all four elements of nature, earth, air, fire and water are employed; yet all four become animated inside a dwelling unit, a vessel, reinforcing the confinement and containment that is key to the unattainability of the entity itself, key to the power of the implied presence. Joseph pushes his medal up through the ground in the well for John; John is forced back to the main floor by a gale-force wind; the line of fire begins from above, travels down the bannister and engulfs the house; Joseph is murdered in a bathtub and shows us through running water from the faucets. We may also see the well, although dry and buried, as a vessel for water. Joseph controls us by controlling the elements; this is how an environment can speak to us. Each element we see with our own eyes, but we also hear; the dripping of the faucet, the roar of the fire, the whisper of the wind, and the trembling of the earth, all vehicles for an acousmatic voice to address us, call for us or warn us.

After the deceased Senator has been taken to hospital and John and Claire drive away, the house is left to burn to the ground. We would be prepared to witness the film's final following

morning shot as an end to the haunting, which would consequently indicate an ending to the implied presence; but Medak continues the implied presence right through the final shot and into the credit roll. Everyone else is gone; but there is an approach with a forward tracking shot towards the crumbled front steps, where the wheelchair has been righted and sits on its wheels under the overhead daylight. It is we who in the movement of this shot, are beckoned, and we realize this when the music box opens and begins playing the melody we have come to recognize. It is the lullaby that John composed, tying him indelibly to Joseph's death through the experiences of his own daughter's. To confront the wheelchair in this final sequence while John's life has been spared, encourages us to consider his well-being as also having been spared. John and Joseph have forged a connection through their communication through the veil, and so the finality of Joseph's story coming to a resolution indicates John's past has also. Yet the symbolic function of the wheelchair intact indicates that John's future is reliant on a co-existence with his pain. A healing process is certainly suggested; a process that occurs with both the living and the dead. Yet the viewer is left with not a closed ending, but an open one (1:43:29).



The Changeling (1980) shot 23



The Changeling (1980) shot 24

In essence, Joseph is the film's last speaker, operating again through the music box. It is common for horror and suspense films to have a bookend close to suggest both an open ending and a continuation of the villainous entity's potential for confrontation. But here is is still implied through the animation of an inanimate object that we can interpret is Joseph's voice, one we have been allowed to hear through the recorder that archived the song John thought he composed. In this way we may see the lullaby as Joseph's, one that John in his recording, has acknowledged and then returned to the dead boy. The lullaby becomes then a signal for confrontation, but also and as importantly, a signal for the call that expects an answer. In this way the viewer may act as the caller, expecting the music box to open, and then it does, answering our expectation. The house may have been destroyed, but Joseph's presence continues.

Can we have a return to terror from/after horror? Yes. The implied presence is the vehicle for this to happen. The entity in *The Changeling* is always watching, always nearby, always… considering. This is a key element to terror - that the entity, capable of making a decision or choice, while the viewer waits for it to make its move, is considering. The stronger this element

is suggested in cinematographic arrangement, the higher the level of suspense and the shorter the distance between the viewer's position and forbidden knowledge. Brushing the veil. This forms the entity's omniscience, and what consequently makes the acousmêtre so strong.

So many horror films seem to be unable to make it all the way through the narrative without presenting or revealing the entity in its entirety; and indeed, part of the emotional impact to the horror confrontation is certainly seeing it in all its gruesome glory, just before the protagonist either destroys it or is torn apart and devoured. But Medak appears to refuse to give in to this, keeping the curtain veiled, but always between us and it, constantly reminding us that the entity represents not just the threat of death but many things that we should be looking at ourselves to see as much as looking at it. The music box, running water, the echoing metallic thudding, the bouncing ball, all show that sound is capable of producing the implied presence without having to rely on an image to do so. If it were argued that Joseph appears in the film, I would counter argue that he does so conditionally, and through the perceptual subjectivity of others. In the end we don't ever actually see the dead Joseph appear at all. [54] What Joseph manipulates, he is responsible for, creating the opportunity for us to assign objects to him such as the wheelchair. We identify the object, interpret who or what is responsible for it, and then we realize what the entity represents; all without actually seeing the entity itself. Like Claire scrambling across the landing and down the stairs, we feel a sense of survival that the object provokes through our

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[54] M. Night Shyamalan's 2008 film *The Happening* does a similar thing but a bit more overtly. An airborne neurotoxin causes mass suicides and erratic behaviour, leaving survivors to run for safety but not have any idea where, in order to escape the threat. Since the toxin is airborne, it establishes a clear omnipresence and elusively, its logistical reach inaccessible. The only way we know the entity is nearby is when people react to it. We can break this premise down to a very simple and succinct narrative strategy for establishing the implied presence in its most fundamental form - an unseeable and unidentifiable entity; in essence, the entity that never was.

glimpse of forbidden knowledge and we want to run as well. But it is too late; we are already confronting the entity in our own way, our own version of it. The psychological implications of being chased by an empty, menacing wheelchair are staggering in themselves. We would run to escape the entity that controls it, certainly; but we also would be trying to escape what the chair represents for our own individual fears. I have heard folks say after seeing certain horror films they won't ever go in the water again; or use an outhouse; or go camping; or buy an old used car from a strange guy with a back brace…

Can we add rent a long-empty mansion to that list?

