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The Horror of Darwinism: The Evolution of the Monster in Film and Popular Culture

Ava Deitrich
University of Northern Iowa

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**THE HORROR OF DARWINISM:
THE EVOLUTION OF THE MONSTER IN FILM AND POPULAR CULTURE**

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
University Honors with Distinction

Ava Deitrich

University of Northern Iowa

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This Study by: **Ava Deitrich**

Entitled: **The Horror of Darwinism: The Evolution of the Monster in Film
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Approved by:

Philip Hopper, Honors Thesis Advisor

Dr. Jessica Moon Asa, Director, University Honors Program

The Horror of Darwinism: The Evolution of the Monster in Film and Popular Culture

In the following pages, dear reader, you will be astounded, mystified, entertained, and intrigued. Using Stephen King's three monstrous archetypes outlined in *Danse Macabre* as a guide, and the 1930's Universal Monster Films as a starting point, I trace the roots of the Vampire, Two Faced, and Thing Without a Name through time and space. Along the evolutionary track of these archetypes, I touch on changes regarding perception and performance, in relation to social and historical shifts. I will be your guide exploring the scenery, costuming, sound design, and cinematography (*to name a few*) as I examine each film within an evolutionary track, and chart the dynamic differences that emerge. The following pages are a culmination of my observations, while seated for many hours in front of my Macbook, with childlike fascination pondering what makes the monsters scary, and how they've prevailed as characters for 90 years.

I. Introduction

The idea of this project stems from a life-long love affair with the horrific. Throughout childhood, I was greatly influenced by horror films. A favorite genre of my father, it has since become a familial staple. Because of the range of horror films that I have been exposed to throughout the last 22 years, I wanted to conduct a deliberate examination of this genre, through the films, themes, and the monsters that have resonated and maintained a presence in popular cultures for decades. The focus of this thesis is grounded by two main themes (1) the archetypes presented by prolific horror author, Stephen King. These archetypes include the “Vampire (or the Undead),” the “Werewolf (or Animalistic Qualities),” and the “Thing without a Name (or the Created/Concocted).” At one point he states that “...I believe it’s impossible to discuss horror in the years 1950-1980 with any real fullness of understanding unless we begin with these three books...” (pg 49) The three books that he is referring to within this quote are Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* By Robert Louis Stevenson. (2) the Universal Studios Monster films as a starting point.

Within this larger pool of well-known stories, specifically the horrific ones, King outlines three archetypes that many of our monster tales can be split into. “Like an almost perfect Tarot hand representing our lush concepts of evil, they can be neatly laid out: the Vampire, the Werewolf, and the Thing without a Name.” (pg 50) It is from these three archetypes mentioned that I am basing my thesis, or at least offering to myself a starting point. These three archetypes will be pivotal in the way that I separate and categorize the film's and monsters that I will be interacting with now and in the coming months.

I track these trios of archetypes along their evolutionary track as they respond and interact with social and historical events. For each archetype, I outline 3-5 films along their evolution, each highlighting mutations or shifts in the originally outlined archetype. As I move forward on the evolutionary timeline of these archetypes, I observe what remakes and “mutations” have occurred, and how we can see the DNA of the original films from the 30’s in horror of today. Finally, I will touch on how the boundaries of these archetypes have become blurred (even by King himself) and consider what it is that scares us, and how, for some reason, trends come back to haunt us.

II. Methods

I began this journey identifying the three standard archetypes that legendary horror writer Stephen King identifies with in his work “Danse Macabre.” It is within this time that he breaks the concept of monsters down into essentially three specific archetypes. The first archetype is the “Thing Without a Name.” I took this loosely to mean something that is concocted or created. There is no customary identifier for such a thing in the natural world making it completely unnatural. A classic example of this appears in Mary Shelly’s gothic novel, *Frankenstein* with the creation of the ‘Creature’. A being created out of natural parts of the recently deceased and made anew. This also examines the idea of a disruption to the natural order manifesting in the creation of a being unnatural by a scientist challenging the nature of God.

The second archetype is the “Vampire.” I broadened this archetype into a more general idea of the undead, as we see today. The general definition of a vampire is “(in stories) a dead person who comes back to life and sucks blood from other people at night” which also can be connected to, or used to describe other classic monsters that

make appearances in our horror films and popular culture such as zombies, mummies, and the other undead (Definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary).

The third archetype is the “Two Faced.” Again, for the subject of my thesis, I took liberties in broadening the genre to include any and all monsters that possess two faced qualities. While King’s own argument started with the narrative of Jekyll and Hyde, I expanded this genre to instead focus on werewolves most prominently, as the rise of werewolf narratives (especially in the Universal film) became the token example of this archetype, both man and beast. In order to collect data and notes while watching all of these films, in a convenient manner, I have created a loose viewing guide which outlines the following:

(1) Aesthetics of the film and the monster?

(a) Cinematography

(b) Production Design

(c) Sound Design

(d) etc.

(2) How is the monster perceived?

(3) How does the monster fit/differ within the specified archetype?

(4) What time period was the movie made/seen?

(5) Historical impact to the film/monster?

III. Literature Review

(1) Danse Macabre by Stephen King

This book serves as one of the cornerstones to my research and as a starting point. Within his writing, King discusses various novels that have influenced the horror

genre. At one point he states that “...I believe it’s impossible to discuss horror in the years 1950-1980 with any real fullness of understanding unless we begin with these three books...” (pg 49) The three books that he is referring to within this quote are Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* By Robert Louis Stevenson. Continuing on, King outlines how these books stand as foundational materials for the horror genre, and for numerous books and films that have come since. At one point he even refers to them as instrumental to creating the “modern horror story” here in the 20th century.

Besides discussing the books as a whole, King also delves into their characters and the ways that these monsters have become so prolific and well known in our pop culture society today. He called out these monsters by saying that, “..at the center of each stands (or slouches) a monster that has come to join and enlarge what Burt Hatlen calls the “myth-pool” ...” (pg 50) The myth pool that King discusses here, can commonly be referred to as our popular culture. Our popular culture incorporates a diverse set of literature, either spoken or seen, that we are continually being exposed to. This set of literature are the stories that we hear as a child, that are familiar to the majority of our population, and are well-known archetypes and plot lines but we have seen mimicked time and time again. Even those that do not read a great expanse of literature, or are film fanatics, still find themselves familiar with the stories and what they present to the viewer. Such as is the well known nature of our fairy tales, our monstrous characters are well known and recognizable in their own right.

**(2) Dr. Jekyll and Hyde By Robert Louis Stevenson, Published in
1886**

This well known narrative begins with the introduction of a Mr. Utterson, who will soon become very familiar to all of the readers. Upon hearing the story of Dr. Jekyll, a well known and respected physician in the town, and his unlikely friend, Mr. Hyde; Utterson becomes infatuated with the idea of Mr. Hyde. This all stems from an incident where our dear Mr. Hyde trampled on a young girl's leg and left without so much as a smidge of remorse. Because of this odd behavior and Utterson's new infatuation with Hyde, he begins stalking the house and waiting for only a glimpse of Hyde. Eventually, Utterson's waiting pays off and he is able to meet Hyde face to face. There, he is greatly shocked to find that Hyde is as despicable a man as he assumed and rushed to Dr. Jekyll to warn him of his horrendous tenant.

Upon arriving at the home of Jekyll, Utterson is notified that the doctor is not at home and is additionally given information from the butler that the doctor's staff has been notified to let Hyde come and go as he pleases. Utterson continues to dig into the mystery of this Mr. Hyde, only to find out a year later that he murdered a well respected man in the area, a Sir Danvers Carew. Not only did Hyde murder Carew, but used the doctor's walking cane to beat him to death. The release of this information drives Utterson's curiosities further, until Dr. Jekyll announces amidst his own bout of illness that he is finally rid of Hyde. It seems as though Hyde has disappeared into thin air, as no one can seem to find his whereabouts. Nonetheless, Jekyll regains strength and his sociable nature as time passes.

Suddenly, the doctor begins to retreat and refuses to see visitors, Utterson included. With this dramatic change at hand, Utterson turns to the doctor's oldest friend, Dr. Lanyon. Upon visiting Lanyon, Utterson finds him on his deathbed and refuses to even discuss Jekyll. At his death, he leaves a letter to Utterson only to be

opened on the death or disappearance of Dr. Jekyll. Shortly after this, Utterson is beckoned to the Jekyll house by the doctor's servants worried about the "person" inhabiting their lab. Apparently, the doors had been locked for days, and various sounds had been heard inside, though no one had come out. Eventually, their worry and suspicion caused them to knock down the door of the lab, finding a small deformed body in what appears to be Jekyll's clothes. Next to the body is the will of Dr. Jekyll, Hyde's name crossed out and Utterson's newly in its place. In addition to the will, is a confession written by the late doctor. Not wanting to linger any longer, Utterson makes his way home. Returning home, Utterson opens both Lanyon's letters and learns the truth of the experiments that Jekyll was conducting in that lab, including the true identity of Mr. Hyde.

(3) Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

In this well known novel, Mary Shelley, comes to create one of the most well-known monstrous creatures in our pop culture today. The novel opens with one Robert Walton, recounting his interactions with the mad scientist Victor Frankenstein in the Emptiness of the Arctic. This interaction comes shortly after Walton sees a gigantic figure crossing the ice in the distance. Upon encountering Victor, Walton soon learns of his childhood, his loving family, and his devoted care to Elizabeth, one of his sisters. From this point on the narrative is entirely Victor's as he recounts his life to Walton. readers find that during University Victor's interest in science Pete and soon became an obsession for the young scientist. During this obsessive stage Victor became enamored with the idea of creating a life of his own, and taking the mantle of God. This Obsession leads to him collecting various body parts from the recently deceased and eventually

building, and resurrecting a creature of his own. Upon the resurrection of the creature, Victor is so disgusted that he abandons it.

This abandonment causes not only trauma with the creature, but also trouble for Victor. As the creature comes searching for its maker, unintentionally both Victor's brother and a family servant are executed in the search. Victor immediately blames that creature for these deaths and they eventually meet in the Alps, the first time that the Creator and they have come face-to-face since that fateful night. In this conversation the creature recounts how it is managed to survive and become educated in the time that it was abandoned. The only aspects of the creature are for Victor to admit responsibility, to show sympathy and even possibly some parental Guidance towards the creature, and for him to build the creature a female companion. Victor agrees.

After finding a remote spot in the Orkneys, Victor begins construction on the female creature. Amidst the excitement of being back in the trade that he's so enamored with, he the the excitement of being back in the trade that he's so enamored with he realizes the outcomes and repercussions of his actions And tears the female creature that he had almost finished to pieces. Upon seeing him do so, the creature becomes enraged and in his own Revenge kills Victor's best friend at that time, Henry Clerval. At this point the two part ways, until Victor's own marriage night when the creature comes and kills his newly wedded bride. With this death, Victor vows to hunt down this creature of his own making and finally end the feud between the two, whatever form that may take.

(4) Dracula by Bram Stoker

The classic novel, *Dracula*, is well known for the integral part that it plays in the production of a whole genre of horror. The novel itself is composed of various letters, journals, and correspondences that narrate this fantastical story for us. Jonathan Harker is the first character that we meet. He is propositioned to travel to Transylvania for his work as a lawyer, and to meet one of his clients, one Count Dracula. Dracula is intending to finalize the purchase of a property in England. When Harker arrives, he is met with disgust and terror by the local population when he discloses to them his final destination. Upon his arrival to the Count's castle, he is met with a pale, strange, but oddly fantastical man.

After cutting himself one morning shaving, he suddenly finds himself face to face with the Count, who attempts to bite him. Shortly after this odd interaction, Harker again finds himself in danger as he finds himself in the grasps of three female vampires. Upon his escape, he learns of the Count's true nature; a feelingless vampire who drinks human blood for survival. Harker confronts the Count, but is left abandoned in the castle, as the Count then travels to England.

Back in England, Harker's fiance Mina becomes the next victim of the Count after the death of her close friend Lucy. The town believes that Lucy contracted vampirism from the Count and is now a shadowy figure preying on the children of the town. To end Lucy's reign, Harker digs up her grave, stabs her through the heart, cuts off her head, and then stuffs her mouth with garlic. Harker and the group of men that he has gotten to help him with his mission, then begin their attempt to track down Count Dracula himself. Eventually, they find that Mina has become the new target of the Count, and is found drinking blood from him one night. With this, the Count returns to Transylvania only to be followed by the group, and later killed.

(5) Holy Terror: Confronting Our Fears and Loving Our Movie Monsters

By Craig Detweiler

Within this article our author discusses various ways in which Humanity tried to play God and how that outcome has created some of the most prolific monsters in our media and movies industry. These characters and their narratives continue to create what our author will come to describe as “...Mysterium tremendum...” or, in other words, “...A holy terror...” (pg 172) Detweiler touches on a variety of films, and supports his claims with notations from Biblical verses noting that “...our fascination with monsters might just reflect an innate desire to experience the sacred” connecting Christian views of the monstrous and what is present in our horror genre today (172). He discusses films such as *King Kong*, *Frankenstein*, and *Godzilla*, as well as more recently released films *The Babadook*, *The Shape of Water* and *Us*. “Monsters have always gripped our collective imagination. Greek mythology is filled with fantastic beasts overcome by superhuman feats. The chimera and the griffin are strange amalgamations of known animals merged into ferocious combinations... We fear what we cannot contain or explain, whether beasts in the field or unseen forces in the depths of the ocean.” (pg 172)

Because this researcher is so focused on the biblical nature of some of these monsters, this takes center stage in a majority of Detweiler’s arguments. In addition to biblical arguments the author also capitalizes on other myths and legends that have inspired many of the now mainstream monsters that continue to grace our TV screens. In addition to both of these arguments and central themes, the author also highlights what it is that draws us to horror films and continues our fascination with fear, terror, and the unknown.

