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Some-ness in No-When: Queer Temporalities in the Horror Genre

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SOME-NESS IN NO-WHEN: QUEER TEMPORALITIES IN THE HORROR GENRE

A thesis submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University
In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

In
English
by

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Approved by

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ABSTRACT

In my research, I question why heteronormative society is afraid of the elements of horror films that are inherently queer. My focus is on temporal understandings of horror through the concepts of queer time, as theorized by Jack Halberstam and the theory of the abject, as presented by Julia Kristeva. I examine the relationship between queer time and heteronormative time. The abject serves as the return of time without identity or defined by binaries. Queer time is the time that will destroy heteronormative time's conception of itself. This then relates to the horror that is created by the queering of time through the breaking down the binaries that hold together normative society as the time in which queer subjects exist is also in a time in which heteronormativity exists. I will apply the theory of queer time to the vampire films *Bram Stokers Dracula* (1992), *The Hunger* (1983), and *Let the Right One In* (2008); the ghost films *The Conjuring* (2013), *The Others* (2001), and *Insidious* (2010); and lastly, I will look at the slasher films *A Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), *Psycho* (1960), and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984). The characters in these films exist outside of the boundaries of heteronormative time or they queer the present to create a place for the past to haunt the present. Queer time is a construction of time that does not depend on markers of heterosexuality to exist. Instead, queer time exists outside of binaries, allowing for the deconstruction of the social constructions put in place by a heteronormative majority. Horror as a genre queers time; therefore, the deconstruction of the conception of time becomes what the heteronormative audience fears.

CHAPTER 1

An Introduction: Queer Theory and Horror Film

Horror film and the criticism that surrounds it often focuses on the human body. Horror uses monstrous forms and mutilation to elicit a response of panic from the viewer. Linda Williams, in “Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess,” describes horror film as a genre of excess, as it brings the feeling of fear from the screen to the physical body of the viewer. Williams states, “The body of the spectator is caught up in an almost involuntary mimicry of the emotion or sensation of the body on the screen” (270). One of the genre’s main techniques is to place the viewer in the perspectives of both the victim and the perpetrator. Through point of view shots, the audience can see from the eyes of both the victim and the killer. By swapping between the point of view of the perpetrator and the victim, the audience is forced to imagine themselves as both capable of committing the acts of the perpetrator as well as the potentiality of being the victim. Horror puts a focus on the body of the audience members because the audience, while watching, is forced to feel and imagine that they are both the victim and the killer. The lines between viewership and the viewer’s physical body are blurred. While the perspective may switch, the focus maintains on the body and how the viewer feels while watching.

When a character is hiding from the killer on screen, we, the audience, feel our breath catch in our throats. When the victim is found, we jump and gasp as though we ourselves have been found. The switch of the point of view to the perpetrator happens usually during the actual killing of the victim. As we watch, captivated, some of us cover our eyes, and others jump back in fear, while some of us laugh. This evidence maintains that horror is a body-centered genre not only in the subject matter but also in its effect on the audience.

The genre of horror not only implicates the viewer's body but also sexual desire. Horror film is often viewed through the lens of queerness because of the body-centered conventions employed. Horror film is a genre with characters who are often coded as or depicted as openly queer. Queer is not necessarily a specific sexuality or person; it is an umbrella term for anything non-normative. This assumption is mainly focused on the bodies of those in horror film. The characters who are shown as non-normative often do not fit into heteronormative society and therefore can be labeled queer. These bodies and desires manifest themselves in several different ways. The bodies of the characters are often non-normative and therefore deemed monstrous. One of the best-known representations of both queer bodies and desire is the mad scientist subgenre. The mad scientist simultaneously embodies queer desire through the desire to create life, while also creating a queer body through the same vein. While I will not be covering mad scientists in my subsequent chapters, I feel as though their representation fully encompasses concepts of the queer body and queer desire.

Mad scientists are often depicted as men obsessed with creating life. This life, however, is not created through sexual procreation. This life is often pieced together from parts of others and brought to volition through homo-social desire and electricity. Rhona Berenstein, author of *Attack of the Leading Ladies* states, "Mad-doctor movies, therefore, are not only male creation fantasy— consider their mothering roles— they are also about anxieties concerning the male body and male bonding" (123). This interpretation of the mad scientist movie invites the option for a queer interpretation of not only the mad scientist's desire, but the queer interpretation of the creation's body.

One of the most memorable mad scientists is Dr. Frank N. Furter in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975). *Rocky Horror* does not hide the queer subtext that other mad scientist films

may skirt around. *Rocky Horror* exemplifies the idea of the queer desire that the scientist must have in order to have the want to create a new life. When a scientist is creating new life, he is often taking the place of a mother and, therefore the female body, according to Berenstein. While the desire to create life comes from queer desire, the actual process of creating life metaphorically queers the character of the scientists. If we go back to the example of Frank N. Furter, he is the physical embodiment of the queer subtext in the mad scientist film. He is obviously male with a hairy chest and masculine features. However, the first time that the audience is introduced to him, he is wearing a corset, fishnets, and high heels. Frank N. Furter then becomes the representation of both sexes by adorning the dress of a woman with the body of a man and procreating with one's self. This clothing is used as a means of explanation for the femininity that is desired by the scientist for the ability to create life, which then leads to the life that the scientist creates without a partner and without coitus.

The most famous of mad-scientist films is *Frankenstein* (1931), in which a mad doctor wishes to create life through the reanimation of the dead. It is interesting that Dr. Frankenstein is not interested in the bodies of those he uses to construct his monster until after they have died. This fascination with death denotes that it is not the creation of life that matters to the scientist but the ability to beat death, to defy God, to create life despite having no female counterpart. Berenstein makes note that these men are physicians who have no interest in healing the sick but are obsessed with bringing the dead back to life (122). This life, however, is not a body that was previously deceased, but a cluster of body parts scavenged from other bodies and placed together as a means to create an entirely new person with a consciousness. Frankenstein's creation is often called the monster. The creation of the monster ties back into the previous definition given to the queer body, which is any body not conforming to social norms, described as monstrous or

grotesque. The queer body is deemed to be these things because it poses a threat to heteronormative society. The queer body does not conform to the prescribed “truths” of heterosexuality and instead demands to be accepted as it exists. The heteronormative majority often demonizes those who do not conform, therefore creating the monstrosity of the queer body. Specifically, in *Frankenstein*, the person created is called “Frankenstein’s monster.” The creation is defined as a monster because of its human-esque body; however, it is not a child that is created but a full grown adult male. The monster is queer because he is singular and plural simultaneously.

When a mad scientist wants to create life, he is often not aiming to create an infant. The desire to create life that is fully grown speaks to the interest of the scientist in maintaining a homosocial bond. Rather than raise a child, he wants to raise a sexual object upon whom he can project his homoerotic desires. In lieu of creating life with a woman, whose role it is to grow that life, he would rather maintain full power and control, creating life on his own. Arguably this body is queer not just because it is created by a man without a woman but also because of the desire that prompts the creation in the first place. The mad scientist is placing all of his homoerotic desires onto the creation. The queerness of the scientist’s body transfers to his creation, predisposing it to queerness. The act of creating a queer body allows for the mad scientist to explore non-normative desire without explicitly engaging in non-normative sex.

The queering of the traditionally male scientist’s body interpreted as a desire to be female, or at least one that encompasses female traits, then leads to another interpretation. The scientist does not just seek to embody woman but to replace her. Therefore, the mad scientist would also encompass female heterosexual desire. The scientist projects his own queer desire onto his creation, giving an explanation as to why the scientist would be more interested in

creating a full grown adult man instead of creating a child. For the mad scientist, the desire to create life does not stem from a place of parental desire, but from a homoerotic-homosocial desire. He needs to create a life that he feels is comparable to his own, creating a monstrous mate for the monstrous self. Therefore, the female aspect must be left out. Subtracting woman in the creation of life, as depicted in *Rocky Horror*, is the fruit of queer desire being literally brought to life.