Conclusion - What Are We Waiting For?

Bigger is better.

Or so they say. We read it on signs and hear it in commercials, often as saucily frisbeed innuendos. But for the purposes of horror films, size most often is assigned to the villain, or the villainous entity, especially the villainous entity. In the case of monsters and the supernatural, there is something to the value of a larger form, one that towers over humans and defies logical definition or explanation. This might be why so many horror films in past years have borrowed the idea of radioactivity and scientific experiments gone horribly wrong: to supplement the notion of an alien race invading our planet and presenting us with biological growth potential that makes mere bipedal carbon units disappear in their shadow. When we think about size in terms of the horror film, we are understandably drawn to how minute of a puzzle piece we are to fit into the grand scheme of things. We are reminded of our vulnerability, the potentiality of pain, fear and death. It permeates the internet, especially platforms like YouTube, where we constantly debate and nervously debunk videos of a giant this or that. Are they real? Do spiders actually get that big? Will giant condors attack us? Is there a Bigfoot? There is a bevy of television shows that feature a (nervously) confident investigatory team on the hunt for the super-constrictor or the mammoth such-and-such. They never find it, but keep us on the edge of our seats, always wondering. We go back for more, even though, through a veiled sense of relief, we still wonder. Stephen King recalls a conference talk given by American author William F. Nolan during which Nolan stresses the power of the closed door: “Nothing is so frightening as what’s behind the closed door […] The protagonist throws it open, and there is a ten-foot-tall bug. The audience screams, but this particular scream has an oddly relieved sound to it. ‘A bug ten feet tall is pretty

horrible,' the audience thinks, 'but I can deal with a ten-foot-tall bug. I was afraid it might be a *hundred* feet tall'" (As qtd in *Danse Macabre*, 110). Horror films work this way because the suggestion of a being surpassing our understanding of biological limitations is the draw; the idea of, and I argue, the end result, whether we actually see it or not, is ours to manifest. I believe a key element to this is a simple one; we are curious.

My use of the term *bigger* is not dependent on physical size though. Unpacking it further, it as much relies on the idea of *more*. More than we know; more than we understand; more than we've ever witnessed; more than we can defend against. Omniscience, omnipotence, indestructibility, the undefeatable, unavoidable threat. These chapters deal with this especially. The Shape embodies the omnipresent indestructible force hurtling towards its prey, in no hurry, but unstoppable and impossible to locate. The alien invasion brings with it an undefinable perspective of another race's thinking and intentions, as they force us to consider death as a replacement instead of erasure. [55] The ghost in the mansion has the ability to arrange events and responses as effects without causes. It speaks and acts from beyond the realm of our human ability to locate and identify. In this way it is, if I may borrow Jeremy Bentham's term, a panopticon eye; we never know exactly who, when and from where we are watched, but we are constantly aware that we *are* being watched. It is simply a matter of time before our watcher, stalking, decides to confront us. Yet we already have confronted it. The unknowing, the doubt, creates our constant hesitation to move forward, even though we are curious; it is what we don't see that we fear most. And with

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[55] I'd like to be clear here that I haven't exercised the intention to go into ontology. I do discuss anthropocentrism in Chapter 2; but I wish to remain closer to the individual threat of death more than the threat of extinction as a philosophy. It is our limits of understanding the entity that threatens us and creates the dread that leads to the confrontation before it happens on-screen, manifested by what we fear the entity represents to us as individuals. Technical approaches to filmmaking guide our responses along the way.

the implied presence, we are able to manifest the entity's size and its *moreness*, before we actually see it on screen. In the case of *Invasion* we add to this a spreading, multiplying, as the threat becomes not only larger but wider. Let me be really clear here - it is what we don't see on screen that we fear; yet our fear is driven by the infinity of possibility, which defies and transcends temporal or spacial boundaries. We may fear a global catastrophe even though we don't see it happening. But it is always there, like the Shape, watching, waiting, imminent.

Our Questions Answered

The questions I have raised in each of the three chapters accommodate the examples I've highlighted from their films. For *Halloween,* the implied presence develops a sense of omniscience and omnipresence in the Shape; how an entity can be constantly nearby but not entirely seen. This places it in the position of a more emotional role: we, along with the protagonists, feel its presence more than confirm it. The empty shadowy house as its lair allows for it to be anywhere and everywhere, so most predominantly in our individual fear of its potentiality. For *Invasion,* doubt is the catalyst for maintaining the implied presence even through our realization of the confrontation occurring on screen. Since the lair for the replicants is out in the open in plain sight, the binary separation between hidden and revelation becomes thin and blurred. We are never allowed to be sure who has been changed and who hasn't. Their moreness then is in their growing numbers; we fear their presence, then their infiltration, then their unstoppable multiplication. We relate very well to a conditioned societal response we often resist, a tendency to mistrust those we don't know. Suspicion, as Philip Kaufman is well aware through his depiction of the collective environment, is a constant. This places us more firmly in the role of protagonist. For *The Changeling*, sound can create the implied presence quite independently within the visual