While my own project does not touch as much on the biblical nature of monsters, nor on the myths of their origin, it will talk about, at least in part, the origin of many of the monsters that have become prolific in our media and film, in a way to formally introduce the monsters to my audience. In fact, one point that the author makes from historian Scott Poole is that “American monsters are born out of American history. They emerge out of the central anxieties and obsessions that have been a part of the United States from colonial times to the present and from the structures and processes where those obsessions found historical expression.” (pg 172) The ways in which this author discusses monsters allows for a more general overview of the monster as a character and as a device in film literature and popular culture. Because of this more general overview, I intend to use the information found in this article as a particular jumping-off point for my own interpretations and connections that I make while watching, reading, and deconstructing the various films that I intend to be involved in this research.

(6) Myth and the Monster Cinema By David H. Stymeis

In this article the author discusses the way and with myths and popular film can be looked at through an anthropological lens. Specifically Stymeis uses horror and monster movies to highlight how they reflect the culture and the world we were made and exist in. Stymeis begins by highlighting how influential and prominent mass media is in our own interpretations of the world, in expressing how we see our lives, and how monsters are able to reflect the issues that are prevalent within our communities. The author claims that “... cinematic works also oversee and proclaim cultural change encoding revised charters of the self and new idea standards of thought and action.” (pg 395)

Looking through an anthropological lens the author then further dives into how films are reflections of our lives, and the monster movies that we have come to love are interpretations of life-changing events, societal change, and personal issues. The author notes that “Myths, like culture itself, is something that is generated, revised, and regenerated in response to economic and political forces.” (pg 396) The author also discusses the importance of the audience when it comes to creating successful films, specifically those within the horror genre. Narrowing in on the film *King Kong*, released in 1933, the author discusses the ways in which the film showcases themes that are prevalent within the ‘30s including capitalism, the rise of industry, the depression, and the struggle between nature and culture. By doing this the author highlights the various ways in which film is able to communicate themes and issues to audiences in a fantastical way, making these issues and themes not only more approachable, but also more understandable to the general audience. Discussing the rise of industry, our author claims that

“... Monster films present a threat to the material infrastructure of Modern urban life in the form of the monster. The monster's anger is directed towards civilization itself and not against the many Anonymous persons destroyed and its Passage...” (pg 402) Our author adds that “Monsters also blur established categories of existence or break through boundaries to impose themselves and inappropriate times and contexts.” (pg 403)

Because our author looks at monsters in terms of myth, I thought it would be a good addition to the research that I was already doing about monsters in film. The interconnectedness of horror and monsters carries over into literary storytelling, legends, and myths from various cultures around the world. This article presents a

different view on monsters and how they fit into our cultural view of the world, and presents a connection to the societies in which we reside.

(7) The Monster Always Returns American Horror Films and Their Remakes By

Knöppler, Christian

Consumer Zombie Apocalypse

Zombies are a pivotal part of our horror culture, and hold a place in popular culture as well. This article discusses specifically *The Dawn of the Dead* films and how they relate to the societal and social change of the time in addition to how they grow the zombie genre and character as a whole within the film community. The author discusses both the 1978 version of the film, and the later 2004 remake. In the 1978 version of the film, our author claims that it's "... satirically cast help with zombies and humans alike as obsessed consumers..." whereas "... the 2004 version forgoes much of the social commentary in favor of a fast-paced violent struggle for survival." (pg 159)

Moving on from this initial argument, the author talks about *Dawn of the Dead* and its pop culture phenomenon. Ranked as "... one of the most profitable independent features at the time" our author also claims that "it serves as a paradigmatic work for the zombie film genre" as a whole. Our author runs through the plot of the film describing the various ways in which the film itself mirrors events in the public eye during the time in which the film was released. It touches not only on police brutality but also disastrous military action and the prominent role of technology and military weaponry within these zombified worlds. The author notes that a lot of this violence is in line with experiences of African Americans in America in the late 1960s, with police acting with "... extreme

degree of violence normally reserved for the confrontations between monsters and humans.” (pg 163) Due to these thematic connections in the film it can be seen as a socio-political interpretation of the 1960s and ‘70s. The 1978 version of *Dawn of the Dead* “... captured a sense of decay and entropy sweeping American culture during the late 1970s with references as diverse as the oil crisis and the nuclear disaster at Three Mile Island.” (pg 161)

The 2004 version of the film, in comparison, chooses to draw more on the violence of the zombie genre and less on making a political or social statement about our current world. The author also looks at the ways in which the zombies in these films correlate more to the monster type that was established in the *Night of the Living Dead* films, which had departed from the previous zombie characters in cinema at the time. Instead of being simply no longer capable of reason or any type of communication, the zombies are now cannibalistic, violent, and prove to be a more realistic threat to humanity. At their core, our author argues that “... the zombies are fairly harmless as far as horror film monsters go. Most are limited to slowly shuffling about, and have to rely on numbers or the gross incompetence of the living to catch their prey.” (pg 167) In addition, these movies also position zombies as more human-like than in previous interpretations, in this the author argues that these zombies are us when individuality and humanity are lost.

Zombie films have overtaken the genre of Horror in the last 20 to 30 years and are now a cemented part of the genre. The zombie has been portrayed in various ways, in various films, at various times. This article outlines the ways in which the appearance of the zombie has changed in film; sometimes providing commentary on culture and current events, while other times are simply invoking of terror in viewers around

theaters in the country today. Specifically, I enjoy that this article touches on the *Night of the Living Dead* films as well as *Dawn of the Dead*, both classics within the smaller zombie genre itself.

Remakes and Remaking

Remakes and reimagining are a huge part of the film industry, and in the horror genre, they are so very prevalent. Our author looks at remixes of monster films and touches on what actually denotes a remake looking at the ways in which themes, characters, and plots are reimagined and reformatted to sit with new world views, cultural shifts, and our ever-changing world. Our author claims that “... acts of repetition sheds light on various cultural processes, whether by revealing the workings of commercial film production or documenting social changes between iterations. Divorced from concerns of artistic value, the remake thus becomes intriguing as a meditation on the continuing historical relevance of particular narratives, concerned with unfinished cultural business, un-refinable and perhaps finally unassimilable material that remains part of the cultural dialogue.” (pg 44)

Specifically when talking about remakes, the author brings up the idea of intertextuality. This is the idea that all literary works or art draw other works in one way or another to inspire, to lead, or to outline a new idea. At this point there are very few things, if any creative works, that are not inspired by those that have come before them. Instead of creating something entirely new our author argues that remakes are more of a deviation when it comes to a film’s “...stance towards its audience.” (pg 50) While not creating something entirely new or tampering with many aspects of the storyline or plot itself, remakes of films instead look at the different ways in which we can tell a story to

an audience; taking into account the worldview, the popular culture, and the current climate in which our audience and the film is existing. This in itself though gives way to a more intertextual reading of these films in relation to one another, seeing how they shift overtime in connection with their audience and historical significance.

The later part of my timeline will focus on horror today; a majority of that having to do with remakes and re-inventions of classical, and well-known archetypes such as those outlined by Stephen King. This chapter provided additional insight into how remakes come to be, and how they are viewed within the larger lens of the genre. I enjoyed how the author touched on the importance of the audience in remakes, and in the production of the film itself. I believe that this chapter provides a good foundation to work off of when watching remakes of classic films, in addition to furthering my knowledge on the position and impact of remakes in the world of film.

(8) Scott, Niall. *Monsters and the Monstrous: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*. BRILL, 2007.

The Zombie as Barometer of Cultural Anxiety By Peter Dendle

In this article our author breaks down various monster movies, specifically those involving the undead. In doing this, he connects the undead and their representation in media and movies to societal and cultural shifts. “Through almost seventy-five years of evolution on the big screen, the zombie can be read as tracking a wide range of cultural, political, and economic anxieties of American society.” (pg 45) He recounts how the movies in themselves are reflections of ideals, ideas, and fears that the American public harbored and may continue to harbor. Even from its beginnings, our author argues that “The essence of the “zombie” at the most abstract level is supplanted, stolen, or effaced

consciousness; it casts allegorically the appropriation of one person's will by that of another." (pg 47) A fear that has continuously survived within the human psyche. As time changes so does the symbolism of the zombie, for example in the 1950s the fear of America was "invasion from within." Films such as *Invaders from Mars* released in 1953 and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* released in 1956 highlight the ways in which standard American homes are turned inside out as intruders that occupy human bodies, end up blending into our own worlds, and turn on the people they are supposed to protect. I also argue that this idea of a zombie "...modeled their outward behaviors on alien ideologies of homogeneity (ideologies that are, not coincidentally, reminiscent of popular caricatures of communism)." (pg 49)

In this case the monsters are not necessarily those that we do not understand or recognize, but instead the monsters are people that we recognize very well. "...what we actually see on the screen as the monsters throughout most of the film are middle-class Americans, dressed in suits and ties, with unthinking unity of purpose and identity." (pg 50) When these middle-class Americans turn into the zombies that we know and are able to identify, they are not so different from us. They are instead reduced to a functionality, to a job and a singular goal in mind. Similar to the other article that I looked at on zombies and their portrayal in film, there is a lack of self-identity and humanity when it comes to zombifying a certain demographic or population.

Zombies are just one portion of the undead archetype that I have laid out, but one that has become a cultural phenomenon. Starting from their origins in African religious practices and myths, these mindless monsters have come a long way and now are at the center of many pop culture crazes. This is part of the reason why I wanted to make sure to have various sources covering the topic of zombies. Because of its ingrained history

throughout storytelling and now and the world of film, I wanted to have various perspectives to take into account when looking at this new genre. In comparison to the other article on zombies, this one highlights the ways in which a zombie film specifically is a reflection of cultural anxieties at the time of their production and release.

(9) Nosferatu (1922)

This film serves as a starting point when it comes to vampirism in movies, especially when it takes center stage as our main character. Made in the 1920s this silent film has become highly influential in the horror genre. Our main character, and vampire, is Count Orlok. As with many of the other vampire characters that we know, he was seen to be both mysterious and somewhat charismatic. At the beginning of the film, the Count sends out a summons to a man by the name of Thomas Hutter. He asks Hutter to come to his home in Transylvania, which happens to be a remote and mysterious castle in the middle of the mountains. The reason for the summons was because the Count is interested in buying a house near Hutter and his wife, Ellen. Hutter comes to the castle, as he is employed by an estate agent with the needed documents for the Count to sign. When he arrives he is met with an oddly pleasant man. The Count begins to prey on both Hutter and his wife, and soon Hutter begins to question if the Count is really all that he seems or something more.

Eventually, the Count reveals his hidden nature to Hutter. As his bloodlust soars, Hutter tries to find a way to escape the castle. Knowing all that they shared, and all that the Count knows, Hutter can only assume that his wife is in danger. The Count escapes

and moves into his new home as Hutter races home. Shortly after the arrival of the count, numerous odd occurrences begin springing up. Eventually, because of reading a book that Hutter brought back with him, Elle finds that only a pure woman can defeat a vampire by distracting them with her beauty. She calls the Count to her window one night, hoping to end his reign of terror. Unfortunately, the Count is able to make it in and drink her blood, but, distracted by Elle, disappears in smoke as the sunrise comes.

This film came before Universal's *Dracula*, and is yet another cornerstone in the formation of the vampire myth and character within pop culture. This film is also another remake of the Stoker novel, though, made in the context of the silent film. I think it will be interesting to compare the use of sound when it comes to the image of a vampire, and how much of the character itself is present within the physical nature that can be seen both in silent films such in this one, and in later remakes of the story.

(10) Universal's Dracula (1931)

In one of Universal's legendary monster movies of the '30s, viewers are introduced to the enigmatic, mysterious, and handsome Count Dracula. Highly influenced by the style of German filmmaking at the time, this film's aesthetic is one which catapults it and the other Universal Monster films into the limelight.

The movie begins with the Count's hypnotization of a British Soldier that we will come to know as Renfield. Renfield's ability to be hypnotized showcases the futility of the human race when it comes to Count Dracula and his whims. This power dynamic continues throughout the film, and highlights the ways in which humanity fears not only the unknown, but those that place higher on the hierarchy of power than them. After hypnotizing Renfield and turning him into his "slave," the Count travels to London,

taking up residence in an aged castle. It is in this castle and the surrounding town that the Count begins his trickery and deceit. This evil nature is in line with the classic monster image that we are all so familiar with, and the nature that we may come to associate with any creature or being deemed to be a monster.