Several sub-genres of horror, including the slasher film, utilize aspects of the body in order to carry forward narratives. One of the most notable slasher films that interacts with queer bodies is *Psycho* (1960). Examining the fluctuations that exist within Norman's gender expression, Alexander Doty argues that Norman Bates isn't homosexual at all but exists somewhere between the margins of the binary between homo and heterosexuality. Doty's interpretation of *Psycho* allows for an understanding of Norman's body as being non-normative and therefore queer. The queerness of Norman Bates, when not limited to his sexuality, can be explored further with the evidence that throughout the film he commits his murders while dressed as his mother. Norman undergoes a transformation when he commits his murders. Norman is no longer the soft-spoken man that the audience is familiar with. Norman takes on the persona of his mother, dressing in her clothing and wearing a wig tied into a neat bun the same way her corpse wears her hair. The queerness of Norman's gender expression as cross-dresser invites the interpretation that Norman could be interpreted as trans. Because Norman can be argued as trans, this positions his body as queer, a body that does not align with heteronormative society's definition of what is an acceptable gender expression.

One of the most popular forms of the monstrous body is the vampire. Vampires are human-like in appearance, with the ability to blend into society virtually undetected. However,

vampires are relegated to the realm of night. Without being able to traverse into daylight, vampires already become non-normative. If they are examined a little more closely, their bodies are not as human as they may at first appear. Traditional Western vampires have pale skin that burns instantly when exposed to the light of the sun. They are almost always depicted as having sharply pointed fangs that they can hide behind clasped lips. Finally, their eyes are frequently depicted as red, not an eye color naturally found among humans. These features only begin to scratch the surface of their non-normative existence. One of the most well-known vampires is, of course, Dracula.

Critic Robin Wood discusses the sexuality of Dracula in his article “Burying the Undead.” Wood gives several examples of the sexual nature of the actions taking place within both the novel and multiple film versions of *Dracula*. Wood notes that Dracula is promiscuous, bisexual, and engages in the non-normative act of bloodsucking instead of coitus or other genital-focused sexuality, although Wood does compare bloodsucking to fellatio. Wood compares Dracula’s attraction to blood to bisexuality, stating that “Dracula’s attraction to blood, although generally focused on women, crosses the boundary of gender; when Stoker’s Jonathan cuts himself shaving, Dracula wants to ‘suck’ him” (370).

While I agree with Wood’s assertion that Dracula’s sexuality is definitively non-normative, I would argue that evidence that Wood gives of bisexuality is actually evidence of queerness, not in the sense of sexuality, but in the queerness of the body. This bisexuality is not an attraction to the genders male and female, but an attraction to body and blood. Dracula is not attracted to the person due to that person’s gender; however, he is attracted to something that they all have in common. Dracula is a vampire and must feed off the blood of the living. The act of feeding on his victims can be seen as an inherently sexual act as it sustains him but also

provides a form of sexual pleasure for Dracula and his victims. Dracula is not only queered through his sexual exploration but also through his attraction to blood. His attraction to blood is because his body does not adhere to the standards of the normative human. Dracula does not eat in the same way that humans do but instead feeds on humans themselves. In addition to the aforementioned traits that qualify a vampire's body as queer, Dracula's life source is consuming the living, and this gives audiences an uneasy feeling because humans feed on dead non-human flesh. Vampires can exist among humans, living virtually undetected. This anonymity is what creates panic in heteronormative society: the idea that something or someone non-normative could be existing within the margins of a hegemonic status quo produces fear.

The limitations of focusing primarily on the queer body's representation in horror film must be acknowledged. As previously stated, extensive work has been produced on the topic of queer bodies and queer desire as applied to horror films. Critics have studied and discussed the queer body as well as the queer desire that inhabits horror. However, I would argue that these critics do not account for the disruptiveness that occurs through the queer temporality that also exists within horror. I argue heteronormative audiences are much more deeply disturbed by queer time, for it disrupts their interpretations of time. Queer sexuality does not negate heterosexuality, but queer time does negate and challenge heteronormative time's conception of itself. Queer time challenges all notions of conformity and human construction, while queer sexuality wishes only to coincide with heterosexuality, not destroy it. Thus, a panic is created that is greater than that created by queer bodies and desires. Queer time destroys heteronormative conceptions of time and the markers that create it.

I will use subsequent chapters to discuss the queerness of time as it is represented through the sub-genres of the vampire film, the ghost film, and the slasher film. Heteronormative society

is upset by queer desire and bodies; even more upsetting is the possibility of a second time existing beside heteronormative time. In my research, I question why heteronormative society is afraid of the elements of horror films that are inherently queer. My focus will be on the temporal understanding of horror through the concepts of queer time. I am working primarily from Jack Halberstam's definitions of queer time from *In A Queer Time and Place*. Queer time is a construction of time that does not depend on the markers of heterosexuality to exist. Instead, queer time exists outside of binaries, causing the deconstruction of the social constructions put in place by a heteronormative majority.

The theory of queer temporality focuses on the elimination of binaries. While the discussion of the queer body in horror film is an important one, I would argue that binaries are still upheld through this type of analysis: the queer body versus the normative body, and queer desire versus heterosexual desire. Heterosexual panic is produced by the idea that there is a sexuality other than heterosexuality. This panic then translates into temporal panic as heterosexual temporalities must face the existence of queerness in time. I argue that queer time exists as the abject of heteronormative time. Heteronormative time presents itself as the original and only time, and yet continues to separate itself from queer time. This continuous need for separation is heteronormative time abjecting queer time. Queer time is the original time with no binaries, markers, or human constructions. Because heteronormative time exists within queer time but cannot accept it, heteronormative time must continue to abject queer time, reasserting that heteronormative time is the only true and right marker of time. The abject serves as the return of time without identity defined by binaries and a clear distinction between self and other, due to the fact that queer time rejects any binaries such as past, present, future, then, and now.

To explain my reasoning behind making the leap between queer temporality existing as the abject of homonormative temporality I will refer to Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* (2010) briefly. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva describes the abject as what of ourselves we distance from ourselves to create an identity. When there is no longer an other, the self does not know what it is: "[a]bjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be" (10). Kristeva makes the distinction between one's body and consciousness; however, I want to apply her theory to a distinction between one temporal understanding and another.

Heteronormative time cannot fathom the existence of a queer time, and therefore when the possibility is raised heteronormative society must other itself from a different understanding of time. The boundaries become so stark between queer and heteronormative time that those who exist in heteronormative time begin to disbelieve in the existence of queer time altogether.

The theory of queer time has been explored most notably by theorist Halberstam in *In a Queer Time and Place* (2005). Like the queering of bodies that exists outside of binary conventions of male, female, hetero, and homosexuality, queer time is a time that exists beyond heteronormative conventions. Subsequently, queer time does not rely on key markers of heterosexuality, such as birth, marriage, and procreation. These markers are described in further detail by Halberstam as "repro time," "family time," and "time of inheritance." According to Halberstam these times are defined as, "[repro time is ruled] by a biological clock for women and by strict bourgeois rules of respectability... family time refers to the normative scheduling of daily life...the time of inheritance refers to an overview of generational time within which values, wealth, goods, and morals are passed through family ties" (Halberstam 5). The

aforementioned markers of heteronormativity also create a future and define the current now as now.

Queer temporality and queering the temporalities that heteronormative audiences are comfortable with end up ripping through the fabric of heteronormative time. Horror is often body focused. When queer temporality is presented heterosexual temporality begins to disintegrate (Halberstam 2). While some horror audiences are always worried about their physical bodies, not often do they think of their minds as being threatened while watching a film. Most people view their minds as a constant with a singular sense of time, the temporality that we exist in on a day-to-day basis. However, that temporality is not the only temporality that exists. There is a desire to hold onto a singular conception of time. Far more threatening than bodies that are queer is queer time. The true threat of queer time is that it will swallow up heteronormative time. There are no binaries in queer time and no distinction of “now,” as it is the original time prior to heterosexual markers.

Halberstam’s theory has mainly been applied to sociological analysis. An example of queer time is the argument made that queerness threatens people as a way of life more than as a means of having sex, stemming from Foucault’s “Friendship as a Way of Life” (310). These analyses focus mainly on the construction of gender and sexuality, as means of deconstructing the binaries put into place by normative society. So far there has been little to no work applying queer time to the conventions of the horror genre. However, horror as a genre queers time; therefore, the deconstruction of the conception of time becomes what the standard audience fears. I align myself with Halberstam’s definition of “now” and what that means for queer time, Halberstam states, “The constantly diminishing future creates a new emphasis on the here, the present, the now, and while the threat of no future hovers over like a storm cloud, the urgency of

being also expands” (Halberstam 2). What I interpret this to mean in terms of queer time is that queer is always happening, and therefore it is the now in all places and all times threatens the future of heteronormative time. Once you are aware of queer time, just like the here, the now, and the present, it is gone. When time is deconstructed, it disappears; moreover, everything else disappears with that conception. Time includes Halberstam’s markers for heteronormative society’s understanding of reality such as repro, family, and inheritance times (Halberstam 5).