frame; it is, as Michel Chion argues, a temporary contractual arrangement between visual and aural representation on screen more than a combined aggregate of the two. Unable to see the entity, we rely on what we hear to attempt to locate and identify it, unsuccessfully. We see now that it is possible, through placement and subtlety of the on screen confrontation (here through the lens of perceptual subjectivity), for a return to terror following horror. It is possible that horror isn't the end of a linear path; terror is not nullified by the horror confrontation, only in this case interrupted. The return to terror is as much from our influence as it is from the narrative in the diegesis. The implied presence in *The Changeling* continues after the confrontation between John and Joseph. As with *Invasion*, the implied presence maintains a level of doubt that prohibits us from reaching a point where all is revealed. Once we reach that point, we become detached from the narrative and become spectators. I've chosen these three films because none of them lets us ever detach. The contemporary films that accompany them (*Halloween* remake, *Assimilate* and *The Grudge*), although decent films on their own, are noted because they show us too much; they become, much through CGI placement, spectacles. A thrill ride is fine, but not as engaging. It becomes key that the viewer be given the space to become part of the diegesis.

Don't Go Into the Water

I have mentioned Steven Spielberg's 1975 film *Jaws* throughout this dissertation. My point with this is that *Jaws* presents us with some elements that encapsulate my analytical approaches for the chapters on *Halloween*, *Invasion* and *Changeling*, specifically the lair, and forbidden knowledge. There are several instances of implied presence in the film; the officer blowing his whistle seeing the washed-up corpse while all we see is one limp arm and hand, the deck coming apart and shattering into the water at night, the float overturning in a spray of red. But

Spielberg is careful to surround the occurrences of the shark with indicators that make us, above the water, aware of it, in the water. What I mean is that the water's surface acts as a kind of line of demarcation, separating entity from protagonist/victim. Shadows and stairways function in similar fashion - but the reflective surface of a body of water is much more direct and powerful in this way. The shark cannot survive out of water and humans cannot survive under water. So the confrontation takes place on the line of demarcation. The water acts as a liminal space in this way, a point of crossover, temporary, but providing the panic that accompanies the idea of being thrust into an environment that is deathly. To accommodate this, Spielberg films the shark's approach underwater, and the attacks above water, at times placing the camera at the water's level, giving both the feeling of being nearly submerged and the terrifying sounds of the lapping waves as they slap our faces. These technical strategies signal chaos; we may interpret the ticking, blipping or slapping sound of the water as catalyst sounds. The POV shot is never submerged. Discontinuity editing creates a hard cut from the submerging moment back to above the surface and the attack begins. We see the shark under the water, but it is not the victim's POV. [56] Much like Carpenter does with shadows and doorways, and Medak does with creaks and whispers, *Jaws* reminds us that the line of demarcation, although approachable, is not crossable. To cross it means death. Key to the boundary aspect of water is the fact that the shark can see us, but we can't see it unless it surfaces. It's like a one-way mirror.

Mirrors often act in this capacity, as mentioned earlier; they skew the reality of the real human from the altered one, the reflected one, which represents our projected fears. Several old-

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[56] There is only one underwater POV scene, where Hooper the biologist goes down in a shark tank to attempt to tranquilize the shark. The cage itself, always between us and the shark, along with the constant close-up shots of Hooper's oxygen mask, acts as a surrogate boundary maintaining the separation between above and below.

er horror films have utilized this tactic. Toby Hooper's 1982 film *Poltergeist* has its famous face-peeling scene, and its sequel (1986), the attacking braces scene. In many cases these are hallucinations for the protagonists, brought on by the mysterious powers of a ghostly being. Yet the reflective surface tells us more about the protagonist than the entity and we may interpret what they see guided by what they fear, and what we ourselves fear. The water's surface, especially a large body like the ocean, has a level of omniscience in itself, in the vastness and uncharted depths that house creatures no one has encountered, but perhaps considered. So a shark, a big one, coming to the surface to meet at the line of demarcation brings with it both the lair, forbidden knowledge, and confrontational ground, in this case, a boat, that ends up being as vulnerable as the people aboard it.

Going back to size and moreness, the size of the ocean helps to determine the size of the shark coming for its victim. The length of space between dorsal fins is one indicator. The sheer immensity of the water is another - it forces us, much like pondering outer space, to realize our smallness, vulnerability, even insignificance. We then determine how big the shark is on our own and we are encouraged to see it as irrationally large, a monster. There are several spots in the film's dialogue where the shark in question is differentiated from all other sharks: Hooper: "They caught *a* shark, not *the* shark"; Quint: "You go in the water, the shark's in the water… *our* shark". The famous Brody line is perfectly apt: "You're gonna need a bigger boat." When they harpoon empty barrels into the shark's side, the idea is to keep it at the water's surface: "He can't go down with three barrels, not with THREE HE CAN'T!!!" Quint hollers. But of course yes he can. These cues inform us that this particular shark defies physiological limitations, thereby becoming promoted to monstrous proportions. This, coupled with either seeing only the fin, a

looming bulk just beneath the water's surface for a moment, or nothing at all but the reflected and gently rolling water, helps us create the contract for the impending confrontation and terror begins to develop; we assume ownership of *the* shark. Like the vastness of space, what we cannot grasp we interpret as a potential compromise.



