



# Horror films and the Monsters within

By Steven Colonero



# Origins

- Many horror films are based on classic horror literature
- Universal became the #1 studio for horror films
- Dracula and Frankenstein both released in 1931 express the history of the given time



# Frankenstein (1931)

- Based on Mary Shelley's Classic novel
- Created controversy over this scene
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MA9opHsLACK>  
(little girl dies)
- The film questions who is the real monster in the film, the monster or Dr. Frankenstein?
- Relation between the Monster and African Americans during the Civil war?





# Dracula (1931)



- Produced by Universal in 1931
- Film depicts a sophisticated male who sucks the blood of those less fortunate than him
- Obvious connection to the given time in history during the great depression
- Clip  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjDfOAhtWwo&list=PL68036115B288319E>

# Cat People (1942)



- Released by RKO studios and Produced by Val Lewton a famous horror film producer
- The film flirts with the line of monster and human never actually showing the monster or human kill anyone. This can be a reflection of what is happening overseas during the war.
- The classic pool scene using shadow and noises instead of showing anything is was actually due to the low budget of the film
- [Clip](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfbGJrAVWUo) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfbGJrAVWUo>



# Social Changes in 60s/70s

- Race riots began in early 1960s over 400 African Americans were arrested in Harlem
- Troops deployed to Vietnam in 62
- Serial Killer Ed Gein is and later tried in 68 the inspiration to many horror films such as Psycho, Texas Chainsaw, and The Silence of the Lambs
- Manson Murders in 1969 shocked American
- Reflected in horror films as these monsters are now psychotic human individuals.





# The Slasher

- Psycho seen as the first slasher film along with 1974 film “Black Christmas”
- The monster is now a knife crazed person reflecting the changing times and the horrors that American is facing
- Many are known for their over the top violence seen as a reflection of the violence in America at that time
- Suspiria (1977) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwRG2qpEwl4>



# The 80s

- Social uproar began in the early 80s when the AIDS epidemic hit America
- Friday the 13th (1980) and other similar horror films are seen as a statement against sexual promiscuity. Teenagers being sexual active who are killed as a result, the virgin lives.





# The 90s and Beyond

- Horror films begin to self reflect
- Scream The rules - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-q-AWD\\_8AY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-q-AWD_8AY)

Special effects begin to take hold of audiences as a result audiences expect more realism in their films thus found footage and other forms of horror become popular

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ky2p76AKSs>



# Conclusion

- Horror films do not get the respect that they deserve
- Many horror films have political and social messages that appeal to the masses
- They use these monsters as a way to convey a message
- “ At their core, monsters in horror movies and horror literature are personifications of the fears of humanity.”  
Vincent Poupard
- Next time you watch a horror movie or read a horror novel, think what is that monster supposed to represent and what does it say about the society we live in.

# References

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