Halberstam’s definition of “now” cannot be separated from the AIDs epidemic. The focus on now is due to there being an impending end coming to a life abruptly. The focus on now can translate to horror film because of the impending death of the characters. There is a narrative focus in horror film on jump scares and the now that both the audience and the character inhabit, for the protagonist can be killed at any time. As an example, Marion Crane in *Psycho* is the protagonist for the first portion of the film. She is then murdered, and the protagonist shifts to a new character. The person that you may think is the main character could die at any point in a horror film. The focus on the now can also be related back to horror’s target audience, which is teenagers. The idea of impending death further ties back to Halberstam’s definition of now because childhood is a time that everyone wants to get through, so they can become a teenager and gain more freedom. Everyone knows what comes after being a teenager. After you have reached the threshold of adulthood, you are expected to fulfill your duty to society. The connections to AIDS returns here as the future of your life, and therefore your progeny, is not promised. Thereby a focus on the now is created; now must be when everything of significance happens because if you wait, now may never come. Halberstam’s markers of heteronormative society can also be applied to teenagers, for when they become adults they are expected to start the cycle of repro-time, family-time, and time of inheritance. However, when someone is in the

thick of youth, there is a major focus on living in the now. Teenagers are no longer children with limited opportunity; however they are also not adults, so the repercussions of their actions are often less severe. With that focus on the now we are able to draw a connection between the constantly diminishing future of the queer now, and the diminishing future of childhood for a teenager.

Theorist Michael Warner discusses in his article “Queer and Then?” the role that queer theory is taking in the discussion of theories. Warner points to several theorists such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Michel Foucault who have assisted in the shaping of what it means to queer something. Through their works, they have been able to shape the discipline of queer theory working inside the constructs of sociology and philosophy. Warner states, “They had already shown that sex, pleasure, and the formation of sexual cultures posed deep challenges to the normative frameworks by which some kinds of sex are legitimated and institutionalized as the proper form of sexuality” (2012). This idea of the challenges of proper frameworks is what I feel is the core of queer theory. Warner poses that queer theory has hit a wall with what theorists have the ability to queer and how these concepts are received. However, I argue that queer theory needs a new lens to focus on. As previously stated in the chapter, queer theory and horror have a long history together, which is why I think the application of the theory of queer time as an argument for the interpretation of horror films opens new and relevant options for queer theory to discuss. In my next chapters, I will focus on the application of the theory of queer time to three subgenres of a horror film.

To begin Chapter 2, I will examine the vampire film and the role of queer time in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), *The Hunger* (1983), and *Let the Right One In* (2008). The vampire film has a long history of study within queer theory. Vampires are the ultimate expression of queer

time because they exist outside of the influence of repro-time. These creatures do not meet the milestones of normative life. Vampires are not born but are created, vampires do not procreate but pass their bloodline through a pathogen, and, lastly, vampires are able to operate from a place where they alternate between being dead and alive. Vampires, through their manipulation of spaces that they inhabit, queer the times that they exist in. These spaces are places that may have once been normative but are now occupied by a vampire and are transformed. An example of these spaces is coffins. A coffin is a place where the dead are eternally laid to rest. Instead, vampires use coffins almost as a bed, where they “die” for a limited amount of time and then awaken when the sun goes down. The dead are not meant to rise again; therefore, by sleeping in coffins, vampires queer the space in which they occupy that was originally created for a normative purpose. Furthermore, vampires queer time by living after dying.

In Chapter 3, the elements of queer time can be seen in the ghost films *The Others* (2001), *Insidious* (2010), and *The Conjuring* (2013). The elements of queer time are seen through the mere existence of ghosts. Ghosts in these films queer time since ghosts exist both within our current time and their own time. Queerness through multiplicity creates fear in the normative audience by the realization that the existence of a time other than their own can impact them. The spaces in which ghosts occupy then become queer spaces. Family spaces are queered when ghosts interrupt the heteronormative family. Ghosts do this through interacting with objects that we touch and see, making them move and shake seemingly on their own. When common household objects become the tools of ghosts, the queered space creates panic in the heteronormative audience. Ghosts can be interpreted as an attack on the heteronormative family because their possessions are no longer their own. The attack on heteronormativity in turn

disrupts time of inheritance in the heteronormative markers of time. Ghosts terrorize and tear apart nuclear families.

Lastly, in Chapter 4 I analyze the slasher films *Psycho* (1960), *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984). The threats, in these films, all come from a different time. In *Psycho*, Norman's mother, who is long dead, is the threat to the characters in the film because Norman becomes her. In *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* the threat is coming from a rural place. Ruralness is often synonymous with being behind in time. When people are often confronted with rural places they equate them to being drastically different than somewhere more metropolitan. The threat of the past is interpreted by the main characters in the film. This is a past that the characters do not want to admit exists. Not only does this film threaten heteronormative time by cutting young lives short, but it also threatens family because the only representation of family in the film is a family of cannibals. The family in the film does not adhere to social norms of modern society and upholds instead a tradition of cannibalism. Lastly, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is arguably the queerest of slasher films because it takes place in dream space. In a dream, anything is possible. A dream space that takes place inside the character's mind should be the safest place for them. It is arguable that when you sleep, you die to the world unable to sense your surroundings or be in control of your body. Once you enter the queer time and space of dreams, the film would suggest that you may not be able to return because something is lurking within your own mind that may end your existence and you not even know.

CHAPTER 2

Vampires: Queer Temporalities and an Attack on Heterosexuality

The vampire has been a staple in horror film throughout cinematic history. One of the earliest versions of the vampire to make it to film was *The Haunted Castle* (1897). Since then vampires have made their way into homes through characters such as Lestat and Edward Cullen. Vampires continue to fascinate and terrify those who allow them into their homes because they look like us and yet are not us. Vampires, I would argue, are the queerest of creatures, for they do not abide by any laws of time or heteronormative sexuality.

Heteronormative time focuses on the future and is often generational and episodic by nature. The existence of the vampire depicts an abjection, in which heteronormative time, casts off (out) queer time, and subsequently the vampires who exist within it, ultimately creating the fear of the vampire. The vampire will always return, and that fear manifests itself as fear of non-reproduction. Heteronormative time markers are often placed in the understanding of when someone dies, there are offspring to replace them. Once that offspring (child) comes of age, the child is then groomed to take an opposite sex mate and produce future generations to replace the current population once it dies. Vampires undermine this. This undermining becomes more frightening than blood, gore, or the potentiality of death because queer time is the disruption of society's understanding of time cycles. Queer time that is represented through the vampire film is present-focused, as the past is transported to the present; furthermore, the present is continuously taken away from the viewer, as the non-vampire character that they are watching could be killed at a moment's notice. Vampires are mythical creatures. We know that they cannot exist; however, their existence in film allows for a subversion of the normative temporality that most people are used to. It is through horror film that queer time is represented

as the original time, where heteronormative society can attempt to but not permanently abject it. Vampires are condemned to exist in queer time because they represent an opportunity to destroy what is sacrificed by continuing to follow heteronormative time. However, just as queer time is a time without constraint, so too are vampires without time constraint, for they cannot possibly be but have somehow always been.

The vampire is a creature of the night, lurking in the shadows, on the fringes of humanity, feeding from the living. The vampire's body is ageless, allowing the vampire to be alive and yet also dead. The body also does not age, freezing vampires in time, as the present moves forward around them. Vampires exist outside of the influence of heteronormative time. Once again to assert Halberstam's definition of heteronormative time, the markers are repro time, family time, and time of inheritance. These markers give heteronormative time a temporal understanding of itself. When these markers are not met, queer time begins to bleed into heteronormative time. Vampires, who do not meet any of the markers for heteronormative time, create the uneasiness that haunts viewers as they watch a vampire film. Because vampires do not meet any of the markers of heterosexual time, vampires are othered. When the vampire is othered, the fear of what is unknown to the audience produces the fear that they feel while watching the film. They are now exposed to and must contend with another time entirely. The audience is exposed to queer time and struggles to conceptualize queer time as existing within their own heteronormative temporality. Vampires distort the viewer's understanding of time by presenting them with two time periods converging. The existence of vampires almost mirrors a queer sexuality as both queer time and queer sexuality present a multiplicity that is unseen in heteronormativity, therefore pushing the viewer to the edge of their comfort zone, provided the viewer is someone who is comfortable in heteronormative time and accepts that they must fulfill

their duty to society, that duty being the need to pair off with someone of the opposite sex, marry, and reproduce. The vampire represents an option that is previously unknown to the heteronormative audience. The vampire does not have to marry someone of the opposite sex or get married at all. Because vampires cannot die there is no need to continue producing offspring; the vampire will never need to pass anything on due to the fact that they will still be there. Part of the allure of the abject is knowing it will destroy us. Therefore, vampires become so alluring because they allow us to defy all rules, yet to become one of them is to be cast out of heteronormative society.