Jaws (1975) shot 2

The compromise is of our anthropocentric reality, an upsetting of balance, from order to chaos. Part of the protagonists' job then becomes resetting order. And there is also a stark oppositional risk for both the humans and the shark in that it is a battle of environments; humans cannot survive in water and a shark cannot survive on land. So they confront one another on a boat, a liminal space in itself where both environments are compromised. The boat symbolizes removal, instability, isolation and vulnerability, all elements that contribute to the development of anticipation, discomfort, anxiety, dread and terror.

We do end up seeing the on screen shark (about as big as an Orca), and Spielberg gives a somewhat rational appearance of it, but the framing of it cruising past the too-small-boat just beneath the murky water's surface, keeps us uncertain (1:22:15). The sounds of the water permeate the film's second half, coupled with what Chion calls a leitmotif (*Audio Vision*, 51), the famous

cello notes that signal the shark's appearance, and approach. When the shark reaches the boat with 3 barrels attached to it (to keep it at the water's surface), it dips below the boat anyway, defying not only rational size but also power. The water is the real catalyst for this; it informs the viewer of what the entity can do, and how it defies rationalization of it (1:46:04):



Jaws (1975) shot 3

Spielberg gives a re-establishing shot that makes the boat seem much smaller and ineffective. When it submerges the music stops and there is a muted splash sound as the barrels go under. Then the silence that follows brings us right back to the implied presence, even though we've already seen the shark. Its unknown location re-establishes terror. Again, it is the water, that we can only see reflections from its surface, that prohibits our knowledge of its location. Lair and forbidden knowledge work together in this environment to keep the viewer in a vulnerable position. By the time we get to this point in the film, we are miles from shore, unable to see anything on any horizon but more water. Yet the line of demarcation is still there, like a line in the sand, with both parties eyeing each other across it. Spielberg uses many long and extreme long shots, keeping a large amount of space in the frame for water and sky. John Williams's score trades

moments with silence, only the lapping and slapping of the water and the creaking of the boat as the men look around, bewildered and waiting. These are a constant reminder of the vastness and vulnerability we feel in an environment where we need to trust a boat that is slowly sinking. *Jaws* in these ways culminates the elements discussed in my analysis and puts them together to provide an example of the ultimate confrontational space where we confront ourselves as much as the entity in question. Spielberg's film is a preeminent example of the genre.

Water As A Theme

In many film genres water as elemental symbol may suggest birth or re-birth, cleansing or transformation, most notably in quest dramas and biopic character studies. What does water suggest for horror films? Perhaps some of these, but we must be willing to recognize a more foreboding side when considering horror and suspense sub-genres. Water is present in all three films analyzed in this dissertation, to varying degrees and intentions. In more fundamentally elemental form, water can represent fluidity, constant motion, elusivity and even to a certain degree, freedom.Yet we need it to sustain ourselves and our lands, so it is also nourishment, replenishment, a healer and a cleaner. It is part of our eco-system, a cyclical element that reestablishes itself despite our human greediness to commodify it. Cleansing in the horror film sense may mean coming to terms with our own fears and confronting ourselves as much as what we fear. A kind of self-awareness. This is why so many horror films have frightening nighttime storm scenes, and why there are so many oceanic films, literally hundreds. Toby Hooper's *Poltergeist* has the film's final confrontation scene in a pool, at night, during a rainstorm; a one-two-three punch. Bodies of water are places of transition and transformation. But what of rain? The rainstorm, the sheet of rain, whether manufactured for mise en scene or utilized on location, presents

the filmmakers with a veil, a kind of lens filter that lends the feeling of an obscured reality. Rain is like a veil over someone's face, translucent but up to a point. Combined with key and fill light placement and sound effects, the rainstorm can be as versatile as to present either a stark reality, an obscured one, or a dream world.

If rain as visual obscures the reality of the diegesis, or the perceptions of characters, then the sound of rain acts as a kind of static interference in a similar way. Within this veil, visual or aural, develops the negative space needed for the implied presence to operate. Negative space in this fashion facilitates the boundaries of forbidden knowledge; the veil discussed earlier in *Invasion,* functioning as a borderline between real and unreal, a side-by-side parallel reality, creates a feeling of the uncanny - recognizable, yet unrecognizable. For each of these films, water creates the acousmatic sound Michel Chion discusses; the viewer is encouraged to try to locate, in the veil of the rain itself, both a particular sound and its possible source. Translating this into bodies of water, we are constantly aware of our inability to identify what is beneath the surface, yet we continue to try.