The Count begins with wreaking general havoc; sucking the blood of the young women of the town, and successfully turning them into immortal beings (*otherwise known as vampires*) such as himself. The depiction of this is commonly set in a somewhat sexual nature in many of the film adaptations of the original novel, this particular film included. Similar to many other monster narratives, there is a deflowering of a pure person, most commonly women. In the case of Dracula, this takes the form of young women in the town surrounding his castle.

Eventually, the Count sets his sights on a young woman by the name of Mina who is the daughter of a well-known and prominent doctor in the area. In the film, she is the epitome of good, gracious, and light. When her father comes across signs that his daughter is the next intended victim of this monster, the well known vampire hunter Van Helsing is called in to protect Mina. In addition to protecting Mina, he is also tasked with putting an eventual stop to the Count's bloodthirst that has proved time and time again to be detrimental to those he preys upon.

I begin with this film, which will serve as a starting point for the remainder of my research. Because of the high rate of classic horror films released by Universal at this time, I thought it a good place to begin my timeline. While not the first vampire movie released, it was one of the first films that gained mass popularity in the horror genre with a character such as this. It mimics many elements of German filmmaking at the time, which have gone on to influence many of the cinematic monsters that we see

today. Because of the popularity that this and the other Universal films spawned, I hope to dig deeper into the filmmaking process behind the original Universal monster films, as well as connect their themes to the larger historical space that they are a part of.

(11) Universal's Frankenstein (1931)

This iconic horror film, also released in the 1930s, takes inspiration from the novel by Mary Shelley published in 1818. Both narratives follow one Dr. Frankenstein, an eccentric scientist obsessed with the idea of mimicking God himself and creating life. This obsession leads him to rob graves and dismantle corpses, finding the needed parts for this creation. Eventually, he assembles a “creature” with these parts of the recently deceased.

In the film, Frankenstein is aided in part by an assistant known as Fritz, who almost seems loyal to a fault. Frankenstein eventually succeeds in creating and animating his creature. Upon the animation of the creature, Frankenstein runs away from his creature, causing it to escape and run into the countryside. Once there, the creature begins to wreak havoc on civilians.

As with the Dracula movie released in the same year, there is the perversion of purity, this time in the image of a young girl. The creature, unknowing of their own strength, would eventually end up killing the girl, causing an uproar in the surrounding community. Frankenstein must eventually start the search for his elusive creature and confront the repercussions of what it means to play God.

Mary Shelley's novel has been popular for quite some time in the literature community, but its relation to film is somewhat skewed. The creature that is presented in the book by Shelly is very different from the creature that production companies

chose to highlight in the various films that have been influenced by this novel. Not only does Dr. Frankenstein now have an assistant within this film, we also see a drastic change in the perception of the monster. Within the book, The Creature is seen as highly intelligent, and can stand face-to-face with Frankenstein in terms of intellectual pursuits. This is all thrown to the wayside in the film reproductions of the novel, and instead the creature takes on more animalistic characteristics, therefore transforming him into an 'other.' This film by Universal is the first one that really took off with the character of Frankenstein in the mass media, and I find it very interesting that it is this monster that grasps audiences, and not the highly intelligent monster of the original novel.

(12) The Wolf Man (1941)

This film is one of the latter classics made by Universal that is considered to be a part of their monster films that first came out in the 1930s. Larry Talbot, our main character, returns to Wales after the death of his brother. When there, he finally reconciles with his father, and visits his old haunts in the familiar town. One of his stops is in an antique shop where the shopkeeper, Gwen, catches his eye. In the hopes of attracting her attention and even impressing her, Talbot buys a silver walking cane.

Later in the night, Talbot runs into a wild wolf, and while fighting for his life, kills it with the same walking stick he just purchased. However, all is not as it seems, as Talbot quickly finds out that he did not just kill a wolf, but rather a man. The seer of the town reaches out to Talbot, explaining that the wolf, or rather man that he had killed was her son. Her son was a werewolf, and now, because he killed her son, Talbot was as well.

The werewolf is a tale that has been told time and time again though not with the same name. In some cultures it is known as a shapeshifter, and in some ways it is similar to that of Jekyll and Hyde, a man with two faces. I find it interesting that Jekyll and Hyde and the character of the werewolves have so many similarities, and while the idea of Jekyll and Hyde has not been as prolific in film, the werewolf has continued to dominate television screens around the world. Similar to the zombie, or the vampire, werewolves have created their own place within our current pop culture as a seeming constant. What has allowed for these characters to continue to persist, and how is this idea of a shape-shifting man that is aligned with the changes of the moon one that we continue to grip onto. Because this film was one of the original classic monster movies released by Universal, it will serve as a starting point for me when tracing this character and its archetype throughout history.

(13) Creature from the Black Lagoon (1954)

One of the latter films released in Universal's run of classic monster films, the *Creature from the Black Lagoon* is now a cult classic. The movie opens when the remains of a mysterious animal are discovered in the remote jungle. A group of scientists rush to the scene to decipher whether the discovery is simply a hoax or possibly something more. The four scientists must traverse the wilderness of South America to make it to the location of the remains, traveling through some of the most dangerous parts of the jungle. However, it is nothing compared to what will await them once they make it to the scene. Once there, odd happenings begin and they find themselves caught in the grasp of an animalistic monster lurking in the lagoon.

The creature, aware of the scientist's presence, watches them, and in one chance encounter, kills two assistants of the group while the others are away. Assuming it is jaguars, the scientists continue their exploration of the site, hoping to find additions to the remains that they hoped would lead to a link between land mammals and amphibians. Taking an interest in Kay, one of the scientists, the creature follows the group as they move towards the lagoon. Eventually, the creature is captured and after escaping its restraints ends up injuring or killing much of the team and taking Kay hostage. The remaining team members find themselves on a rescue mission for Kay. The group eventually injures the creature and rescues Kay in the process. The movie ends as the team speeds away from the jungle and the body of the creature sinks below the depths of the lagoon.

(14) Shape of Water (2017)

Somewhat mimicking its predecessor, *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, this film is a beautiful story told by well known director Guillermo DeToro. Set in 1962 in a government laboratory, viewers are introduced to Elisa, a mute woman who works in this high security location as a custodian. Elisa finds herself constantly isolated due to her lack of auditory communication, with her only friend being the woman that she works with, and her roommate, an eccentric man. Elisa's life is changed though, one day, as she is cleaning and discovers a well hidden secret in one of the labs. In a water tank lives a creature from South America, scaled and somewhat mysterious in nature. As time continues on, Elisa and the creature form a unique bond, and then a friendship with one another, as she continues to clean and he finds socialization in their interactions. Even without the use of language, the two get to know one another and find

themselves falling in love. Eventually, Elisa learns of the fate of her dearly beloved creature, which lay in the hands of a violent government agent. In order to protect and preserve her newfound love, she schemes with her coworker and roommate to break the creature out.

The visuals in this film are truly striking, and the color palette is not only recognizable in relation to the film, but sets a tone throughout that distinctly influences the viewer's experience. This use of color along with the storyline, mimics that of the Creature from the Black Lagoon, but this time not only is the setting more modern, but the roles are reversed and the audience finds themselves cheering for the creature and for Elisa. Because of this reversal I think this is an amazing film to look at when referencing how our view of the monstrous and monsters themselves have changed over the course of history.

(15) Us (2019)

This well known film by director Jordan Peele centers around the experiences of our main character Adelaide Wilson. As a child she experienced a traumatic event, and since then something has been different. While visiting her hometown with her husband, son, and daughter, Adelaide begins to become increasingly anxious as she feels that something bad is bound to happen now that she is back at the spot where her former childhood trauma took place. This anxiety is soon warranted when one night a family of four, mimicking her own appear at the end of the driveway. Strangers to her they invade her house and corner her family in the living room. Adelaide and her family come to find out that there is an underground system where people known as tethers reside. These individuals are twins, or copies of those living above ground, forced to

recreate their movements and life in their underground prison. What happens next it's just the start of the journey, as Adelaide and her family fight for survival. The Tethers are here, and they are coming for their Tethered.

(16) What We Do in the Shadows (2019)

This hit series follows an odd compilation of vampire housemates as they try to cope and survive in our modern world. Tasked with taking over Staten Island, these four vampires try to navigate the complexities of life in the modern world. The “leader” of the group is known as Nandor the relentless, who is shown to have been a great warrior from the time of the Ottoman Empire. The British vampire, Laszlo is a bit rough around the edges, and is a lover of pranks, trickery, and the occasional mischief. Nadja is the only woman in the house, and is known to be seducing to all, though she can commonly be found in the depths of Laszlo’s mischief right alongside him. These three characters fulfill the various stereotypes of vampires that we have come to know and love. In addition to this cast of characters are two others that do not fit so snugly into the mold. Colin Robinson is a vampire in his own right, but instead of feasting on the blood of humans, rather sucks their energy in his own “creative” ways. The final character in this charming series is Guillermo, the human familiar of Nandor and a vampire wanna-be. The series follows these five lovable characters through chance encounters, love, loss, and the occasional murder.

(17) The Iron Giant (1990)

This 1999 animated science fiction children’s film directed by Brad Bird. The film is set in 1957 during the Cold War scare and tells the story of a young boy named

Hogarth. Hogarth discovers a giant robot from outer space that has crash-landed near his small town in Maine. Hogarth befriends the robot, which is capable of understanding and mimicking human speech, and the two grow together. Amidst their blooming friendship, Hogarth tries to keep it hidden from the authorities, who are intent on destroying the machine out of fear that it is a weapon. Hogarth teaches the robot and his newfound friend about life on Earth and the importance of becoming who YOU choose to be. Things eventually take a dangerous turn when a government agent arrives in town, determined to prove the existence of the Iron Giant and destroy it at any cost. As tensions escalate, Hogarth and his friends must band together to protect the Iron Giant and prevent a catastrophic confrontation, ending in the Iron Giant giving his life to protect his newfound family.

(18) Edward Scissorhands (1999)

"Edward Scissorhands" is a 1990 film directed by Tim Burton and well known in popular culture. The film follows the story of Edward, an artificial man who has scissor blades for hands and is taken in by a suburban family after being discovered living alone in a castle on the edge of town after the sudden death of his creator. As Edward tries to adapt to his new environment and rowdy neighborhood, he quickly becomes a sensation for his unique talents. However, as time goes on and he begins to fall in love with the daughter of his new family, things take a turn for the worst. Edward begins to face challenges and misunderstandings from the neighborhood, who eventually chase him out of the area in a mob like fashion.

(19) Night of the Living Dead (1990)

Directed by George A. Romero, this 1968 film is known well in the zombie cinematic universe. The film follows a group of strangers who are trapped in a rural farmhouse during a sudden outbreak of zombies. The story begins with siblings Barbra and Johnny visiting the grave of one of their parents. Out of nowhere, a zombie attacks Johnny and Barbara runs for her life. Fleeing to a nearby farmhouse, Barbara meets Ben and other survivors hiding out. They soon begin to nail windows and doors shut as they prepare for the onslaught of zombies moving towards them. From here, the situation only escalates until at the end of the film, the audience realizes that Barbara is the only survivor from her group.

(20) American Werewolf in London (1981)

This 1982 horror film tells the story of two American college students, David and Jack, who are backpacking across England. While walking at night on the moors, they are attacked by a werewolf. Jack is killed, but David survives and is taken to a London hospital to recover. As David's story continues he realizes that something is off and begins to experience odd symptoms and hallucinations. He soon comes to the conclusion that he is turning into the werewolf that they boys were both warned about before the attack. This film is most known for its phenomenal makeup and costuming work in the transition from man to wolf.

IV. Results

What is the enduring attraction of monsters that continue to appear in film, and influence and frighten audiences? What aspects of these monsters have continued to

survive, and what connection does that have with our own cultural views? How has history influenced what is seen as monstrous, and how has that changed over time?

Various authors and researchers have tracked the evolution of these films on a much wider scale. As previously mentioned, I have chosen to limit the scale of my research due not only to time, but also to the scale of the genre in its most general form, and to the number of monster films that have been crafted since the 1930s.. While the outward appearance of these monsters may remain the same, the ways in which they are perceived and played, in addition to how they are put in place within film media and culture, has changed drastically.

The intriguing part of this project that I discovered is that as time continues onward due to either historical or social factors the horror of the monster begins to shift away from the supernatural or scientific creation and deposits the narrative upon the everyday person. It is this myopic look into the individual that highlights the similarities between the monsters that scare us and our neighbors that live next door. What once was a thriving industry centered around the supernatural and the non-existent has come full circle and instead represents a subversive examination of humanity in which the monsters are not made up, herald from another planet, or risen from the dead, rather they are the everyday person wholly in control of their free will.

As monsters become more humanized in film, and star as the center of comedic and touching narratives, the humans in turn switch spots with the predetermined monsters and instead take on the monstrous characteristics previously given to these misunderstood creatures. In a time when the reinvention of pop culture, fashion, and the popular is thriving, it is no surprise that the monsters of the 1930s received a facelift. This cultural revamp comes from more progressive ideas calling out problematic social

concerns that were previously showcased in monster films and now highlighting contemporary social concerns reflected in current day horror and monster film archetypes.