Halberstam's definition of queer time is "...[an] opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction" (1). Vampires do not follow the social conventions for heterosexuality and therefore fall outside of heteronormative time. The vampire's rejection of heteronormative time puts their existence and the traits they possess in the temporal space of queer time. Vampires do not follow repro-time, which is one of the major markers in heteronormative time and society. The vampires that I will examine in this chapter are created through what appears to be a pathogen instead of being born, the way human life is typically created; instead vampires create a living death thus destroying binaries. In all of the films I will cover in this chapter vampires are created through being bitten, and having vampirism produced within them as though it is a disease. This creation is not heterosexual, and vampires are generally "born" as adults. As critic Robin Wood argues, blood sucking is not an equation to copulation but closer to fellatio (Wood 370), thus disrupting the acceptable sex of (and assumedly only) reproductive heterosexual coitus set by heteronormative society.

The Western vampire also disrupts family-time. Because the vampire does not reproduce sexually, there is no need for family time. Vampires do not create biological family members,

and while some vampires are depicted as living in covens, they do not have any familial ties to the people in the coven except they were created through a vampire biting them. The bite would simultaneously make vampire spawn their “children” but also their sexual partners, since the process of changing someone into a vampire takes place during the act of blood sucking that could be considered akin to fellatio.

Finally, vampires do not participate in the time of inheritance. The time of inheritance is the time when family members pass down tradition, material possessions, and values. Halberstam connects this with familial stability, “familial and historical pasts” that correlates the family to the future (Halberstam 5). This stability is completely destroyed when applied to vampires. Vampires, because they are so often depicted as immortal, cannot die of what humans would consider natural causes. Vampires do not die without the intervention of specific tools designed to kill them. If only mortal through being murdered, it can be assumed that vampires have no need for the time of inheritance. Because they live forever and skip both the previous steps of repro-time and family time, they have no one to whom to pass possessions, traditions, and values on to.

In our ever-diminishing present, vampires have always come before us. In *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (1992), *The Hunger* (1983), and *Let the Right One In* (2008) the vampires predate each of the protagonists by at least 100 years. Through that understanding of the vampire, if the vampire, who exists wholly in queer time, has come before the present, then queer time must also come before the present. Heteronormative time is only a piece of the whole temporality. Heteronormative temporality cannot assert itself as the complete whole while simultaneously abject the whole from itself.

There is comfort in normativity. With the knowledge of other times, comes the ability for humanity to opt out of the cycle. Moreover, the safety in singularity mandates the unbroken cycle of heteronormative temporality. Despite heteronormative society's continual denial of vampires, they continue to come back through iterations in film. Through film, vampires are able to return to an everlasting present by transgressing the boundaries of heteronormative time, solidifying that queer time and heteronormative time exist simultaneously. Vampires represent what is desirable but would destroy heterosexual identity. Without the binaries and markers to hold onto a human would lose all markers of identity. The heteronormative society maintains that (complete) freedom is not an option for humanity, as what it holds sacred is the only thing allowed to be eternal. God is eternal. Humans cannot be eternal, or, if they can, they can only achieve it through God. Vampires threaten the position of God in a heteronormative hierarchy by offering everlasting life without faith.

Vampires exist almost wholly in a state of abjection. The abject is a place where all meaning collapses (Kristeva 2). When all meaning has collapsed, so, too, has time. Vampires exemplify abjection through their inability to exist in a singular form, since vampires hold the ability to shape shift. What this means is that vampires can and cannot be simultaneously. The multiplicity of the vampire creates an othering of the creature from its human and normative counterparts. Within this multiplicity is the creation of queer subjectivity as well as abjection. A normative audience wants to abject the vampire. They are both repulsed and seduced by queer temporality that is created through the film. Thus, fear is created, not of the bodily harm a vampire can cause but of the way vampires elude time. The way a vampire is able to live is alluring to the heteronormative audience; however, complete freedom is fear, as the self and identity are lost when there is no separation to cling to. The destruction of a singular time, that is,

a heteronormative understanding of temporality, is the fear the audiences wish to cast off, to run from, but continue to return to time and time again.

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), Jonathan travels to Transylvania to work out a real-estate deal with Count Dracula. The Count is buying up property in London and arrives in person shortly after his dealings with Jonathan. Dracula has already had dealings with Jonathan's associate Renfield, who was placed in an insane asylum shortly after returning from his trip to Transylvania. Dracula turns Jonathan's fiancée Mina's friend Lucy into a vampire. Van Helsing is called to investigate, which leads to the party trekking back to Transylvania in order to root out the vampires in their home and reverse the curse of vampirism. The past (Dracula) is taking place in the present and through doing so is warping the normative audience's perception of time. Dracula has the capability to exist through thousands of years without time affecting him the way that it affects humans. Because Dracula does not age, he does not have a need to hit the heterosexual markers of time. Because Dracula is fundamentally different than the audience, they begin to fear him, not because of his ability to kill but his ability to traverse time. In fact, he does not do much killing at all throughout the film. He instead is feared because of the queer acts that he commits while he is on screen. He commits bestiality by having sex with Lucy as a wolf as he arrives in London. Dracula practices BDSM pleasure that most would assume as pain and non-genital sexuality when Dracula has Mina suck blood from his breast. Dracula makes sexual advances and claims on Jonathan, and he lives in both the past and the present. Dracula is constantly moving from an elderly state to a state of youth. He does not exist in time in a way that is stable; he gets younger as the film goes on and ages out of order. By this same logic he also cannot exist in a form that is stable. Dracula is able to continually shift from mist to a wolf to human. This instability of time and the self is what instills fear in the viewer.

The scene where Jonathan watches Dracula prepare for his trip to Europe exemplifies the queer time, as he watches Dracula move from a state of death to a state of living seamlessly. Dracula, who previously in the film was introduced to Jonathan while he looked elderly, was very much alive. When presented with a coffin, people are often inclined to believe that once a person's body goes inside there is no reason for them to leave again. However, in Dracula's case he exemplifies queer time by defying death and existing in a time that means that he is both dead and alive simultaneously. Queer time has no binaries; opposition can exist simultaneously. When those binaries between life and death are blurred, heteronormative time feels as though it has lost its place within the film. The duality of Dracula and the queer time that vampires exist in allows him to coexist amongst both the time of the living and the dead. What Dracula does is create the vehicle in which queer time can exist simultaneously with heteronormative time. Heteronormative society sees Dracula as parasitic, feeding from them both through vitality and sexually, and the admission of the existence of queer time creates the belief of an opening for queerness to infect the heteronormative society.

Jonathan writes letters to all of his loved ones back in London and has become a prisoner to the Count. As Jonathan sets out to explore the castle, he narrates over what he is seeing. Men he describes as "Gypsies" fill boxes to the brim with dirt from Transylvania. As Jonathan is watching these men, he hides behind a large stone slab. As he ponders the reasoning for filling the boxes with earth, a sound causes Jonathan to look over his shoulder. There is then a cut to a long shot from a different perspective. The basement of the castle is in full view. The stairs where the Gypsies were loading boxes of earth onto the ship is in frame as well as a skeleton impaled on a spike. Unlit candles line the walls and the smallest ray of sun shines from beyond the stairs. As the sound that Jonathan hears is transformed into a scream from a disembodied

voice, two large stone doors swing open. The doors reveal what appears to be Dracula himself dressed in a fine cloak embedded with jewels. His arms are crossed over his chest, eyes closed and skin pale. Dracula looks like a corpse of royalty laid to rest forever amongst his most precious possessions under his castle. As the scene goes on, Dracula begins to rise from the coffin. His body starts rising upward from the coffin at a 90-degree angle moving from his ankles until he is upright. Dracula's hands move from the resting position crossed over his chest to a menacing fist.