Though much of *Halloween* takes place at night, the only scene where it rains is at the film's beginning, when Dr. Loomis and Nurse Chambers arrive at Smith's Grove Sanitarium to sign Myers out for a court hearing. When they get there, it is pouring with thunder and lightning and all the inmates are wandering around the property. From the car's interior POV shot, it is impossible to tell which one is Myers through the rain, and all we can see clearly is the rain in the headlights and their illuminated white hospital johnnies. There is no score until this shot, only the distant sound of thunder through the windows and Loomis and Chambers talking. When it cuts to this shot below, the sound of thunder is heightened, referred to as sneaking in, and the

score begins. We come to know the urgent high piano notes (that Carpenter wrote to accompany his script) as assigned to the Shape, which will be more prevalent in coming scenes. But it is here that the music signals the film's villainous entity, and much like in *Jaws*, it becomes a leitmotif; when the Shape drifts by, or we cannot see it but know it is nearby, this score plays (9:27).



Halloween (1978) shot 17

Myers escapes, as mentioned, and steals the car to get away. But the significance of this scene rain-wise is that it is the last time Myers is a man; from this point on, he becomes the Shape, donned in the coveralls and faceless mask. The rain, signalling escape, transition and transformation, informs the viewer that water is assigned the role of metamorphosis. The limited attention Carpenter pays to the escape itself (we see nothing of how they got outside at all), shows water's full power to oversee such a potentially catastrophic event. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* begins with the arrival of the aliens reaching Earth through our eco-system, descending in the rain. Rain seemingly an often occurrence in coastal cities, no one thinks much of it. The perfect cover for an infiltration. The rain here both camouflages the aliens and also gives them the food they need to begin their development into flowers. The close-up shots of their development Kaufman

uses position us as viewer in a conspiratorial way; we see what the characters don't and our suspicion is aroused first. Kaufman is careful not necessarily to hide the presence of the ocean, but to keep us contained within the urban centre while the changes occur. Yet towards the film's last segments we become more aware of what surrounds the city. Sound effects of seagulls and foghorns reposition us to question the probability rate of the survivors getting away. The final scene that suggests, not shows, but suggests Matthew's capture has a cargo boat in port. Its sheer size (again there is moreness in its potential for rescue) maintains a sense of hope. But overlaid is the music of "Amazing Grace," which suggests an end rather than a re-beginning. The ocean then off the San Francisco coast takes on a duality in its role; it is for a moment a path to freedom and humanity, and then becomes a barrier to prohibit that humanity from living.[57]

It is significant that John Russel chooses the river to rid himself of the ball that has taken on a life of its own in *The Changeling*. In this film, bodies of water become access points to decipher the mystery of what happened to Joseph Carmichael. The sounds of metallic thudding become, it shows, small fists against the sides of a bathtub; water runs in the kitchen and bathroom, drawing John to parts of the mansion where a message is waiting for him; the filling sink and tub also present a deep and unseen depth, that watery veil where there might be something beneath the surface but we must find out. An always effective suspense shot is the hand and arm slowly reaching into the water to grasp for the plug. We hold our breath and wait for something to either emerge or drag us down. When the ball returns to the house, bouncing down the stairs, it is wet. It must be; dirt, I suppose, might have represented the well Joseph's body was buried in, but not

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[57] Zack Snyder's 2004 remake of *Dawn of the Dead* has survivors escape in a yacht, only to be foiled by running out of gas. The island they reach is infested with zombies and they are overrun. In this film water serves the same duality - escape into death.

nearly as distinctly, as John would have had to bury the ball, which would have been too close a parallel to the villainous act itself. The river serves in its fundamental way as a fluid, forward moving cleanser, and John's idea is to wash the ghostly association with the ball away, perhaps to cleanse the memory he retains of his daughter. As well, if the ball were to be coated with dirt when it returned, it would suggest more of a *return* from the dead, which is not what Medak is trying to convey; Joseph communicates *from* the death realm itself. To return from the dead and rejoin the living, even in zombie capacity pulls down the veil that is needed for the implied presence to function and be sustained. So water becomes a necessary element for the bond between John and Joseph.

The Search For Meaning

So we move through the films from rain, to rain and body of water, to bodies of water plural. Even though *The Changeling* employs all four elements (the earth of the well, the wind that saves John in the end, the fire that destroys the house and the constant communication through the movement of water), water is a thread that runs through them most significantly. Horror films utilize elemental water often (rain, downpour, snow, sleet, waves, etc.) as a larger presence or force, trying to control the outcome of human intent. It becomes Human vs Nature. Disaster films are abundant with this approach as the main point of struggle. For these horror films being discussing in particular, water and rain become characters in themselves, aiding the villainous entity in its pursuit of chaos. In this way, entity and environment, as explained in terms of the lair, become united. Levels of pathetic fallacy are useful and effective devices in film.