In the final section of this thesis, I will go in depth about the three archetypes that I outlined in the introduction and further explain and explore the ways in which each archetype has evolved and mutated along its evolutionary track throughout the last 90 years. While many of the evolutionary tracts of these archetypes are similar, each one tells its own story. and highlights the ways each of these creatures have captured our imagination, our hearts and our nightmares, have changed in relation to cultural and societal shifts of their time.

V. Discussion

The monstrous and mythical are at the forefront of many cultures and societies spanning across the globe. Every society has their own version of a chupacabra, a Bigfoot, or a Loch Ness Monster. The creatures that have come from generations of lore passed down around campfires and over dinner tables. The journey of the monstrous that I am discussing is no different. Born out of novels, imaginations, and lore spanning centuries, there is an innate ability within humanity to create that which we are afraid of. The monstrous and their many forms reflect the many purposes that they are in fact created for.

As author Craig Detweiler writes in their article Holy Terror: Confronting Our Fears and Loving Our Movie Monsters “American monsters are born out of American history. They emerge out of the central anxieties and obsessions that have been a part of the United States from colonial times to the present and from the structures and

processes where those obsessions found historical expression.” (Detweiler 172) Monster films have always served as a highlight or reflection of the society in which we are living. Based on prose poetry novels or other written or spoken legend, these archetypes individuals and creatures are all mirrors to the world's and cultures within which they were conceived. Author David H. Stymeis uses horror and monster movies to highlight how they reflect the culture and the world we were made and exist in. The author claims that “... cinematic works also oversee and proclaim cultural change encoding revised charters of the self and new idea standards of thought and action.” (Stymeis 395) They are special in their ability to not only discuss these but to do so in a way that is not blatant. instead they ask us to look Inward and outward using the archetypes of these monsters as a frame of reference to view our own lives actions and those of the ones around us.

In this, the monsters themselves prove to be an experience that humanity desires. These characters are their narratives continue to create what our author will come to describe as “...Mysterium tremendum...” or, in other words, “...A holy terror...” (pg 172) The divine conception of these Monsters has moved past its reflection of society and become vehicles for discussing various components of the human condition and of our lives. “...our fascination with monsters might just reflect an innate desire to experience the sacred” connecting many religious views of the monstrous and what is present in our horror genre today (172). The experience of being scared and the terror that can come upon oneself when faced with the monstrous is an odd yet exhilarating feeling, one that many individuals find themselves craving. That is in part why the monstrous has survived so long in our media and pop culture. The innate desire to be scared is embedded, and horror films provide just the right environment for this to occur.

Another factor in the continuation of the monstrous and mythical in our film and horror is the ways in which characters and their stories are remade and retold to reflect current times and society. Author, Christian Knoppler claims that "... the remake thus becomes intriguing as a meditation on the continuing historical relevance of particular narratives, concerned with unfinished cultural business, un-refinable and perhaps finally unassimilable material that remains part of the cultural dialogue" in their article entitled "The Monster Always Returns: American Horror Films and Their Remakes" (Knoppler, 44) There are some things, like the monstrous that never die, and through remakes individuals are able to reimagine and bring up ideas, veins of thought, or issues that have refused to die in new ways. These new perspectives of these issues allow for a new generation of moviegoers to not only be entertained but become introduced to the issues at hand. Due to the vast collection of remakes that we see everyday, it is fair to say that at this point there are very few things, if any creative works, that are not inspired by those that have come before them. Instead of creating something entirely new our author argues that remakes are more of a deviation when it comes to a film's "...stance towards its audience." (Knoppler, 50) The actual story is not changing, but the shift is coming in making the material accessible and enjoyable to a new audience.

By tracing the ways in which the monstrous has changed in film, we are able to see the response of these stories to the societies, the times, and the cultures in which they have presided in. Specific shifts in characterization, the palace of antagonists, and the response of the 'normal' to the monstrous are all remake worthy changes in perspective that can be seen below as I dive deeper into specific archetypes. "Myths, like culture itself, is something that is generated, revised, and regenerated in response to economic and political forces" (Stymeis, 396) and the monsters of the 1930's and

beyond do the same. They are also the myths that shift with our world and the individuals within it. With this being said, let's dive into the lab of Frankenstein, the den of the Vampire, the home of Jekyll and Hyde, and the waters of the Black Lagoon.

Frankenstein: Creator and Created

Explored in Mary Shelley's seminal novel is the tension between the creator and the created. We see this through the relationship of Dr. Victor Frankenstein and his Creature, and this tension within this relationship was brought to film in the 1930s. Since the film premiered, it has become a film classic and inspired many imitators and spin-offs that integrate the ideas and values of the time in which they were produced while also keeping true to the original film storyline presented in 1931. In order to ground ourselves within the idea of this tension and the relationship between the creator and the created, I first examine Mary Shelley's novel and then explore the film adaptations relating to her narrative as we take a trip through time.

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Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus by Mary Shelley (1818)

Mary Shelley's well known novel *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* is a timeless piece of literature, still taught as a classic of the western canon in schools around the world. Written when she was just 19, the novel encompasses many intertwining and intersecting ideas and perspectives as Shelley weaves the world of Victor Frankenstein and his creation. One of the most prolific creatures of the monster scene is created along this journey who has since graced TV screens, movie theater lobbies, children's books, and animated remakes (among many others). While I can

guess that this is not what Shelley had in mind when writing her novel, the creature that she was able to mold came to survive much past her own lifetime and is now known as a classic creature, one which is known by all.

While many may know the creature that she came to create back in 1818, the perception of the creature and his composition differs greatly. Many interpretations and understandings of the creature came from the 1931 film adaptation by Universal Studios, which not only altered the storyline greatly, but created a monster unlike that which Shelley outlined in her novel.

At the onset of the novel, we see the creation of the Creature and its eventual resurrection. At this time, its creator Victor Frankenstein runs from the scene, disgusted at what he has created leaving the newly alive creature alone. It is here and in the following chapters that readers are able to see the true consciousness of the Creature. The consciousness of the Creature is one that seems to be similar to that of an infant encountering the world around it for the first time. Language, cultural norms, societal placement, and even the basics of survival are all unknown to this newborn even if it occupies a full grown body. As the Creature explores the world, they are privy to new information, harrowing experiences, and the realization of their own abandonment.

Through this journey the Creature grows and even portrays a sense of eloquence and persuasiveness that is not communicated in later adaptations. Shelley writes a truly dynamic character in which we are able to see growth from chapter to chapter. It is because of Shelley's portrayal of the Creature that readers are able to sympathize with the Creature. We are able to see its creation and the struggles it endures as it adapts to the world, learns to speak, and recognizes that even if it was created with good intention, it does not belong.

As the story progresses, Shelly illustrates the similarities between Victor and the Creature as they both progress along the lines of their separate journeys. The two encounter one another time and time again and mirror the complicated dynamics of parent and child. Early in the novel, Victor and the Creature are in a desolate location in the Arctic, a setting which mimics the feeling of abandonment which the Creature is introduced to upon its creation. As the novel continues onward, we see the two characters dance around one another as they both deal with the consequences of their actions. Eventually, readers are able to see that both Victor and the Creature have become obsessed with one another. Each in turn, pursuing and running from another in a seemingly endless match of wills. Both are heavily invested in their own identity in the world in which they reside and what the existence of the other defines them as. The Creature questions his existence and the idea of free will whereas Victor ponders what he has wrought in his hubris of playing God.

Frankenstein directed by James Whale (1931)

James Whale's film adaptation is set against the backdrop of vast leafless trees, fog and rolling hills, displayed in glorious black & white. This opening setting is similar to those other Universal Monster Films in this study, creating a through line between the films. The introduction of these tales in this way not only prepares viewers for the story to come, but also sets a 'mood' or 'tone' to the film. Barren trees point to little life and prosperity, fog is a call to the mysterious hiding within, and the rolling hills as a backdrop call to what could crest them at any time.

Whale introduces us to Dr. Victor Frankenstein as he unearths a freshly-dug grave with the aid of his apprentice. Incidental characters flesh out Dr. Frankenstein's

background and touch upon his obsession with creating life. The film gives us glimpses of the various pieces that eventually comprise the Creature. Descriptions of bodies stitched together, constructing the Creatures remarkably wide frame, with particular attention given to the collection of the brain which will 'finish' the Creature. The brain is that of a criminal, which later is used as a plot point to explain the violence of the Creature. In Shelly's novel, the cast of characters is much different. There is no assistant to Dr. Frankenstein, and his reaction to his creation is one of disgust instead of awe.

Seeing the Doctor in his lab for the first time is the very genesis of our common understanding of a mad scientist. Instruments lie haphazardly while a metal table is seen with the creature covered by a thin white sheet. The atmosphere of the lab is punctuated by flashes of lightning, rolling thunder, scored with ominous perfection by Bernard Kaun. The atmosphere implies chaos to the audience, as assistant and scientist busily place the final pieces in place and setting the stage for the horror to come. The visage of the mad scientist is on full display as his assistant, Igor submits to the Doctor's every command. It is in this sequence, that the iconic accelerant is introduced - the bolt of lightning, bringing the Creature to life.. All the while, the Creature, which will commonly be referred to as 'Frankenstein' remains hidden, with his face still covered by the white sheet, prolonging the mystery.

Soon, the first sign of life is witnessed by focussing on the small movements of the hand of the Creature. Instead of abandoning his creature at once (as in the novel), the Doctor holds vigil as the Creature begins to awaken to a world it simultaneously may recall and still have no understanding of.

Soon we are given witness to the face and form of the Creature, lumbering about before its creator and where also, the film diverges from Shelly's source material. The

Creature's iconic square head with bolts at the neck, wardrobe and gate, is crafted for maximum visual impact Shelly, however, describes the Creature as:

His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful.

Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same color as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips. (Gutenberg Frankenstein, Chapter 5)

This description varies greatly in the physical representation of the Creature we see on film and more so, in the adaptations to come. Instead of being monstrous, Victor Frankenstein had intended to create the 'perfect man' which can be seen in the above description of the Creature by Frankenstein himself. The build of this creation was wrought with the search for perfect parts in order to create and encapsulate the hopes of Victor.

The Creature is unable to speak, but is expressive through the masterful portrayal by Boris Karloff. One moment of longing, and curiosity is when the Creature reaches toward a beam of light shining into the dank cell it inhabits in Frankenstein's castle. Igor enters carrying a torch, and instantaneously the Creature reacts, displaying profound fear of fire. The ensuing panic causes the Creature to flee in panic, tossing aside Victor and Igor. This plot point is absent in the pages of Shelley's novel. The significance of fire dominates the later half of the film. The creature then escapes his chains and hangs the

assistant with his own whip, the first real show of pure and unadulterated violence that is seen of the creature. Before this point, there is little to point to this attack or to cause the audience to anticipate an action such as this. Comparatively to the novel, this instant violence seemingly without much provocation immediately sets the creature up to be the monster of the film, both in looks and actions.

Later in the film, when the doctor is attempting to examine the monster, he wakes up and it once attacks, the doctor grabbing him by his neck as the monster rises off of the table and chokes out the doctor with seemingly no emotion. This again places the creature in the place of Monster within the film, cementing it as an 'other' to the audience. Another cementation of the monster in this archetypal role is its interactions with the little girl, a well known cinematic feature of the film. This is the first time that this stark contrast between the angelic nature of a female child and this heinous monster, two sides of a coin, is introduced into the narrative. The death of this child cements the creature as a villain in the mind of viewers and our characters alike. The contrast between women (virginal and pure) with the image of the monster is continued as we continue in the film. We see the creature arrive and shadow behind Henry's to be bride, the whiteness of her dress polarizing with the darkness of the monster.

A manhunt begins to kill the creature as all of the townspeople light torches in the well known cinematic scene of the mob, torches a lit, heading to slay the monster runs across the screen. Henry Frankenstein, eventually finds his monster as they come face-to-face on the top of the mountain, staring one another down. The creature now, looking at Frankenstein laying on the ground unmoving below, becomes engulfed in flames as the windmill burns to the ground, and with nowhere to go, is seemingly killed

in the blazes. The destruction of the monster, and the commonly told tale where good wins against evil.

The idea of Frankenstein as a literate and a monstrously handsome man as written in the Mary Shelley novel would not have existed within the world of the 1930s. At that time, the general population were looking for an escape. The original storyline that Shelley constructed was highly engrained with deep topics spanning a variety of different sectors of society. At this point in the United States, the Great Depression was in full effect. Individuals and families were struggling to survive and eat week to week, standing in lines for bread, and struggling to deal with the economic situation. A conversation about parenthood, the idea of playing God, and the morality of the human experience would not have been popular, or even been considered at the time to grace the big screens. What sold and what society was looking for was an escape. The ways in which Whale and Universal retold the narrative of the Creature (*which came to be known as Frankenstein*) was one which allowed for that escapism.

Mary Shelley was much ahead of her time when writing her book as it explains how this uniquely perfect human being that was constructed by Victor Frankenstein comes to learn just as a child learns. Taking away his speech within films and making him a bumbling idiot who not only seems to lack intelligence but also motor skills we further divide him from ourselves and make him an 'other.' By taking away his speech we also take away his agency and in his inability to speak also comes into question his ability to think. Because of this, it is assumed that he is more animalistic than he may actually be, furthering the othering of his characteristics and of his archetype as a character within film and literature to come.