Coffins are generally accepted as the final resting place for the dead. Instead here we have one being used as a temporary resting place. When we see the coffin, it appears as a large stone slab with two doors. If the coffin was designed to imprison the dead forever, then the design seems odd. What I mean by this is, that coffin is designed as a temporary resting place for Dracula with its two doors that look as though they never actually fully close. Doors are meant to be opened, therefore death is not a time but a space that can be traversed by Dracula. As he arises from the coffin he is preparing to make his move to London where he will meet Mina and turn Lucy. It is explained that Dracula can move around in the daylight but does not have the capability to use his power to its fullest extent. What this means is that he must use his characteristics of death to rest and regain his power. Dracula's use of a coffin conveys his place in the existence of queer time by depicting his existence somewhere between life and death.

What these examples of death and life, age and youth, the past and present mean for heteronormative time and Dracula's disruption of it is that the step of repro-time has been subverted or skipped altogether. Vampirism allows Dracula to defy death. He does not need to reproduce because he continues and believes he won't die. Dracula's life disrupts the flow of heteronormative time because Dracula is not actually taking part in the cycle of heteronormative

time and is creating not new life but a deathless life. All meaning collapses. Those who are infected become a shell of their former selves controlled only by Dracula's will and blood lust. Through the creation of new vampires from adult human's reproduction is not taking place through conventional means. Dracula can be seen as disrupting heteronormative time and exemplifying the queer time that resists the heteronormative cycle. While Dracula does have his brides, he is never shown having children with them. The only time that children are depicted with the brides is when Dracula brings them a baby to eat, which is a direct threat to heterosexual reproduction, as any production will be consumed, disallowing any further generations. The film is saying that if adults can live forever the need for children becomes obsolete. Therefore, they are used for consumption, instead of to complete a cycle of reproduction.

Dracula not reproducing like humans do adds to his othering. Dracula's reproduction creates the fear of Dracula because he is othered from a heteronormative audience. There are three instances in which we are exposed to Dracula's means of procreation. The first is through Renfield, who is a colleague of Jonathan's who is committed to an insane asylum shortly after his visit to Count Dracula's castle. Next is Lucy, whom he turns into a vampire after making the trek to London in order to hunt Mina. Last is Mina, who he is unsuccessful at fully turning into a vampire. Renfield is the first person from the firm to visit Dracula in his home. While he is there, Dracula turns Renfield into a slave, which is different than a child. Because Renfield is not a complete vampire but is at the mercy of Dracula, he seems to possess no free will of his own, losing his entire identity and becoming obsessed with pleasing Dracula. At one point in the film he states that he lives on life and pleads with the doctor to bring him a cat, so he no longer must feed on bugs and rats. Dracula has turned Renfield if not into a full-fledged vampire, then at the least has managed to distill his humanity into nothing more than a shell of a man. The means of

procreation that Dracula uses does not create life but steals it away. The living death that is created by Dracula does not coincide with the parameters of heterosexual reproduction.

Second to be changed by Dracula is Lucy, a young girl whose sexual inhibitions make her an easy target for Dracula. The first instance of her transformation happens during the storm that appears over London when Dracula arrives. Dracula has taken on the form of a wolf like creature who has hunted Lucy and seduced her in the garden. After he has sex with her, he is discovered by Mina and he disappears, but not before biting Lucy's neck. However, it is not the sex that produces another vampire, it is the bite. When Dracula sucks Lucy's neck, the vampire trait is passed on to her, creating a new vampire, but it takes time for her to gestate outside of a mother's body because vampires only have one parent reiterating their creation via asexual reproduction. Once she is rescued, she describes her ailment as being able to hear the servant whisper from across the house, and the mice stomping in the attic. She claims that she is haunted by red eyes of a monster that are causing her bodily changes. Lucy is changed to a vampire, and when she fully becomes undead she steals a child that she intends to eat, breaking up the markers of family time. Instead of the adult who sacrifices for the child, it is the child who is sacrificed to the adult, so the adult may never die. Lucy's three suitors must slay her with the help of Van Helsing. Dracula cut short Lucy's ability to reproduce and take part in repro-time because she had become a vampire. She would take life instead of bringing it into the world and her suitors kill her instead of have sex with her.

Lastly is Dracula's treatment of Mina, whom he believes is the reincarnation of his long-lost bride. When he sees the picture of Mina that Jonathan brought with him to Transylvania he becomes obsessed with having her. When Mina realizes that her past life is that of Dracula's bride she agrees to be transformed into a vampire. In the middle of the transformation the

vampire hunters burst into Mina's room to stop him; however, he has already claimed her as his bride. The past has temporarily taken over Mina's present and future, leaving her unable to move forward in the cycle.

The Hunger (Scott 1983) exposes the audience to queer temporality early on in the film through the depiction of Miriam marrying John in the early 1800s. The stage for the film is set by keeping a focus on pleasure and sex over reproduction and inheritance. John (David Bowie) is turned into a vampire by his wife Miriam (Catherine Deneuve). Marriage without procreation creates a rift in heterosexual time. As a married, seemingly heterosexual couple, the two are expected to have children. According to the markers of heterosexuality, once an individual is paired off, it becomes their next responsibility to create a new life in repro time. That life must then be nurtured in family time, and then finally it receives both knowledge and possessions through the time of inheritance when their parents pass on. However, in *The Hunger*, Miriam is never able to start this cycle. She is biologically frozen in time, living for thousands of years and never needing any heirs to her possessions because she can never die. The loss of stability is again the source of the fear in the audience. These are two adults who are not only having sex outside of their marriage but also, not having children as a result, and the only child in the film ends up being eaten as a means of John hoping to sustain himself. The loss of the future is jarring to the audience, who have only experienced heteronormative time. When there is no future for the audience to rely on, there is no way to comprehend the time markers that they are accustomed to.

The Hunger creates a conflict through threatening a seeming selfishness that is unseen in heteronormative time. After decades of living youthfully, John realizes that he will indeed live forever, but he will not be young forever. Once he starts to age, he enlists the help of a scientist

named Sarah who at first refuses him. After being unable to find help within the field of science, John attempts to cure his aging by feeding on a young girl, Alice, to no avail. When Miriam finds John collapsed on the basement floor, she brings him to the attic, revealing Miriam's former lovers suffering an eternal living death inside a room full of coffins. When Sarah has a change of heart and comes to find John, she is greeted by Miriam instead and is transformed into a vampire. Disgusted by the idea of living on human blood, she leaves, returning home to her husband Tom. When Tom becomes suspicious of Sarah's disappearance, he has her blood tested for pathogens. Confused about her recent transformation, Sarah returns to Miriam for help, but when Tom comes looking for her, starving, Sarah kills her husband. When Sarah forces Miriam to ingest her own blood, she inadvertently frees Miriam's past lovers from their eternity of suffering. Sarah then traps Miriam in a coffin, sealing her with the same fate she had condemned others to. Sarah then becomes the new Miriam, attempting to force heteronormative cycles on vampirism because it is all she has ever known. However, it is not possible because as a vampire Sarah will now and forever exist outside of time.

The Hunger prioritizes the self before others, pleasure before duty, and survival before reproduction. Queer time has no boundaries and allows for the couple to opt out of heterosexual responsibly. Miriam puts herself before all others, locking her previous lovers away. Miriam and John lure a young couple to their deaths by promising pleasure, seemingly punishing those humans who do not conform. Finally, John prioritizes survival over reproduction when he kills Alice because he thinks it will make him live longer. Alice is a young girl who would grow up to take her place in the reproductive cycle. Queer time is a time in which all binaries are cast aside, and all time is without distinction. John and Miriam privilege pleasure over duty because as vampires existing in a queer time they have no obligation to reproduce. There is no obligation to

put the others before the self because for them self-preservation is more important than the preservation of tradition.