These approaches this dissertation has been discussing, forbidden knowledge, the lair, technical cinematic strategies (including actor performance) and environment, all work together

to create, through the implied presence, a boundary between our emotional and intellectual participation in the narrative and a definitive interpretation of meaning. This is the mirror effect these films have that urge us to confront the entity in ourselves before we see it on the screen. The unseen entity via the implied presence means that an interpretation of the film's meaning, as a textual whole, becomes difficult. Is *Halloween* a film about the potential dangers of adulthood? *Invasion* about the commodification of natural resources? *The Changeling* perhaps about the trauma of facing our own mortality? Can we see a film like this to *mean* something? To expand, instead, we must interpret what the suggestion of what we aren't actually seeing represents to ourselves; this creates the opportunity for us to have our own confrontation with the entity, to become a kind of protagonist ourselves. We immerse more fully into the film's narrative and transcend the voyeur position. We look behind the text for a glimpse of forbidden knowledge even though we're afraid of what we might see. I'm not quite saying an interpretation becomes impossible; rather that these films in particular work against interpretation and make us strain to see through the veil that affords us a glimpse of forbidden knowledge, but just enough for us to acknowledge the shapeshifter, able to take on any form. The Shape, the replicant and the ghost, are much more than this. They are an embodiment of us.

What's Next?

I've always been fascinated with the evolution of horror films over the last hundred years or so, both technically and narratively. Special effects have run through the gamut of stop-motion, superimposition, miniatures, mattes, prosthetics, robotics, and now all things digital, including our odd love/hate relationship with CGI. Narratives, of course, change as do generations and cultures. War has always been a catalyst for story and expression in art. As hackneyed as this

question is, I believe it is still valid - does art imitate life or the other way around? Impossible as it is to predict what the next faze of the horror/suspense genre for film will be, and how far off it is, we do have some clues to work with.

Today's advancements of CGI, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence are points of information regarding our technological innovation and tools at our disposal. Perhaps not as widely commercialized as they potentially could be (and probably will be), the fascination with technology's seeming unstoppable progress remains intact. I realize technology is a very broad term, but for the purposes of filmmaking, we can gear our expectations in the direction of cinematic depiction and even more to the point, audience participation. These three technological approaches have been in use to a lesser degree for decades; but they are becoming more independent of themselves all the time. The 1980's produced several films that heralded the potential threat of a digital version of reality, or at least, the presence of a parallel perception via simulation platforms. 1982's *Tron* has a (literally) human-immersive video game world; 1983's *Videodrome* suggests a terrifying melding of television screen content and psychological awareness; adapted from Philip K. Dick's 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, the film adaptation *Blade Runner* forces us to consider how we would know if someone is a human or a replicant (there are many echoes of this in my study of *Invasion*). If we add forty years of filmmaking and 3-D advancement and theatre sound innovation, plus the evolution of the horror film genres into, as noted in the Introduction, a more gritty and realistic era, where are we able to see, based on the films that have warned us so long ago, the horror film going? Can we see a possible merging of Virtual Reality and the filmic experience? Beyond that?

Earlier I noted Douglas Trumbull's 1983 film *Brainstorm* in terms of its eerie suggestion that we might someday develop the tools to record and capture human experience as it happens. What is most at stake here is the transition from the moreness of the villainous entity to our own potential moreness. Is this where we become the entity? Perhaps, but the point is that there seems to be a certain underlying urgency when considering these digital advancements that they don't overlap. The scientists in *Brainstorm* have developed a way for one person to experience recorded sensations and feelings that another has during a certain event or occurrence. Of course we see both sides of this potentiality in the film, sexually and traumatically. But the cautionary element in *Brainstorm* is not necessarily the commercialization or weaponization of such a discovery - more so the ease with which it can destroy a person's mind and then consequently, their body. The film's final segments have one scientist against all odds, determined to view the tape of a colleague's self-recorded heart-attack death. Dodging pursuing authority figures and risking both his working and personal lives, he is finally able to experience the recorded death. In an attempt to stay alive himself, he removes the physical trauma from the tape and views the perceptual psychological experience. He witnesses the colleague's POV through the event, and then what she sees in the afterlife (1:40:00).



Brainstorm (1983) shot 1

Using a modified headpiece that connects to a phone line (a pay phone), the scientist Michael psychologically goes through his colleague's death experience. He collapses in front of his wife.



Brainstorm (1983) shot 2

Michael is revived and lives, but the warning remains. This situation lies within the film's diegesis, but what if we were to consider how a real-life cinematic experience such as this would be? Will we one day be able to "dial in" to another person's experience, even if from a written story? If so, would the experiences audiences actually participate in be pre-recorded and archived for these purposes? Can we imagine the giant leap from 3-D glasses to brainwave headgear? Lofty, to be sure. Impossible? Irrational? The fact that this film is forty years old lends its intended idea even more foreboding for today.

Canadian filmmaker David Cronenberg's films have delved deeply into horror elements of physical and mental alteration as well as humanity's tremulous relationship with technology. *Videodrome* (1983)'s celluloid mind control, *eXistenz* (1999)'s Virtual Reality gaming and *Crash* (1996)'s study of symphorophilia are earlier examples of this that align with Trumbull's *Brain-*

storm. Cronenberg, a Canadian cinematic icon, continues to write and direct speculative films today. His most recent project *The Shrouds* (2024) explores the idea of surviving loved ones utilizing technology to observe the deceased's decaying process (*The Shrouds*, Wikipedia). In all these films Cronenberg gives us the opportunity to consider how intertwined our own sense of humanity is with the machines we create, and how closely our own cogitative processes are recreated and projected into them. Is technology at our disposal? Or are we at technology's disposal? Cronenberg's films will be a certain centre point for study for me in the near future as I extend my own thinking of this concept.