The Iron Giant directed by Brad Bird (1999)

Set in 1957, this animated film opens up with a scene in space depicting the origin of our Iron Giant. The Iron Giant's appearance is simultaneous with a hurricane and other natural disasters. As the Giant crash lands, we see the first real view of the Giant on Earth. Besides this, the viewer's initial introduction to the character is first to its glowing eyes in the darkness, and its gigantic feature in the ocean during a thunderstorm. Dark blues and blacks outline the screen, with the silhouette of the creature appearing here and there.

The film then quickly switched to an idyllic neighborhood scene after the storm, where the rest of our narrative is set. The introduction and backstory of the Iron Giant is reminiscent of the creation scene in Frankenstein set both in a dark, gloomy, and violent thunderstorm. In addition, the introduction to the Creatures is similar. In the novel, Victor first realizes his creation has come alive when it opens its yellow eyes, in this we see the shining light of the Iron Giant's eyes as well. Both characters express the dichotomy between the monster in human society, the dark vs the idyllic.

As the film continues we see the introduction of our main character Hogarth who is a young boy being raised by a single mother. In ways this could be a reflection of many of the parenting conversations had in Mary Shelley's original novel. Eventually, the boy goes searching for this creature. Broken limbs and tree branches, along with uprooted trees, lead our character until at last he finds the Iron Giant. What begins here is a friendship in which both The Iron Giant and the boy are able to grow with one another. The idea of nature versus nurture is challenged by Hogarth and the Giant. The conversation of what the creature was built for versus what the creature ends up being encompasses and outlines the entire work.

Growing up is a large topic in this movie and we see it reflected in the way that the Iron Giant is learning to live on earth and the ways in which Hogarth is growing up with a single mother. In this narrative, the Creator, the Doctor Frankenstein is missing, viewers see where the Iron Giant has come from, but have no conception of why or how he was created. "During the film's opening scene, the orphan giant plummets to earth as a flaming meteor, flung across space according to the whim of his ever-unseen creator." (Miller). Much like the commonly abandoned child of a single working parent, the Iron Giant is left to fend for themselves. "Early on, Hogarth explains to Dean that the Iron Giant is "like a little kid." It is true that both monsters are "orphaned creations," and both film and novel examine issues of parenthood" (Miller).

When the two first meet we see that the creature, although bigger than the boy, peers down, and sits with him on the ground, both sharing in a child-like manner of curiosity. The creature begins mimicking the boy, learning from him. It is also in this scene that we see that the creature is capable of speech, and the child is trying to teach it, taking on that form of educator that a creator would do, which also reflects the elementary nature of knowledge that we see in portrayals of Frankenstein. Both boy and giant are learning from one another in this initial encounter and will continue to do so throughout the entirety of the film. Author T.S. Miller points out that "The Iron Giant in fact matches Shelley's novel almost point for point in terms of the monster's education and emotional development, with each deviation remaining explicitly within the bounds of how, in Bird's understanding, Shelley's monster might have ended up." (Frankenstein without Frankenstein: "The Iron Giant" and the Absent Creator) Viewers continue to see Hogarth trying to find his place in the world around him as the creature also tries to

acclimate to a world in which he was not initially created for. In this sense both individuals are innocent and unknowing of the world around them, learning as they go.

Set in a time when the Cold War was a prevalent threat, the use of violence and weaponry takes center stage. Eventually, both boy and giant come to realize that this world is not friendly to those that are different especially at a time when the country is on high alert for the 'other.' This results in an amalgamation of violence towards the Giant. Trying to save his newfound friend and family, the Giant eventually begins fighting back. As with Mary Shelley's Creature, the Iron Giant does not attack without provocation, and in many of the scenes it is to protect Hogarth. At the end of the movie both Hogarth and the giant learn that you are who you make yourself to be. In the final scene we see intense emotion and friendship between the Giant and Hogarth as the Giant flies off to collide with the missile that is aimed at the small town of his Newfound family. Both have learned that it is not predestined what you become, but instead what you decide to become that is your future.

The idea of othering that we see first in Shelley's novel and in the 1931 remake can also be seen in this film adaptation as well. Set in a time when the Cold War was a realistic and impending threat we see various hints at the ways in which the other is greatly feared and a preventing anger is attached to anything that differs from the norm. At the beginning of the film we see a newspaper which says that a Russian satellite was seen in the night sky. In addition to this we see other references to the Space Race and to Russia. Even when the audience is introduced to Hogarth in school we see films being shown which prepare students for an atomic holocaust and how to stay safe in the event of an atomic bomb. This further portrays the ways in which the other is an impending threat and the idea of something unfamiliar coming into this environment is clear.

“Works like *The Iron Giant* have undeniably continued to alter its significance, engaging with its foundational science fiction themes even as they expand the tradition with new concerns, such as, here, a turn-of-the millennium denunciation of the excesses of the Cold War.” (Frankenstein without Frankenstein: "The Iron Giant" and the Absent Creator) This is the outline with which the Iron Giant is seen when being perceived by those in the community. The large question is: is it sent by another country and for what reason was it sent? While these questions are never answered I do think that the idea of them being asked is reflective of the time in which the film is set. Even before Hogarth and the Iron Giant become fast friends we see an us versus them mentality as Hogarth initially hunts the creature down.

Later in the film it is revealed to the audience that the Iron Giant is in fact a weapon, but that he only responds in a defensive manner. I took this to be commentary on the ways in which weaponry and War are fought and how even weapons in and of themselves can choose to be used in different ways. This is all a commentary on the idea of free will and nature versus nurture when it comes to determination. “After all, to bracket for a moment the pacifist subtext of Bird's critique of Cold War foreign policy, the more elementary "moral message" of the film resides in the words that pass from Dean to Hogarth and then on to the Iron Giant: "You are what you choose to be"(Miller) his repeated phrase throughout the film showcases the idea of free will, of the ability to choose, and the idea that any conflict or violence in this world was created by humanity. It was a decision that was made, it was not determined. Bird reminds the audience of that time and time again when the phrase is exchanged between Hogarth and the Iron Giant, two opposite ends of society's spectrum of normal.

I believe that the film also provides commentary on the ways in which we view those that are different from us and the ability to accept those that do not fit in the Norms that we have set in our societies. If anything, *The Iron Giant* provides an alternate ending to both that of Shelley's novel and the 1931 film adaptation. Instead of being seen as the 'other,' hunted down, or becoming a recluse; we instead see the Iron Giant become a part of the collective community. "The final scenes of *The Iron Giant* enact the peaceful outcome to Frankenstein that Shelley's monster describes but can never realize: "If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them an hundred and an hundred fold; for that one creature's sake, I would make peace with the whole kind!" (119). At the eleventh hour, Hogarth becomes that one creature who manages to avert the tragedy of the traditional Frankenstein story." (Miller)

In this film there are various callbacks to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the film seen in 1931 released by Universal Studios. In the initial encounter between Hobart and the creature we see the Iron Giant eating parts of an electrical plant eventually being electrocuted. This reminded me of the way in which the creature and Frankenstein had a fear of Fire. I also thought that the creature's initial introduction to Hogarth being one in which he was electrocuted was interesting considering that was the method in which Frankenstein was originally brought to life. Hogarth decides to save The Iron Giant from the electrocution by turning an on and off switch off. Again, I thought that it was intriguing that this imaging was present as a giant on/off switch is commonly seen during the creation scene of Frankenstein's both in the 1931 edition and in further adaptations.

The elusive nature of The Iron Giant and of Frankenstein are both present in this film. After Hogarth's initial interaction with the creature the Sun rises and the monster

is seen to be gone. The same elusiveness is seen in the classic horror films of the 1930s where the monster seemingly disappears when individuals go to find it. We also see the common narrative of unbelief as Hogarth tells his mother of The Iron Giant he has recently encountered and his mother's negation of the entire story within itself. Another scene which calls back quite realistically to the idea of Frankenstein occurs when the Iron Giant is hit by a train. Upon being hit the monster breaks into various pieces scattered around the snowy landscape. Hogarth immediately panics but the image in itself is reminiscent of the pieces that Frankenstein is composed of. In a turn of events The Iron Giant reforms himself and rebuilds his body, differing from that of the original Frankenstein. Author T.S. Miller notes the similarity writing "After a collision with a train partially dismembered the Iron Giant, he proceeds to piece himself together limb by limb, very like the way in which Shelley's Frankenstein literally patches together human body parts ..." (Miller)

Edward Scissorhands directed by Tim Burton (1990)

Edward Scissorhands directed by Tim Burton and released in 1990 is a cult classic known by a majority of Americans, specifically those within my generation. The film depicts a creation called Edward who has scissors for hands hence the name of the film. Within the context of this film is meshed Frankenstein type storyline with the ideas behind a *Beauty and the Beast* type scenario. As the film opens we are introduced to a dark foreboding Castle situated in the back of what is seemingly a perfect 1980s town. Cookie cutter houses line streets and wives prepare houses as husbands leave for work.

We are first introduced to the family which will come to adopt Edward. The mother is a makeup saleswoman, the father works in an office, and they have a son and a beautiful daughter. A typical American nuclear family. When the mother first encounters Edward we see him situated in the shadows within the attic of this large castle that he inhabits. He is placed in front of a dark gray background but his silhouette stands out even against the darkness. Initially there is a sense of fear in the unknown of this creature but soon he is found to be calm and harmless despite the off-putting appearance that he holds. Viewers learn that he used to live there with his creator until his creator's untimely death. Initially his creator had intended for him to have hands but was unable to procure and implement them before he died leaving Edward with scissors for hands.

Upon seeing the poor boy the mother decides to take him back into town to the chagrin of everyone else and eventually adopts him into her family. Initially Edward is seen in all black and darker colors and this persists even as he is adopted into the idyllic American neighborhood. His pale complexion and dark clothing and hair contrast with the bright colors, light hair and overall bright nature of the neighborhood.

What is interesting about this film is even though he could be othered and seen as so different from the community those in the neighborhood are not fearful of him but are curious of his presence in the family. At points throughout the film they treat him almost as if he is in a sideshow or part of a zoo exhibit to be gawked at. I find this interesting because in other retellings of Frankenstein narratives the monster is intrinsically avoided and thought to be violent and feared. That through line is not portrayed in this film and instead we see Edward being welcomed into a community.

Shortly after we see that he has skill and trimming hedges into diverse and interesting shapes and eventually into cutting hair both human and animal. Among all of the different things that he is being introduced to we also see Edwards struggling with the social dynamics of this neighborhood. individuals in the neighborhood will make many jokes referring to his scissors as hands but because of his limited knowledge of society and his limited social interaction we see him at a loss and how to react to these experiences.

Edwards' story seems to be on the right track until eventually the community and the neighborhood turn against him. At one point he unfortunately cuts his adoptive brother with his hands and is labeled as violent and untrustworthy. From here we find that he is chased out of the neighborhood by the community members as they drive him back towards the castle from where he came. This scene in and of itself is very reminiscent of the mob scene in the original 1931 *Frankenstein*. What is added though is an element of *Beauty and the Beast* by Burton in which the adoptive sister who has become his love interest comes to the castle in order to save him from the mob. By pretending that she has killed him Edward is allowed to live in peace up in his castle apart from the neighborhood that he once called home.

Dracula: The Undead and the Cursed

While in this section I mainly intend to focus on the ways in which movies concerning vampires progressed throughout history. I was interested in seeing how this character of death and destruction changed hands as society also changed through the

course of the last 90 years. I will also touch upon the introduction of the zombie genre, one that has led to innumerable adaptations and mutations still to this day.

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Dracula by Bram Stoker (1897)

Within the narrative of Dracula, many of the main characters and protagonists are men. This is telling of the time, and the scope to which men filled the social and cultural sphere. Men at the center of this narrative allow for society to find the information more believable, only to be further backed up by the fact that many of the men that fill these central roles also are doctors (medical) or men of science in general.

At the time of its conception, Bram Stoker's novel was immersed in a time when the male mind and authority was front and center. Society looked to the males in its leadership roles and at the heads of its communities for strength, guidance, and protection. With this came an intimate trust in the male mind and in men in general. In terms of Dracula the abundance of male characters speaks to the way in which the author wants this piece to be viewed and the validity with which it is taken. Truthfulness and believability of this horrid tale find a grasp in the male characters that tell it, and with the support of further trusted individuals (doctors, men of science, etc) this tale further gains grounds to being a part of our reality.

There is a mystical nature that is reflected in the character of Dracula throughout the novel. This allows him to interact well within the social constructs of the time. While he is the hunter in a sense, the prey are so mystified and fascinated, as there is something drawing them closer to him. This is in line with the conclusion that we came

to in relation to Dracula's place within the idea of "mysterium tremendum.", Something akin to the metaphor of a moth being drawn to a flame, which mirrors his prey unable to resist being in his presence. There is an overlying elegance and homely manner that covers the hostile and violent nature that runs beneath it. Such as with characters like Gatsby, there is a mystery to their elegance and extravagance that sets them apart from the crowd, and beckons others to try and unravel the mystery.