Miriam does not have sex as a woman to create life but to consume it. Women within heteronormative time prioritize the creation of life over the pleasure of sex. She lures in lovers with the promise of pleasure but instead swallows them up, mirroring the archaic mother swallowing her children (Creed 16). The archaic mother is a force looming over her creation threatening her right to end the lives she has created. Miriam, the eldest vampire in the film, becomes the archaic mother and swallows her children and lovers to feed on their flesh. The first example of Miriam as the archaic mother is when Miriam and John take home a couple from a night club. The two have been married since the 18th century and yet the two of them have no biological children together. Instead the two engage in sex with another couple and then proceed to feed on them after. The next instance is when Miriam and Sarah have sex after Sarah comes looking for John. Sarah is already married to Tom, and the two seemingly have no children together either. Instead of choosing her husband whom she could potentially have children with, Sarah chooses to stay with Miriam. They engage in a same sex relationship that biological children could not be reared from. This film disrupts heteronormative time by doing away with even the notion of repro-time. John and Miriam have lived for centuries by the time that John finally begins to age. The two have no children of their own but are teaching classical music to a young girl named Alice. Miriam had been grooming Alice, so she could turn her once she came of age. However, John kills Alice before Miriam has the chance to turn her.

The beginning of the film is sensual with close up shots focused on the body, compelling the audience to take pleasure in adult bodies themselves and not the bodies they could create.

The Hunger is a need to be satiated in a time of starvation. The starvation in this sense is that of

reproduction. Heteronormative audiences see that reproduction is nonexistent despite the sexuality that is displayed, creating a fear of people no longer being produced. What would happen to the memory of me? The two are not having sex for any other reason except for to have sex, and to feed on the blood of the couple that they have brought home. The two use their sexuality almost as a weapon, luring their victims into their home on the basis of sex and pleasure, and then cutting off their lives short. The next example of pleasure being prioritized over procreation is when Sarah chooses to continue her relationship with Miriam despite the fact that she is not a vampire yet and is still married to Tom. In the film Sarah chooses to have sex with Miriam, letting her sensuality entice her into being turned into a vampire. Sarah chooses a same-sex relationship that will result in eternal life over the marriage and subsequent children that heteronormative time would have set out for her. Instead she chooses a shortly lived relationship with Miriam, damning her to rot in an eternal living death, while Sarah lives forever, young. Miriam acts as a mother vampire, grooming humans into what she would like to have in an eternal partner. When they begin to age she locks them away, ashamed of what she has created, literally. This idea of motherhood appears again when John kills Alice, the young girl that Miriam was planning to take on as her next lover after John's transformation was complete. Alice is a young girl, looking to be roughly sixteen or seventeen. The idea that Miriam who is much older than Alice, would be sexually interested in her, deeply disturbs heteronormative time. The idea of an older woman loving a younger woman may often come across as a mentorship, or motherly type love. That example can easily be seen as Miriam is Alice's music teacher; however, but nonetheless she intends to be Alice's lover, also.

Family time, repro time, time of inheritance are interesting concepts when it comes to looking at *The Hunger* through the lens of queer time. While the couple appears as young and

able to have children, the two do not have any and live in a small space. While the couple does not have any children of their own they are grooming a young girl named Alice, who they teach classical music to. Miriam is attempting to groom Alice to be her next lover, but instead John kills her. What this means for family time is that Miriam seems to want to have a pseudo child but will then take her as her lover. When you take away the need for repro time, through having Miriam changing her lovers into vampires like her, the entire concept is thrown on its head. What this means is that Miriam cannot have children of her own; therefore, there is no need for family time or time of inheritance. When there is no family to spend time with, or no one to pass her possessions to, the entire concept of heteronormative time is done away with. In this film queer time completely over takes the place of heteronormative time. There is no need for it when the “family” in question can no longer reproduce. When the lines of the binaries of heteronormative time are broken down by queer time, the audience is uncomfortable with their conception of time being turned on its head. Miriam is not interested in passing anything on because she will never actually pass on. Miriam will continue to defy biological time as it stands still for her and continues moving for everyone else.

To continue, the importance of a future to a heteronormative audience can be seen in *Let the Right One In* (2008). Eli (Lina Leandersson) is a young, gender-ambiguous vampire who appears to be a human girl around the age of 9. The film, however, takes the focus away from the fact that this 9-year-old must kill to survive, and emphasizes the underlying love interest that creates the most unease in a viewer. Eli does not meet any of the heterosexual markers of time because Eli is a child who will never age and therefore never hit puberty and be capable of reproduction in a way that is understood by society. Therefore, Eli’s interest in the protagonist Oskar (Kåre Hedebrant) can be particularly jarring. Eli, who is in the body of a child, is not a

child, which brings to light the question of the relationship with the previous caretaker. Eli had moved in next door to Oskar with a much older man, presumably playing the role of a father. However, if Eli does not age, it is a distinct possibility that the caretaker was also at one time Eli's lover. Because Eli exists outside the binaries and constraints of time, Eli is able to transgress taboos of pedophilia by the much older man masquerading as a father to Eli while possibly being a previous lover. Moreover, Eli is a vampire whose body will never grow old and will remain a child even as her lovers age.

Eli is depicted as non-binary and, therefore, already uncomfortable for heteronormative audiences. Håkan, Eli's care taker, who does not appear to also be a vampire, is caught attempting to harvest blood for Eli. After another ill-fated attempt to harvest blood for Eli, Håkan pours acid on himself to stop from being recognized and traced back to Eli. Now alone, Eli seeks out the help of Oskar. Oskar asks Eli if she would like to go steady; however, Eli replies "I'm not a girl." Oskar asks to go steady anyway. After some deliberation, Eli agrees to go steady, stating, "It'll be just you and me." Later, Oskar proposes a blood bond between Eli and himself. Unknowing of Eli's vampirism he cuts himself, and Eli drinks the blood that drips from his hand and then runs away. Shortly thereafter, Eli attacks Ginia. Ginia is the girlfriend of Jocke; the man that Eli kills in the beginning of the film to feed on. Though Ginia survives the attack, she knows that she is no longer herself when she wakes up and her hand is burned by sitting in the sunlight. After Ginia is viciously attacked by her friend's cat, she is admitted to the hospital where she has a nurse open her blinds, so she can burst into flame. After realizing that Eli is a vampire, Oskar is skeptical but comes to her aid when someone attempts to kill her, after which Eli returns the favor when bullies trap Oskar in a pool in an attempt to drown him. The two are then shown leaving on a train with Eli safely tucked away in a box to protect her from the sun.

The main characters in the film are the youngest in any of the vampire films that I have covered thus far, but Eli is much older than Lucy, Mina, or Sarah. When children become the thing that you fear, the future and heteronormative time are both called into question. Eli remains in a de-sexed body of an adolescent, who is not capable of reproduction, unlike the previous women. Eli lives in an eternal now whereas everyone else may proceed into the future whether that means beginning the cycle of reproduction, becoming a vampire, or dying. Eli is an adult mind trapped in a child's body. Eli, therefore, has the desires and thoughts of an adult, further queering Eli and the time she exists in. Children are often a focal point argument for heteronormative time. Children are often cited as why alternative lifestyles should not be practiced or lived, because those lifestyles will infect the children. I feel as though *Let the Right One In* turns this argument on its head. Eli is a child and is the vampire who is infecting people. Eli, while at first has Håkan to gather blood for her, must learn to hunt on her own.

Let the Right One In entirely destabilizes heteronormative time through Eli's role as both child and vampire. The duality in her personality makes her the victim of circumstance (she must kill to survive) but also the perpetrator of violence. In the film the conventions of heteronormative time are disrupted through Eli's role as a vampire, a child, and also the seemingly same sex relationship formed with Oskar. Because Eli and Oskar are both children, and because Eli will never age, repro-time will never come for her. When repro time is interrupted the entire institution of heteronormative time is thrown for a loop. Family-time and time of inheritance are no longer necessary. Eli can never have a family because she is unable to reproduce. Eli also lives a nomadic lifestyle, being shown at the end of the film sitting inside a box on a train. Eli will not have any earthly possessions because she is a vampire and a child. Therefore, she cannot collect anything without arousing suspicion. Because Eli is a vampire she

will always exist on the fringes of society; therefore, social rules have no meaning to her. Eli's vampirism, eternal life, and need to feed on the living inhibit her ability to exist in heteronormative time. If she does not exist in heteronormative time, then queer time is the only place left for her to exist in.

Vampires exist in opposition of heteronormative time, completely tearing down the boundaries that hold the time together. When someone becomes a vampire the first step in heteronormative time is skipped. Without repro-time, the entire ideology of heteronormative time collapses, leaving queer time as the original time, and inciting a fear from normative society that a time other than their own exists and has always existed. Vampires and the films that they are shown in are in direct opposition to heteronormative time, eliciting the return of the abject. Normative society is afraid of returning to a time without identity or defined by binaries and a clear distinction between self and other.