The list of films that depict or even suggest a link between technology and death is extensive, and covers many decades. My point here isn't to say that death is the intended destination for the futuristic thrill-ride; but it lurks in the background of the idea that humans can share physical and psychological experiences through a virtual platform that mimics filmic audience participation. I simply find myself wondering how horror cinema, specifically the filmic experience, will evolve as technology continues to assume command of our social and economic lives. On this thread, I then find myself seeing a possible answer to the questions I first posed in the Introduction: Why did I turn my head? Is there a line there that was crossed (by me or by the filmmakers)? I believe my initial response was correct - I didn't want or need to see what came next. And yes, there is a line that exists between simulation and reality, which is being blurred continually through our adherence and, I might be bold enough to suggest, coerced reliance on digital

means to record and represent (and re-represent) our own identities.[58] Imagine if our memories came next? That would certainly be the lolling tongue and final three blows that crossed it.

If we consider in these speculations the possibility of a heightened level of psychological or even physical audience participation in the filmic experience, beyond sensory input and cognitive inference specifically, and riding pretty closely to amusement park rides or thrill-seeking adventures, we might get a glimpse at the potential for our own moreness. Where we become positioned to even surpass the role of protagonist and assume one of entity ourselves. This, I suppose, would depend on our aspirations. It's been depicted enough times in television and film that the idea is no longer dismissible. The inevitability is now the thing to fear. As stated throughout this dissertation, the entity is a shapeshifter, able to take on many forms, including our own.

Acknowledgment of Scope

There are some threads I chose to approach to set up my points, but not explore in more depth for the reason that they would have taken me away from what I wanted to accomplish in this dissertation. What I was not able to accomplish lies primarily on how film fits into human perception on a larger, more meta level; the role it has in our lives on the whole. I wanted to include acknowledgement of that, but I wanted to stay as close to the implied presence in terms of a close reading of the films themselves as possible. Had I more room, certainly the validity and importance of ontology and media criticism would have offered a larger look at the life of film

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[58] Social media is now a multi-headed Hydra, offering far too many opportunities to re-represent ourselves as simulation. Granted there is a safety issue involved here, but even some control over personal information is simulated in itself. We give far too much agency to technical entities that "allow" us to become entities ourselves in this way. We have gone from a series of login passwords to avatars, each for a different "world" or platform. This very vividly exemplifies Jean Francois Baudrillard's notion of a Simulacra. Are horror films examples of this as well? Perhaps on a less overt level, but yes.

itself in our human perception. Timothy Morton's book *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (2013) would be helpful in explaining how films can act as a catalyst, or even a microcosm of a much larger concern or fear, such as global warming or depleted natural resources. I do touch on these things but OOO (Object-Oriented Ontology) opens the door for a much larger discussion. Adriana Cavarero's book *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence* (Translation 2009) shows a philosophical progression that moves our thinking from victimizer(s) to victim(s) in acts of terrorist violence. On a similar thread, horror films in their commentary on the move from terror to horror may provide a starting point from which to identify and analyze where an act of violence becomes one of a people more so than a person. These two texts can effectively extend my study of horror cinema to a much more sociological and anthropological as well as philosophical level. From a more psychological standpoint, I am aware of Kaja Silverman's discussion of suture, (*The Subject of Semiotics,* 1983), the relationship a viewer has with a discourse through subjectification, specifically in her analysis of the cinematic model. This would move me deeply into the realm of psychoanalysis, a field I have a basic working knowledge of, but am not yet ready to contribute to from a scholarly standpoint yet.

Working with a wider scope would then suggest a number of horror films specifically geared towards a global or mortality level in terms of context. The *Final Destination* films (2000 - 2011) present us with premonitions of impending disasters followed by unavoidable individual deaths, suggesting an unalterable fate of doom; an interesting aspect to these films is that many of the deaths occur from technological devices. After the Covid-19 pandemic we may look to films such as *Outbreak* (1995) and *Contagion* (2011) for a renewed perspective on how a deadly virus can spread worldwide and threaten the human race. I would suggest films from this not-

too-distant past to see how our perspective on this now differs from then. A phenomenon we may discuss in relation to a more participatory role of the viewer in a horror film is the "found footage" style of filmmaking, arguably started with 1999's *The Blair Witch Project*. Many films have employed this style since then, but this one after an initial budget of $35,000 - 60,000 grossed $250 million after its release, impressive for an independent film. A strategic move by the marketing team during its premier showing, listed the actors as missing or deceased ("The Blair Witch Project," Wikipedia), which added to a viewer manipulative approach that tried to transcend the boundaries of a fictional diegesis. From this direction I could move into box office numbers, promotional rhetoric and advertising, marketing strategies and even viewer survey and post commentary for a more quantifiable collection of data. On its own, this would be a fine basis for a socio-political study of horror cinema, especially based on global issues of the time of the films' production. But again, it would have taken me quite far from the four films I discuss in this dissertation. Yet a constructive approach would be to examine how sub-genre trends such as the found-footage film come about and why they become popular at certain times. It would certainly provide helpful data on what films influence others, and what viewers desire as much as what they might fear.