I think that there is both a religious and an underlying sexual meaning for this. The author at the time was writing about the "others" that were immigrating, coming with their new ideas, religions etc. At this point in time, ethnocentrism was probably at a high point, so I wouldn't be surprised if by having Dracula only drink the blood of English women that he was romanticizing in some way the English people, or inadvertently putting it into his plot that the blood of the English was more revitalizing or "better." he can clearly be seen trying to state the dominance of the English in this way. In addition, Dracula needs the blood of English women to "survive" in one sense shows his dependence upon the English, which further shows the influence that the English have in this novel.

There is a sexual meaning to the fact that Dracula primarily preys upon and drinks the blood of women. Women in society at this time were not largely seen in any powerful sense, so they are open to these mystical powers and mind control more than society believes men would be at that time. They are easy prey, because of their lack of power both socially and physically at this point in time in society. As far as I am aware, most of the women that Dracula has turned that we know of are virgins, so there also could be a religious element buried well. At this point in time I don't think I have enough information to make that claim officially, but that might be something to

explore. In addition to this, when the women are turned, they use their sexual prowess to bring men into the fold. This adds to the sexual component of this, as Dracula builds a harem of “turned” women, which, in short, he maintains control over.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is one of the most well-known and influential texts when it comes to the realm of horror. Because of this I wanted to make sure to include it in my research as one of the foundational cornerstones of the monstrous. In addition this book has not only inspired so many films, it inspired one of the films that I am specifically beginning my research with; the 1931 film *Dracula* released by Universal Studios. There is so much within this short novel that has been taken and remade or reimagined, but yet the main themes of the book and of the monster that Stoker creates continues to live on not only in our imaginations, but in our creative culture as a whole.

Dracula directed by Tod Browning (1931)

In this 1930's rendition of the infamous novel by Bram Stoker, we open with the 'night of Nosferatu' as it is referred to in the film. This is just the beginning of a long line of empirical nature that colors the rest of the film. We are introduced to the main character through a carriage ride and his interactions with the locals.

Our first real glimpse at the monster or the man known as Dracula comes with the ways in which the local community responds to him. With the mention of the name count Dracula, we see a woman doing the sign of the cross. Overall, the general village population seems to be scared of the person referred to as Count Dracula. This inherently gives rise to the audience that something is off about this character although we are not yet introduced to the physical representation of this man until much later in

the film. The public opinion of the community is also how the audience is first introduced to the idea of the vampires.

The setting of this film is similar to the other Universal horror films and that it is set in a dark, misty and low lighted area. The setting of the prolific castle is set higher on the mountain tops, covered in mist with a dark sky. In many ways the castle provides a dark shape against the slightly gray and gloomy sky behind it. When the audience first sees the castle, it is within the context of the coffins in which the vampires sleep. Beams of light stream in from the setting sun and the rising moon. Suspense looms as audiences see a hand creeping out of one of the coffins.

The audience's first introduction to count, Dracula is against the stark basement of the castle. In the setting his pale, white face and black hair and cape stands out. The Harem of women in which he upkeeps is also present in other Moody colors, all in light gray colors which contrast to that of the count himself. As the audience is focus back on our protagonist, it should be noted that even the count's carriage speaks to a sort of antiquity with the design of it, and with the elegance of the castle itself

Upon arriving at the castle, this film goes silent as the viewer and our main character take in the enormity of this palace, and as he enters the estate, it seems to be all in stone and quite extravagant and design. Bats are all around the property as are other small creatures here and there. The count moves silently down the steps as almost it's creeping up behind the protagonist of our story. Dracula himself says very little, and it kept someone a mysterious creature, holding only a singular candle to lead our guest up the stairs. This is why Dracula is so prolific and is done time and time again in this time period. The way that they are construing this character to the audience is one in which he is not a comment on the world, but instead is this clear evil to be fought

against. At the time people were not looking to think, they were looking to escape. They did not want to ponder over commentary on how to live and ways in which the world could change, but instead wanted to take their minds off of their own suffering.

Night of the Living Dead directed by George A. Romero (1968)

Night of the Living Dead directed by George Romero and released in 1968 is known as one of the introductory films to the zombie genre as we know it. This film is quite fast-paced and covers a lot of ground in a short amount of time. It opens with a brother and sister visiting their parents grave and joking about the idea of a zombie epidemic popping up. As the two approach their mother's grave we soon find that the dead have indeed risen and the brother is quickly attacked and devoured as the sister runs for cover. It is this quick fight scene that throws the viewers into the zombie narrative that will entrance them for the remaining amount of the film. Barbara is set up as our protagonist but is seen as someone who even with the unrealistic nature of zombies fears them, leading us to root for this underdog character. Barbara runs from her brother's devoured body and we see other undead rising from the graves, abandoned caskets and bodies strewn across the graveyard. As the sister runs through fields and tries to find some semblance of help we realize that the town and the surrounding neighborhoods all seem to be abandoned. Family houses, farms and gas stations alike are all seen empty and stoic in the background.

Finally Barbara runs into someone who has not risen from the dead, whom we find out is called Ben, and upon meeting this person immediately breaks down into a Hysteria that is almost expected from women in films at this time. as these two unlikely characters bond together to deal with this onslaught of the undead we see our

protagonist make her first kill. As the film continues on we see the ways in which Humanity changes when faced with the severe consequences such as a zombie apocalypse

The reasoning behind the zombie apocalypse is noted at various points within the film; characters at one point refer to it being an outbreak from a prison or a chemical spill. however the actual reasoning behind the outbreak is unknown throughout the entirety of the film. However, we do get background on the other characters that we are introduced to and how this is not a small outbreak but one that has spanned quite an area. At one point in the film a TV program even airs that the outbreak is a mind altering illness which causes those who have recently died to come back. Some refer to it as judgment days while others simply label it as an illness.

Eventually Barbara and Ben find themselves in a house which they clear of zombies and then begin to use as their home base. shortly after they find that there are five other individuals in the basement which introduces a new conglomeration of people and a new dynamic to our character pool. The two protagonists are originally introduced to take charge and eventually begin boarding up the house as zombies begin to surround it. All the individuals prepare to defend themselves and this home base as zombies begin breaking through windows and pounding on locked doors.

It is in the midst of the film that viewers are privy to the true introduction to the zombie. We have seen previously that they are slow, are often seen stumbling and uncoordinated, and attack humans eating their flesh. As zombies attack the house we see that they often come and hoard, that they are afraid of Fire, and they have become increasingly strong. The mindless attitude of zombies is portrayed in the film as loved ones do not seem to recognize or associate with people they might have known when

they were alive. It also seems as if zombies have a strict goal in mind, although the particulars of that goal are unknown. zombies in the film are depicted as speechless, and in many cases it seems to be an animalistic de-evolution of humanity.

At the end of the film we see Barbara, our main protagonist escape as Ben, our secondary protagonist, is taken and eaten by a zombie. Eventually Barbara is found by a group of men who have somehow survived the apocalypse and is taken into their community. This is seemingly the last remnants of humanity and civilization as we know it. The film ends with Barbara and the group returning to the house where she had previously fought for her life. She finds that Ben has been turned into a zombie there, and that all the others in her group have died in various circumstances. She is the only one that has made it out alive.

While *Night of the Living Dead* is a cult classic in the zombie horror film genre it is definitely not the first time that zombies have come about. The idea of the zombie narrative is one that has been embedded in cultures around the world in addition to the monstrous for centuries. What is striking about zombies and the undead in general is the ways in which they flip between the living and the dead world. Not entirely alive but not dead either. It is this balancing act that sets them apart from others and that seems to Intrigue viewers and readers time and time again. In fact one author notes that “Undead names the zone of restless and perplexing activity from which monsters arrive, a gap in the fabric of the known world that opens a space neither real nor chimerical, a breach in which everything familiar loses its certainty...”(Cohen). It is in this gap of the known world that we see the monstrous, in particularly the undead both the zombie and the vampire emerge into our literature and our film. The zombie narrative took center stage at a time in the country's history when conformity was both expected and a threat.

The zombie at this time was seen as the ultimate form of conformity being brainless individuals with a specific goal in mind and acting with an almost group think mentality. However this is not how zombies were known before being introduced to pop culture and film. While the origins of the zombie might be unknown, some of our earliest accounts of it within folklore are seen in Haiti. “Zora Neale Hurston described the zombie as a body without soul.”(Cohen). This description is vague and does not entirely outline the ways in which zombies have come to represent themselves on our screens and in various narratives. Filmmakers and writers alike have added additional ideas and concepts to zombies that have become intrinsic with the name.

We can see the zombie emerge from the undead archetype that the vampire and Dracula initially outlined. What is interesting is that characters such as Dracula and the vampire have an individuality that sets them apart from others. Their characters are intrinsically inclined to have personalities and story lines that draw people in however “...zombies are a collective, a swarm. They do not own individualizing stories. They do not have personalities. They eat. They kill. They shamble. They suffer and they cause suffering. They are dirty, stinking and poorly dressed. They are indifferent to their own decay” (Cohen). So what is it that draws us to zombies then if it is not an individualization that connects them to audiences upon introduction? I argue that it is the diverse way in which zombies can be used as metaphors and within film to depict different scenarios and communities. “The zombie is a monster polyvalent enough to incorporate a multitude of fears, desires, traumas and hopes” (Cohen). This can be seen throughout various film examples and as we trace the evolution of this archetype through time and see how it is mutated, we can see how the zombie has come to

Encompass many different things and has shifted in order to remain relatable and even individualized to society today.

In part it is due to their lack of individualization that these monsters came about and still pervade within our society. Because we don't point them out as individuals and come to connect with them on a one-on-one basis they can easily be representative of a multitude of different ideas and experiences, well in some cases also playing the antagonists. zombies are the monsters through which humanity is able to present ideas about Humanity as a collective. We are able to speak about things which might be taboo, but in the case of the zombie and the lack of humanity and individualization it is so much less problematic and even accepted. In that we are able to explore thought patterns and ideas that might otherwise be considered untouchable. Zombies in this can "...present the single human collective about whom we can speak without hesitation in terms of determinative mental traits, communal bodily designators, and stereotyped characteristics. Zombies offer a permissible group thinking of the other" (Cohen). The anonymity that zombies provide in addition to the ways that we have seen them can be used to communicate different ideas and situations allow for them to adapt themselves to different genres and to continue to thrive within our popular culture and film today.

Fido directed by Andrew Currie (2007)

The movie opens in black and white, harkening to the classic monster and zombie films of the past. We are introduced to the origins of the zombies. Zombies had invaded humanity after a celestial event. In the resistance of the undead invaders, a company called Zomcom takes center stage marketing means of control and rehabilitation of

these individuals. Fences are built around communities, and with the use of a collar system, zombies are domesticated.

There is a topic on the building of more walls around the cities and building them higher in order to keep dangerous zombies out. This idea of walls being built and a physical separation between the two illustrates an 'us vs them' mentality that is seen in many a monster narrative. The difference between this and other narratives with this concept is that some of the zombies are next door neighbors, friends, and even family. There is a more personal connection and narrative to their story, which calls into question the humanity of the division and of the undead themselves. This idea of conflict in the overall narrative is also in the original branch of the undead and vampirism. Those who are turned are the neighbors and friends and family. In the original novel and in the Universal film we see our original protagonist become turned as well as the women he was to marry.

The colors in this film are overall bright, the one exception from the bright color palette of this 50's recreation is the zombies. These individuals are very much muted in tone. This falls in line with previous iterations of them, colored in dark blues, purple and green hues. The coloring of these characters immediately sets them aside from not only our other characters, but from society as a whole. This again reinforces the 'us vs them' theme that runs throughout the film.

As the audience is introduced to more and more of this world, it seems as if many of the zombies are being used for the purpose of laborers. Households have them as maids and servants, and they are used for more menial tasks. We see a change in the common zombie narrative of death and destruction when the household zombie, affectionately named Fido, ends up saving the boy of the family which he serves from

bullies. As previously mentioned in relation to other monster archetypes, the common visual introduction of the child and monster contrast is introduced but takes a different turn than that of the classic monster tale.

As the film progresses, we see Fido begin to really play a part in the family dynamic. He begins to serve as a helper to the mother, and an affection forms between the two. Fido also begins to support the son in a fatherly way, something that the actual father of the family is lacking in. In one scene in particular, we see Fido and the son washing a car and playing around. The mother comes out to bring them drinks and joins in the fun. As the father comes out to disrupt these interactions, he instead ruins the idea of family that was created. In the end as the father drives away to golf with the neighborhood dads, the mother and son reengage Fido in 'playing house' as the father watches from the backseat of a car.

Eventually, Fido is sent away for biting and killing a woman in the neighborhood, but not before a concrete connection between him, the son, and the mother is solidified with the rescue of the son and a burning of the two childhood bullies turned zombies. With the loss of Fido, the family dynamics struggle until the son attempts to break the zombie out of his confinement and bring him back to the family. At the end of this film we see the zombies becoming not only an integral part of the community and of society, but also holding a more intimate place in the family. Instead of being seen as merely workers or slaves for that matter, the zombies are now a part of the family and hold a place within the family dynamic. With this change the color palette drastically changes, and we see zombies now in lighter colors reflective of the idyllic environments with which they are a part of now.