CHAPTER 3

Ghosts: Disruption of Family Time and the Family Dynamic

Much like vampires, ghosts also exist within a queer time. The rules of heteronormative time do not apply. Multiplicity creates queerness through the possibility of several outcomes. In heteronormative society there is one way of existing and any defiance from that norm is considered undesirable. Queerness, through multiplicity, creates fear in normative audiences by the realization that the existence of a time other than their own can impact them. In the case of ghosts, they are often depicted terrorizing a young family through the disruption of family time. The definition of family time is parents and children spending time together in day-to-day activities. When the responsibility of the parents is passed to the children family time's cycle continues. When family time is interrupted, a rift is often created within the family itself, leading to the destruction of the family altogether. Furthermore, the ghost genre tends to disrupt patriarchy. Adult men in the ghost genre are almost never exposed to the haunting that is happening in the household, until a woman or a child exposes a man to what has been happening to them. Women possessing a second sight allows them to see into queer time and see through the layers of time that exist simultaneously. Women are in two times and exist in the two times at once. The male refuses to believe that another time exists because he only exists in a singular time — heteronormative time— that is continuously abjecting itself from queer time since the heteronormative is continuously trying to assert itself as the only and original time.

The depiction of women possessing something that men do not is troublesome in a temporal understanding that is patriarchal at its core. Hetero time could be considered patriarchal because men need to harness control of women in order for the cycle of heteronormativity to take place. The possession of women takes place through the act of compulsive heterosexuality.

Where heterosexuality is normalized and naturalized as a means of production for society, it becomes the standard to adhere to. However, if women are able to opt out of heteronormativity and, therefore, heterosexuality, then the cycles can never begin. The continuation of heteronormativity hangs in the balance of women's complacency in their oppression (Rich 632).

Through all three of the films *The Conjuring*, *The Others*, and *Insidious*, women are depicted as the center of the haunting. Women have the capability to understand that heteronormative time is abjecting queer time and queer time creates a place when time becomes spatial. Ghosts reiterate that queer time is the original time through the way that they begin to appear as layered on top of heteronormative time. Ghosts create several times in which only those with the ability to see it can understand it. In *The Conjuring*, heteronormative time itself is still upheld, but the dynamic of family time is attacked. In *The Others*, time begins to blur for the viewer as well as for Grace (Nicole Kidman), as she does not realize where she is in time or where her place is. Finally, in *Insidious*, time begins to lose all meaning and collapse in on itself as The Further is introduced as when all times exist simultaneously, connected yet independent of each other. Because the women in these films are associated with the paranormal and therefore the queer, their femininity is also equated with wickedness. Barbara Creed argues that the symbolic order separates out all those who threaten it. The mother in the instance of the ghost film acts as the gate keeper to queer time, a figure who can allow her children who are still a part of her to enter into queer time or to be shielded from it to take their place in the realm of the father (Creed 15).

Women have the ability to bring life into this world, and when they have the ability to also take life, the power of life itself falls solely on them. If women were to be given the ability to opt out of the cycles of heteronormativity, Halberstam's markers of heterosexuality would

never come to fruition. Women must be present in repro-time in order to grow a child in their bodies. Women are traditionally those who commit to family time by raising children to adulthood. The ghost film offers women a glance into what could be possible for them. If women are not being forced into compulsory heterosexuality, they would be able to throw off the entire cycle of heteronormativity (Rich 631). However, with the ability to see the multiplicity of temporality as well as the ability to bring and take life, women become the ultimate power in heterosexual relationships. Men, on the other hand, cannot create life, and so to create the power for heteronormative time to exist as a patriarchal structure, men must create life through women. Men must take control of women and once men hold that power over women only then do men feel as though they have power over their own existence.

The way that heteronormative society has been conditioned to view time is as a continuum. Time is generally presented as a continuous motion starting at one point and ending at another. Linear time represents a time line of birth and death where society is conditioned to live, with a set beginning, middle, and ending to life, where everyone is expected to partner off when children come of age and then have children of their own to start the cycle over again. However, in queer time, time does not exist as a continuum but, rather, spatially, in layers. Time is shown to exist simultaneously, with the past, present, and future happening all at once. *The Conjuring*, *The Others*, and *Insidious* depict the past moving beyond the present and into the future.

The Conjuring (2013) depicts the Perron family, with five young girls who move into a dilapidated farm house in Rhode Island. As the family settles into their new living quarters, their lives seem to go amiss when the girls discover a boarded-up entrance to the cellar. The morning after the cellar is discovered the mother, Carolyn Perron (Lili Taylor) develops deep purple

bruises on her body. After a series of other attacks on the family, Carolyn reaches out to world renowned paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren (Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga).

After the initial investigation with the Perron family, the Warrens discover a dark history that surrounds the farm house and the land that it was built on. The house had belonged to a woman named Bathsheba, who was accused of witchcraft in Salem during the witch trails. She fled to Rhode Island to escape persecution and later married and started a family. However, seven days after the birth of her child, Bathsheba's husband found her in front of the fireplace in the midst of a ritual to sacrifice the child's soul to Satan. Once found out, Bathsheba hung herself from the tree in the front yard, proclaiming a curse on all who should inhabit her land. During the Warrens' night investigation of the house, the ghost of Bathsheba wills Carolyn to attempt to take the life of her daughter. Ed Warren performs an exorcism on the house in an attempt to rid Bathsheba from the property and free the Perron family and all others who inhabit the property. Once Ed successfully exorcises Bathsheba's soul from the land, allowing the daughter to free herself from Carolyn's grip, Carolyn's body once again becomes her own. The next morning the Perron family steps out into the daylight, the bruises fade from Carolyn's body, and the family is free.

The Conjuring depicts an attack on heterosexuality through the violence that is perpetrated by a spirit from the past in an attempt to stop family-time. Instances of family-time are portrayed specifically through the mothers and their roles as both life-bringer and life-taker. Motherhood makes Bathsheba and Carolyn into monsters as both of them attempt to take the lives of their children. In essence, hetero time destroys a woman's humanity. This attack on motherhood coincides with Halberstam's theory of queer time. These mothers are haunted by the past, and it is affecting their present. Bathsheba remains on the land in spirit, existing forever

with the ability to interact with the living inhabitants of the house. Carolyn, on the other hand, cannot interact with Bathsheba unless Bathsheba makes the initial interaction. The evidence of the ghost's attack on motherhood and heterosexuality is through the initial attacks on the family. Some of the initial haunting includes doors opening, clapping, children giggling, and the death of the family's dog.

Ghosts are often depicted as preying on the weak. *The Conjuring* takes place in the 1970s, sets up the viewer for the past to come forward into the present. Carolyn is a stay at home mother with five girls. Her husband works and is the primary bread winner for the family. From a 70s point of view, she would be seen as the weaker of the two sexes. Male domination is also the role that Ed Warren would prefer that his wife Lorraine take. After Carolyn becomes possessed by Bathsheba, she becomes the taker of life as well as the giver; this would mean that she needs to be controlled. Carolyn has stopped acting as the subservient wife, and therefore, is more susceptible to the control of the ghost of Bathsheba. While Carolyn and her girls are terrorized by Bathsheba, her husband does not seem to suffer any ill consequences at all. Carolyn as a woman has the ability to exist in queer time and heteronormative time simultaneously. This multiplicity of time is created through the acts of Bathsheba who knows she is able to traverse planes of time, while Carolyn only becomes aware after she has encountered Bathsheba.

When someone thinks of a traditional Western family, the home is warm and full of soft edges that make you feel invited. The home in that scene is quite the opposite. The presence of ghosts and queer time stop the home from being the traditionally inviting home of a heteronormative family. The difference in the home is further exemplified when the girls wake up slowly and complain about how cold the house is. One of the daughters asks, "Do you think we bought a cold house?"

Christine and Nancy, two of Carolyn's children, are attacked directly by Bathsheba in the night. Christine is woken up by whom she thinks is Nancy pulling on her foot. Once she is stirred from her slumber, Christine is the only one who is able to see Bathsheba, who is standing behind Nancy. This display of dislike for children reiterates the attack that is happening on the family and family time, which could be held equally to the same degree as the attack that the heteronormative society sees when it is confronted by the queer community. Christine is given what appears to be a second sight, and she is able to see through time into the past where Bathsheba is coming from. Her father is the first person into the room, coming to heroically save his daughters from whatever may be frightening them. However, he is not able to see the ghost. The lack of the ability to see what is haunting his family becomes a disempowering moment as both a father and husband, as he is the patriarch of what is a traditional and nuclear family. While the father holds all the power in heteronormative time, when queer time invades the family space that power is lost. All of that power is stripped away in queer time and creates a space where he is no longer the driving force in the family. Thus, the family begins to fall apart, recreating fear in the heteronormative audience that ghosts, who bring a glimpse into queer time, remind a heteronormative audience that their time is constantly abjecting itself from the original queer time, and that existence of queer time means an existence where men no longer dominate.