My investigation and analysis of the implied presence, what we don't see (or hear) on screen, moves us in the filmic viewing experience towards what we as individuals perceive and expect as the villainous entity(s) before it is actually shown. This places us in more firm control (whether we are willing to assume it or not) of our confrontation with what we fear. We are able to look at ourselves as much as what the film presumes to present, to establish and initiate that confrontation. I return here to one of my original concerns that got me started on this project's

research. Why would someone be afraid of horror films having never watched one? I believe this dissertation goes a fair way towards answering that question. There seems to be a difference between the response *I can't watch this because it will scare me,* and the response *I can't watch this because I will become scared*. It has become pop culture common knowledge what vampires, werewolves and monsters (of most kinds) look like, and so one must have a working idea of what to expect going into a horror film, especially with the trailers these days literally giving us the full film in under two minutes. But I think the fear falls more towards the idea of being scared than the presentation of the scare coming. If an individual understands why the idea or suggestion of a visual scare becomes scary, without the actual visual, they can better understand not only how everyone fears something different, but how well-made films help us realize this.

As I have been writing I have realized the pedagogical aspect of my findings. This dissertation points toward initial steps, and invites development, of a working method of teaching viewers, specifically students, how to watch a horror film; it also offers a way to better understand why some people find them frightening or repellant. Granted many viewers simply aren't interested in horror films; fair enough, since many viewers aren't interested in Rom Coms or Westerns either. But my pedagogical idea focuses on viewers who want to watch a horror film, are curious, but apprehensive. I have attempted to create, through my examination of the implied presence and technical filmmaking approaches, a sort of toolkit for an individual to help with a more confident and controlled viewing experience. Scholarly work on horror cinema is not as widespread and loudly discussed as I at first anticipated. I had to look diligently to find work on the films I study here. There is a lot of commercial commentary on them, but my work attempts to move the discussion into a more literary field. We can extend this into discussions of novels,

poetry, sequential art and video game studies, using adaptation as a helpful bridge over which to move. Horror cinema has a lot to teach us and it is a decidedly overlooked art form in ways. What I found and what I will continue to find with my research is suitable and beneficial for scholarly discussion but also and as important, for teaching in classrooms - how we view films, how we respond to them, what we learn from them, what we learn about ourselves individually and collectively. We are in very good position in our current day to reexamine films from previous decades for a fresh and updated perspective on them.

A logical first step would be to design courses that focus on watching and analyzing horror cinema. It would be helpful to gain a working knowledge of what inspired the genre and its sub-genres, Scientific Enlightenment, German Expressionism, ideas of dreaming/waking consciousness, even early tragedy theatre performances. But more focus should go on cinematic technique and sound editing. From there students will be able to approach a film with more of an analytical eye, recognizing how things are made as much as how scary or not they are. There are of course a bevy of excellent film courses already; but I would have one specifically called "How To Watch A Horror Film." Viewer feedback then becomes essential to the evolution of this idea. We need more film communities, more forums, more conversation of horror cinema especially. It would be great if a student asked a professor "I've never been able to watch (that film); can we add that one to the course? I would respond with "of course we can." Even better, I might pose a list of films to students ready to take the course so we can decide on which ones to study together. My dissertation focuses on primarily late 1970's American cinema. I would open this up to include a wider timeline and a wider global reach for film selection. But I hope this dissertation forms a solid starting point.

Adaptation is important then, moving forward, especially considering what we may speculate on as the future of horror cinema. The lines of genre definitions are getting blurry, with many films defying a concrete classification beyond the viewer age rating system. I have written on novel-to-film adaptation of horror texts and there is a large amount of room for examination of social, ecological and political issues that evolve right along with humanity. What I have produced here is a useful tool for approaching texts in this way, and furthers the discussion of how cinema is instructive for understanding human behaviour. We may use these study techniques on other established genres, certainly. Science-fiction, historical and political dramas, romance and even comedies and satires all bring a certain level of pastiche to an audience through their commentary on current and past events and ideas. Our understanding of what to look for, how to recognize it and what to do with it are key to putting us more firmly in control of what we are watching; not necessarily control *over* what we are watching, but control *of*. Having control over a film viewing would be to overcome the act itself, to negotiate its terms, which would be counter-productive, and too easy to dismiss aspects of it. Control of a film viewing is to meet the text face-to-face, converse with it, be mindful of what we are looking at, looking for, finding, responding, to understand that what we fear is only suggested by what we watch and hear; what we fear really comes from within us. That's what we confront. To engage with the diegesis and become a participant, transcending a voyeuristic positioning in this way, is key to establishing control *of*. The film then, becomes an instructive ally.

If we see the future of the viewing experience as becoming more immersive and reality-infiltrated, may we see our own responses and ability to understand the experience progressing

similarly? Perhaps. I say yes. If we are to be subjected to a more invasive participation with film even on the whole, then we need to be ready. For anything. And Everything.

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