This really reminds me of Guillermo Del Toro's take on the monster genre within the shape of water where instead of the monsters being seen as something scary they have instead then demystified, and domesticated. In this case the monsters are not necessarily those that we do not understand or recognize, but instead the monsters are people that we recognize very well. "...what we actually see on the screen as the monsters throughout most of the film are middle-class Americans, dressed in suits and ties, with unthinking unity of purpose and identity" (Scott).

In the 50s another war was being fought, the Cold War. One in which the enemy is not blatant or violent but is instead the unseen. It is times like this when a country is called to come together and individuals are called to conform to certain positions within that society and community in order for group mentality to be held. I propose that it is because of this fear of the other and of the underlying obsession with conformity in this time period that the zombie flick and the zombie genre predominantly comes out after this it becomes more and more popular as we see the zombie as a final and official form of conformity after all it is brainless and abides by a set list of rules in which it is ingrained. We can see this clearly in various zombie narratives: they want to eat brains they want to kill and they will not be stopped.

What We Do in the Shadows directed by Taika Waititi (2019, TV Series)

Running for 4 seasons, *What We Do in the Shadows* by Taika Waititi have captivated present day audiences. With its comedy and satirical introduction to a colorful cast of characters, it introduced a new face of vampirism to the undead archetype. These characters are consistent with the archetype in many of their traits. We see them sleep in coffins, profess that they are undead, drink the blood of humans and

even have a human as a familiar. What sets this apart from other projections of this archetype is the fact that they are set in the present day and many of their archaic fashions and habits are struggling to fit in with the modern world. It is this exploration of how centuries old vampires merge with our modern day that creates this beautiful rendition which has become a cult classic.

In this TV series there is even a new type of vampire introduced that is able to live in the present day, go out into the sunlight, and interact with humans normally. The catch is that this vampiric figure feeds on the energy of others instead of on what. This adds in an element of comedy and also notes and comments on the various ways in which energy and time is a form of currency.

The TV style and cinematography that is used in the end is somewhat what makes it popular is a documentary style of filmmaking. This all centers around genuine script writing and genuine experiences that are portrayed throughout the show. We see everyday life for these vampires and the ways that they deal with various events or situations thrown their way. In some ways you could see it as a type of fictional reality TV. The setting of the TV show is modern day, but the home that they occupy is very much of an almost Victorian style home. It is decorated with regalia from centuries past and each cast member has a unique coffin and room which they inhabit that reflects their own history as a vampire and how they fit within the vampiric archetype and community of their home. Even in modern day many of the characters continue to wear their own clothes from the time period. And while they do not have jobs they are responsible for watching over and turning others in the Staten Island, New York area.

They are seemingly out of place in the real world where they are severely at a disadvantage. We see them deal with so many modern things and struggle with them.

Even when it comes to preying on humans. This struggle that we see in them from everyday things not only takes away the mysterium tremendum and the horrific part of the archetype but instead turns them into something that is comedic and relatable to an everyday person. Formerly only done through cartoons, doing it for an adult style TV show is a new mutation within the archetype, using the key features of it to create a new perception for audiences.

This is a wonderful example of what current horror films look like, or at least one subsection of them. The show is entirely comedy based, yet the characters themselves mimic the terrifying vampires that are known to be prolific and classic in the realm of movie monsters. This is a breakdown of the normal majesty that surrounds the character of a vampire, and instead sets them within the reality that we all know. Mixing these two results in a variety of different outcomes, one of which is humor. This show also uses the introduction of the documentary style of filming, commonly associated with the hit series *The Office* to further connect it to mainstream audiences and culture.

Jekyll and Hye: Two Faced

Originally in my research I had pegged this part of Stephen King's archetype on the more animalistic side of humanity and while that does ring true, I realized that King more readily focuses on the two faced nature that characters such as *Jekyll and Hyde* present. While there are few movies made about this topic, the archetype of the Werewolf is one in which this two-facedness is present and the monster genre took to this character like match to a fuse. I intend to start my discussion with the novel *Jekyll and Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson and then draw connections to the wolfman

narrative and the ways in which this is reflective of the two-faced nature that Stephen King so readily draws upon in his analysis of the monstrous archetypes.

...

Jekyll and Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson (1886)

The duality seen when it comes to accepting responsibility and blame within the British Empire both in the local and national sectors can be seen in parallel with *Jekyll and Hyde*, a novel written by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1885. Within this novel, we see the two sides of a character struggle to find an equilibrium in their shared existence. In most cases when one believes that they are not in the wrong, they assume they are good people and that their actions do not impact that innate goodness. In some sense, it reflects this line that Dr. Jekyll mentions to Mr. Utterson within the context of the novel: “the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr. Hyde” (pg 777). While one may hope that they can be rid of these actions, and this dual person in effect, it is almost impossible to divide an action from its person, just as it is to divide an action from its country. Just as Dr. Jekyll found that the divide between him and Mr. Hyde was not all that he thought and that “man is not truly one, but truly two” (pg 799), each individual has to realize that their actions and reactions are in fact parts of them, no matter if they are considered good or bad. Dr. Jekyll struggles with this as we see him contemplate:

If each... [identity] could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin, and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his outward path, doing the good things in which he

found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of his extraneous evil (pg 799-800).

When one does something that is not characteristically in line with how society views them, the same exploration takes place. No one ever would like to own up to their deeds, especially if these actions hurt or hinder another individual or group. In connection to this, those good actions make them good people, and in that there is no sense of shame or responsibility for the effects of those actions. It is as Dr. Jekyll puts it at the end of his novel: “but the situation was apart from ordinary laws, and insidiously relaxed the grasp of consciousness. It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty” (802-803). When one views themselves at a distance to the actions that they commit, one in essence creates two personalities that struggle to each find the lime light: “It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together— that in the agonised womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling” (pg 799-800).

Within *Jekyll and Hyde* the duality depicted is that of a power that refuses to take responsibility for its actions and those that are left in the wake of the destruction. They showcase the tension and duality that surfaced during the Victorian era and in some ways continue to permeate our society even today. The resistance of an individual, community, or national power to take responsibility for their actions still is an issue at hand today, particularly within our current political and social climate. Responsibility is scary, just as *Jekyll and Hyde* iterate, but it is needed, and without it, those in power are allowed to operate outside the lines.

In King's book *Danse Macabre*, he references this classic monster story as part of the basis of one of his three monster archetypes. As Influential as this text is for King, I thought it important to include it within my own research. As an English major it is a text that I'm very familiar with and one that I have read many times throughout the course of my studies here at the University of Northern Iowa. I hope to be able to take a closer look at this text while looking at adaptations of it in the world of film, recognizing how the ideas presented in the original text have supported an entirely new archetype of monster. I also believe that this text highlights a lot of the themes that come up time and time again when looking at what humanity views as monstrous.

Working off of the two-facedness that Jekyll and Hyde offers, one can immediately form a link between this and the animalistic storyline of the werewolf. seen in various cultures around the world the idea of an animalistic nature existing within man and coming out in the expression of a physical transformation is one which I believe encapsulates this two-sidedness of humanity to an extreme. While films have been made surrounding the Jekyll and Hyde narrative I felt that the werewolf storyline gave better light to the two-sidedness and fell more in line with the monstrous archetypes and film collections with which I wanted to look at. It can be seen throughout our timeline that werewolf literature and narratives are not as well known or as commonly distributed as other story lines discussed within this thesis. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* are widely circulated texts which are used in education still to this day. werewolf narratives on the other hand are not as widely circulated or as widely taught. One author notes this as they write that "...werewolf literature has received neither the attention nor the widespread distribution accorded Bram Stoker's and Mary Shelley's fantastic beings. This checkered literary history may

at least partially account for the fact that the werewolf is the last of the "big four" to have made its way into production for the filmgoing audience” not only does this author explore the ways in which werewolf narratives have been kept out of wider circulation, but how that has affected the ways in which they have been taken into film and media (Craig). As mentioned, *The Wolfman* was one of the last films to be made by Universal within their big monster release of independent films focused primarily on a specific monstrous character. Both *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* were released prior to the *Wolfman*, although the *Wolfman* as with both of the Prior films have led to various adaptations and mutations leading to the present day.

While werewolf narratives have been around for a while. The ways in which these narratives are constructed and the specifics of the werewolf differ from place to place. in one article werewolves are described as “... a man or woman who, either voluntarily or involuntarily, is supernaturally transformed into the shape of a wolf and endowed with all the physical characteristics of that animal—a shaggy covering of fur, glowing eyes, long canine teeth, and razor-sharp claws...”(Craig). I believe that most of these characteristics we intrinsically align with the werewolf because it is what has shown up and film iterations of this character. an important part of this identity to note is that “ ... the transformation may occur either voluntarily or involuntarily, for most of the mainline cinematic depictions of werewolves result from the film's focal character being bitten by another werewolf”(Craig). The idea of one turning into a werewolf after being bitten is not one that we see streamlined in previous narratives of the werewolf but instead was introduced in the Universal film and continued to live on in werewolf narratives even until today. The idea that the transformation occurred involuntarily

during a full moon is another way in which film and media has impacted the werewolf narrative and made a certain characteristic commonplace.

When it comes to werewolves in media we see a common through line where a werewolf is introduced first through the bite of another and where the focal point becomes a werewolf being bitten by an already existing werewolf. There is very little backstory or origin story to the werewolf myth that is presented in many film adaptations and instead viewers are thrown right into the narrative from the point of bite. This can be seen in the 1930s film released by Universal. In addition to that this Universal film also set a standard for later werewolf films to come. These 'rules' are now seemingly commonplace in a variety of werewolf lore and fiction that we see on screen or in literature. Some of these rules that are seen, are listed below:

1. Subduing a werewolf with something made of silver (such as a silver bullet).
2. The transference of this 'curse' from person to person.
3. The sign of the pentagram being intrinsically linked to the werewolf, showing who carries the curse and who will be the next victim.
4. The werewolves aversion to wolfbane.
5. The transition to a werewolf during a full moon.

(Craig)

As we dive into werewolf film and literature I ask that you keep these in mind, and attempt to view the ways in which the werewolf was introduced to the realm of film as an addition to the Jekyll and Hyde two-facedness of humanity. The animalistic and the humanistic living side by side within a singular person, only coming out at specific circumstances and can be conveyed as a curse sometimes comes as a gift.

Wolfman Directed by George Waggner (1941)

The movie opens up with a paragraph describing lycanthropy, as well as associating it to a castle called Talbot castle. I have witnessed this in other films where the idea of the monster is explained by a character or other aspect of the film in order for the audience to have a full understanding of the concepts in which they are about to watch. As with the other Universal films made at this time, The film is all in black and white. Most of our settings are hilly, covered with leafless trees, and a seemingly never absent fog. The only space in which this is not pertinent is in the city where we only see characters for a certain amount of time. Besides the introduction explaining lycanthropy, the audience's first introduction to the idea of the werewolf comes when our protagonist confronts his new love interest. It is there that he finds a cane. One in which has the head of a wolf inscribed on the silver handle along with a pentagram on its hilt. It is during the following conversation that the love interest further explains the myth of the werewolf to both the protagonist and to the audience. The film associates werewolves with a pentagram and as the story goes werewolves are able to see pentagrams in the palms of their next victims.

Shortly after this introduction to the love interest and the idea of werewolves that the trope of the traveling nomad is also introduced to the film leading viewers to assume an association between the wild tales told previously and this other group that has now entered into modern society. The fortune teller within this group during a session sees a pentagram in the palm of a woman that the protagonist has brought with him along with the love interest to their caravans. After this action is quickly set in motion and the audience is introduced to the werewolf first by a howling in the distance and a woman

scream. viewers see the woman being attacked by what seems to be a large dog as our protagonist comes to help; he beats the dog with the cane previously bought but has appeared to be bitten by the beast.

In the morning news says that the woman was attacked by a large animal and her jugular was severed, in addition to this authorities found the nomad man previously giving fortunes to the community dead and beaten to death. When our protagonist tries to say that he had attacked a large animal and shows his wounds there is nothing there to show.

We didn't see our main character go into a panic, looking at himself in the mirror, and trying to figure out if he is, indeed turning to a wolf figure himself just crazy. What he instead finds as excessive hair girls on his legs as he realizes the transformation is set to begin. We just see the feet of this creature as they move along the floor. There is a transition from the feet of these creatures on the floor of his house to in the woods, and it is there that we see the wolfman more human, like a thin beast, but covered in hair, and slowly adopting the wolf-like sensibilities. In the darkness of the forest, we hear lone howls as a precursor to the beast's appearance. Then we see the beast take down multiple victims as more howling sounds in the distance. As morning comes audiences are encouraged to follow along as the camera follows muddy footprints, leading from the crime scene back to the castle where the protagonist is staying.

There is a talk by one of the inspectors about how there is good and evil, and every man's soul, and the evil takes the shape of an animal, such as in Jekyll and Hyde with the two faces of humanity. This is also a play off of that idea as well. The character then tries to tell others that he is the werewolf, and that he, in fact killed those people, but they are not at the point to believe him, and refuse to believe that a man could turn

into a wolf, but that instead, something else has occurred. After attempting and failing to turn himself into the police he then goes to visit his love interest throwing pebbles at her window such as Romeo did to Juliet. It is there that he then senses a pentagram in the palm of his lover's hand, and asks his father to tie him up in the hopes that he will not harm anyone that coming night. Even though he is tied up, the wolfman does escape, and his lover comes to find him in the fog; however, in that time he ends up coming face-to-face with his father, who attacked him with the cane and killed him.

An American Werewolf in London Directed by John Landis (1981)

This film opens with two explorers in the open lands of rural England. Our setting encompasses the vastness of rural England with fog and dark Rolling Hills in the background of a dark green and blue landscape. Looking to hike with an England that eventually lands on a small pub that they enter. Within the pub it is clear that they are outsiders and audiences first are introduced to the pentagram that lines the wall and then to the odd community members that warn them not to go out after dark. The association between the pentagram and the werewolf is only really done within the Universal films and it's not very often seen in werewolf lore. I do find it interesting that there is a concrete connection between this film and our original starting point, even though there are many film adaptations that lie in between the two.

After leaving the pub, characters are then sent out into the dark and misty night with slight trepidation from those in the pub in a warning to stay on the road. The monster first is introduced with a howl heard sounding over the moors. While our characters do see the monster physically, the audience is not yet privy to the sight.

Then, out of nowhere, the monster attacks, one of the men perishes while the other is badly ruined. In a blurry shot amid the darkness of the moor, we see the werewolf being taken down by a shot. As ____ looks over in the grass he comes face to face with not that of a wolf, but of an older dying man. Audiences are then quickly transitioned to a hospital as our surviving protagonist is seen mid dream, visions of running as a wolf haunting his mind.

As the film continues on, it is the psychological nature of the man that comes into question as he mentions time and time again the presence of a large wolf during the attack. This converges into our protagonist seeing his deceased friend, with a tale of a werewolf and a warning of more death to come.

The transition from man to wolf and the cosmetic makeup of this movie during that transformation is really what is remarkable about this film. At the time, it was a truly revolutionary craft to make the transition from man to beast so clean. We see our protagonist pacing the apartment of his lover as the full moon begins to rise. Slowly, his hands begin to elongate into claws and hair begins to accumulate all over his body. Viewers are privy to the full transformation this time, unlike its Universal precursor. As he sprawls over the carpeted floor of the living room, his back and legs move into an animalistic formation as the wolf-like body begins to take shape.

Shortly after this transformation, we are able to see this werewolf kill its first victims, still keeping in the shadows. Once he wakes up, and finally realizes what he has done, our protagonist attempts to turn himself in, but to no avail. Such is the disbelief in the Original film, so is there an inability to believe in this one. The psychopathy of the condition continued to worsen as he is again visited not only by his dead companion but those he tore apart the night before. This turn of events causes him to revert to his

animalistic form as the giant creature mauls everyone in the theater, precluding his escape. As he reaches the streets in broad daylight, mass paranoid begins to spread as he mauls person after person. Eventually he is found backed into the corner of an alley. His love interest rushes to the scene, trying to talk him down to no avail. As he lunges to attack her, he is shot and the wolf turns back into the man.

Us Directed by Jordan Peele (2019)

A more recent horror film, *Us* outlines a different type of archetype than those that I originally started researching. In some sense this is a deviation, a mutation, the original archetypes that are outlined by Stephen King. There is a sense of the other, obviously in this plot, but the others are not monstrous, or take on the form of some animal, but instead are twins staring back at us as though we are looking in a mirror. Released in 2019, this film took the horror genre by storm. The film opens with an oddly terrifying backstory of another world existing below ours and which we have twins, referred to as 'Tethered' which live out our lives below the surface. Vaguely referred to as a failed scientific experiment dealing with the division of Souls and lives into two separate human bodies, *Us* takes on characteristics of both a sort of Frankenstein narrative in addition to the two-facedness that we see in the Jekyll and Hyde archetype. Because of the way in which the two-facedness plays such a prominent role in this film I wanted to look more into that side of this narrative than any other.

The film opens with our protagonist reliving parts of her childhood as she revisits the beach in which the introductory scene first takes place and she comes face to face

with her tethered individual. Now she has a husband and a family and seemingly has grown up all right, however as the film continues on the audience is introduced to her Tethered in addition to that of all of her family members. What continues is a face off of each family member with their Tethered each one struggling to survive and live in the world above. What is soon thought to be a singular occurrence ends up being a nationwide phenomenon entitled “Hands Across America.” All of the Tethered that had lived below are coming out and killing the versions of them living in the world above hoping to replace them.

The idea of looking at a different version of oneself and coming face-to-face with it is in essence what the two-facedness portrayed in Jekyll and Hyde is all about. There are two sides to humanity within this film, one which has been able to prosper and live freely on the world above and one which is an abandoned experiment forced to live out the actions of their counterpart and the world built for them below. Those living in the outside world are intrinsically accepted into society and live life within the societal bounds set for them. Those living in the below are not privy to these societal bounds and live, act, and perceive the world according to a different set of rules. Just as the more animalistic side of humanity is viewed as an ‘other’ and as negative, so are the Tethered viewed by those in the world above.

What is interesting in this film is as the two families battle one another we see the animalistic and violent natures attributed with this other side of humanity come out in the family that we are initially introduced to that lives in the above world. It calls to mind what happens to individuals and to humanity in general when faced with specific circumstances and experiences. I also think that it reminds us that sometimes our greatest enemies are ourselves and that humanity does have a double-sided nature to it.

humanity is not intrinsically good and one singular person cannot be either. There are always two sides to a coin and each person has those characteristics within themselves. It is choosing when they come out or how they come out where we are able to exist within the confines of societal expectations. What happens though when Society collapses and we are forced to act on our own. It is here in these moments when our Mr. Hyde comes out.

Introduction of Purely Animalistic Monsters

Creature from the Black Lagoon Directed by Jack Arnold (1954)

With this film comes the introduction of the “fish person” into the genre of horror, as well as film in general. This figure of a fish man is seen again in *Hellboy*, and in the more recently-released film *Shape of Water*. It is the unknown and the animalistic that is at the center of this monstrous creature, themes that continue to persist throughout history in association with the monstrous. I find this particular monster very interesting because of the way in which it differs from the others. In many cases, monsters are inspired by some sort of literature, and while I am sure there is a background of literature, myth, and legend to this creature, it is not as familiar to me as many of the other fantastical creatures that have been turned into the subjects of our horror films. Unlike Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, there is not a specific literature that we can link this monster and creature to. Instead it arises out of a fascination with turning the animalistic into a type of monstrous creature. We see the same type of affiliation between animals and the monstrous in creatures such as King Kong, Godzilla, and others.

Originally released in 1954 by Universal Studios *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* explores a scientific expedition to the Amazon stemming from the discovery of prehistoric bones and footprints in the lagoon area. What the expedition team then comes to find is a creature living within the Amazon that is neither human nor animal, well having two characteristics of an animal the build of this creature seems to be more human than anything else. This calls into account The evolutionary track of humanity and begs the question what all is out there and the unknown. Throughout the film they refer to this creature as a 'Gil-man' that lives in the lagoon beside the river where the footprint was originally found. Eventually the storyline evolves into a King Kong narrative and the creature falls in love with a female scientist during her time there. This creates an entirely new dynamic within the film that is explored as the monster falls in love with a human woman (Banner).

Released in the midst of the Cold War the *Creature from the Black Lagoon* tends to symbolize many things. The first idea that comes to mind is that the creature is the outcome of some type of radiation within the area. This same idea of monster creation is seen in various other films in and out of the horror genre, but outlines the way in which the 'other' is pervading an environment seemingly far outside of their reach. Because of the odd nature of this creature and the way and which it exists both in the animalistic and human realm, it is not conforming to a specific definition and therefore is othered within the context of the film itself. One scholar notes that "*The Creature from the Black Lagoon* was one of many monsters that menaced humans in the science fiction films of the 1950s. Scholars have interpreted those monsters as symbolizing Cold War fears: of Communism, homosexuality, the African American rebellion, male anxiety, and, above all, nuclear destruction (Banner). Not only does the creature serve as a symbol of what

could happen with the introduction of radiation and other Results of nuclear war, but also has become representative of various different fears during the time of its release.

Shape of Water Directed by Guillermo Del Toro (2021)

This movie directed by Guillermo del Toro takes direct inspiration from *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*. The film that he creates is a reimagined retelling of the narrative set In 1962 Baltimore. This change in location gives the film a more political undertone in combination with the fact that the creature has now been captured, and is in the hands of the government.

The animal, reminiscent of the creature from the original film, is a scaled creature from South America (specifically from the Amazon). Throughout the film it is referred to as 'the asset' or 'the Abomination' interchangeably. The creature is known to have two breathing systems and although it stands like a man it does have gills like a fish. This is the classical mix of man and fish that we see in the original 1930s film. Prior to Guillermo del Toro's rendition, this particular creature has not seen much Fame in the film industry, but somehow has continued to thrive underneath the surface as secondary characters or plot points until becoming the protagonist of the shape of water.

Dissimilar to the original Universal film, the color dynamic of the entire film plays a key role in submerging the audience in the setting of this film. The color of both setting and characters lives in the realm of mainly muted tones and relies heavily on greens and blues. Not only does the setting take on this color scheme, but so do the characters of the film as well. Covering everything from the government buildings to the costumes in a color swatch of the Lagoon. In an ode to old Hollywood Romance films

and a call back to the original inspiration, *Creature of the Black Lagoon*, Del Toro incorporates a black and white dream sequence. The sequence is both reminiscent of old Hollywood films and a call to the classic romance between the creature and our main character. In addition it is also a call back to Universal films' *Creature from the Black Lagoon* set entirely within black and white.

Adding a new layer to the story we see the monster and our main character being able to communicate with one another not only through the use of body language but through some small use of sign language as well. Our main character is mute and unable to speak similar to that of the monster and the audience immediately connects the two to one another both as silenced individuals, and both being silenced by society. Within the film the monster and the main character use ASL with one another that is how they associate with one another and communicate

As the film progresses, we find that the government is using the monster as an experimentation to create unique weapons by studying its DNA structure and adaptations. (*Similar in theory to what I am conducting with this thesis, although I promise no weapons will come of our this*) From the beginning to the end of the film, the audience can clearly see that this creature is painted unlike its companion, the *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, in the light of a victim. We see it caged, experimented on, and entrapped. The Creature very rarely is shown in a violent manner throughout the film, further taking the Creature out of the previously determined monster archetype.

The monster appears as more a thing of wonder than anything else to the audience. But Del Toro's design is quickly connected to the audience. When watching the film we feel bad for the creature, and seemingly this is another underdog tale that

grabs our attention. To help this conception of the creature as more like humanity or what would you humanity be it comes into conflict with many of the other characters within the film. In comparison to the other characters in the film, mainly the other humans, this creature is not really considered the true monster. Viewers instead see the monstrous qualities that are applied to the creature placed instead in the hands of humanity. Monsters now are used to showcase the ugly of humanity over time. The usage of the monster has flipped in our media, the morals of our scary bedtime stories, the bad guys; are the people like you and me

VI. Conclusion

Within the 30s, the Great Depression hit and audiences were looking for an escape from their own lives as they were standing in line for soup kitchens, pieces of bread, and cups of sugar. They wanted something so vastly different from the world that they were living in that they escaped to the movies to find this yearning. That is why many movies of the 30s (*with these monster movies*) we see so blatantly that they are different from the world that is surrounding them. Today we see more of a connection between film and the world that we are living in and commonly it is a reflection, if not a conversation, on the way that society and our culture is acting. At this time though escapism was popular and these films reflect that. This is partially why the monsters that we see on screen are so different from the people that are watching it.

That is why I believe some of the characteristics of these monsters have so hugely shifted away from what was originally shown in the 1930s. Not only are we discussing more in these films, but they are seen as a commentary and an opportunity for discussion about the world that we live in. The experiences that we have in the culture

that is being created every day by our communities. The monsters are no longer purely capable of violence because it is inherent in their nature, but we see the backstories of our villains and the ways in which they are shaped either by nature or nurture to act in particular patterns.

In our media today, we witness monsters humanized and instead of providing an escapism for audiences, they aid them in asking questions of themselves or providing commentary for situations and events that may be more difficult to discuss in a public sector. The way that society functions and thinks now allows us to dive deeper into the back stories of the villain archetype as well as these various monster archetypes. Not only do we see them blatantly as the monsters that they have been defined as, but we see the backstories in which they become these monsters. In many of the more recent films that I've looked at this seems to be true as the backstory to the character makes them likable and human and gives them a sense of humanity and connection to the audience that was simply not there before.

As previously mentioned in the films of the 30s and some other earlier films the monster is simply that violence and monstrous actions are simply ingrained in its nature. Its own existence is set upon the fact that it is a villain and it is evil. Now in our films we see the idea that evil is not innate but instead it is taught and nurtured. We call into question how people become evil and what evil is in our society and how it comes out in various forms. I think that the evolution of the monster from a creature to a human is one that speaks to our history, our culture, and the growth of our society as a whole.

VII. Resources

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