After the initial attacks on the family, Carolyn seeks the aid of the Warrens. Once they have completed the home investigation Lorraine tells the Perron family that she can see a dark entity has latched onto their family and it is feeding on them. Lorraine Warren can also see the multiplicity of the temporalities within the film. Because she is depicted as a medium and a psychic, she would appear to always have one foot in a queer temporality, while living her "normal" life within the confines of heteronormative temporality. She is married to her husband,

Ed, and the two of them have a single young daughter. She has done everything to fulfill her duty as a woman in a heteronormative society by being a wife and mother. However, it is only after she has a child that her priorities are supposed to change. Lorraine Warren is a famous demonologist and has the ability to see and communicate with the ghosts. However, it is Ed who is specifically mentioned as the only un-ordained person allowed to perform exorcisms by rule of the Catholic church. It is only after she becomes a mother that Ed, despite her supernatural abilities and prowess at her craft, would rather have her stay home with their daughter. Ed states that every time Lorraine communicates with ghosts she loses a piece of herself. However, Ed has the ability to perform exorcisms and remains completely intact? It is not that Lorraine loses a piece of herself, but that Ed loses a piece of Lorraine the more adept she becomes. There would come a point where she would no longer need to rely on Ed for help with the visits to haunted locations and would be able to do each of them on her own. It is not the fact that she needs Ed, but that Ed needs her. What he believes that he needs from her is what she can offer as a heterosexual woman.

Bathsheba is feeding off the misfortune of the family, making her stronger the more she terrorizes them. Bathsheba is pulling her strength from the fear the family experiences and with each moment that the family lives in fear of her, she becomes more real. In the beginning of the film she is only able to interact with animals and inanimate objects. However, as the film progresses, and she feeds from the family, she is able to begin to physically harm them until she has created enough power to possess Carolyn. When Carolyn becomes possessed by the spirit of Bathsheba the girls run outside to their father, proclaiming that she has taken April and Christine and she smelled like rotted meat. Once Carolyn arrives back to the house, she is headed off by her husband and the Warrens, who attempt to take her outside; however, her body begins to

rapidly decay. After she is flung backward by the spirit of Bathsheba and dragged into the basement, the Warrens attempt to tie her to a chair while their assistant looks for Carolyn's daughters. While in the basement Carolyn finds April, grabs her and begins holding a knife to her. Ed Warren shouts for Bathsheba and Carolyn's face morphs into the witch. Once the Warrens urge Carolyn to fight Bathsheba from inside her body, she breaks free from the control. Bathsheba feeds on the ability to steal away the joy in everyday life (family time). Once she has done this, heterosexuality is disrupted and cannot continue its cycle and must be postponed until she is defeated or the family moves.

The men in the film depend on women to be their submissive counterparts and to take part in their duty of compulsory heterosexuality. When women are given the option to opt out of heteronormative time and therefore heterosexuality, men will have no control or even the illusion of it. Without women, all of the markers of heterosexuality fall away. There is no repro-time because there is no one to physically birth a child, and without a child the other two times become unattainable. When the women in this film are targeted as the weaker sex, it is a depiction of the means of control men use in order to maintain patriarchal status in a heteronormative society.

The Others (2001) is a film that opens with Grace Stewart, a wealthy young mother with two children, in 1945. Her husband had been fighting in the war in France but has yet to return home to them despite the fact that the war is now over. Moreover, Grace is perplexed by the fact that her housemaids have left the house and grounds. Her housemaids did not give any reason before leaving, and they did not pick up their final pay, leaving Grace and her two children alone in a large house, isolated from the rest of the world. However, three new housekeepers respond to an ad that Grace had put out, and she explains her bizarre house rules, the most important of

which is that the curtains must always be drawn because the children are “photosensitive.” After the housemaids settle in, strange things begin to happen in the house. Grace begins to hear footsteps, and voices, and her daughter begins talking to an invisible boy named Victor. Grace decides that she needs to have her home blessed and goes out to find a priest but becomes lost in the fog that always surrounds their home. While lost, she locates her husband who has also become lost in the fog. Once home, he begins acting strangely and will not leave his bed. In the meantime, Grace tries to make her daughter’s first communion dress.

Logic and physics seem to matter less and less as the film goes on. Time is a concept that is used in this film to twist the audience’s perspective of what it means to have time and create time. Within the film time is depicted as frozen as Grace and her children attempt to live their lives in a place where there is no way to tell how time has changed. When Grace leaves the room for a moment and she comes back, her daughter sits on the floor in the communion dress. To Grace her daughter has turned into a doll. Grace grabs her daughter by the neck and begins to scream in her face. Grace tears the veil off the doll’s face and reveals her crying daughter. Grace is visibly shaken by this interaction and her daughter runs off crying. Grace’s daughter had never turned into a doll or been in the dress. Instead she had been there the entire time, and it was Grace’s flawed perception of reality that induced the encounter. The children run upstairs to hide in a wardrobe but are greeted by an elderly woman with opaque eyes. The woman with the opaque eyes has the ability to see the dead and move between queer and heteronormative time. The family screams in fear and the camera moves to a group of people sitting around a table. The people sitting at the table include the elderly woman from the wardrobe who is leading a séance. Grace and her children scream, “We are not dead!” as they disappear in the scene. Papers on the table are moving around, seemingly on their own. It is then revealed that Grace had smothered

her two children in their sleep and then shot herself but remained in the house, not fully realizing that their bodies had perished. Her new servants had died working in the house during a tuberculosis epidemic. The new and only living occupants are a mother, father, and their young son Victor. Time has become jumbled as the past is haunted by the future. Grace is haunted by the new occupants of the home, as she believes she is in the present.

There is no differentiation between the normative time markers that an audience would be used to. Coupled with the fog that is always surrounding the home the time that is happening during the film is confusing. There is no bright sun light in the morning, or the orange light of the sun in the evening to indicate the sun is setting. The lack of light is shown early on in the film when Grace's new servants arrive. Grace says that she needs to wake the children to meet the new occupants. However, there is no indication of what time it is. One could infer that because the children are still sleeping it could be early in the morning. However, because the house is kept dimly lit, it is impossible to tell what time it is. Grace saunters the halls quietly, looking around, lit only by candle light. Grace says that this is because during the war the electricity kept turning off, so they had it shut completely off.

Another example of the complexity of time is when Grace is about to go out to look for a priest to bless the house because she is convinced that it is haunted, she is greeted by one of the new servants and he gestures to her and says, "Good morning." However, in the scene it is difficult to tell what time it is outside. The sky is bathed in a deep fog with no indication of where the sun may be sitting in the sky. The clouds hang low in the sky and she enters into the fog. With each step she takes, it is difficult to say how much time Grace spends looking around for a way off the property. While she is out looking in the fog for a way to the main road she becomes lost and wanders around aimlessly, until she runs into her husband, who went missing

during the war. When the two are reunited, the scene around them is dark. It is the same level of darkness that has been seen from when she left the property. This lapse of time creates a sense of discomfort and confusion in the viewer. There is no way to tell when things are happening, and the confusion does not allow for a linear time line to be created. The only place darker than the outside of the home is the inside, which is often kept pitch black, lit only by candles, with no access to the outside light, leaving the family forever in the turmoil of misunderstanding the time that they live in.

The cues that are taken from the physical time that is missing from the film reiterates the meaning of time becoming queered as ghosts live simultaneously with the living. Grace is from the time of 1945, but she is simultaneously being haunted by both the past and the present. The past is haunting Grace through the three servants who lived in the house during the 1800s and died of a tuberculosis epidemic. In the film the servants appear to know that they are no longer living but do not give Grace that information. She asks the man if he has seen any grave stones on the property and, if not, he should go to look for them for her. Once Grace leaves the property another one of the servants comes to find the man doing yard work. The two discuss whether or not it is safe to let her go off the property. They state that the fog will never let her go far. The man then asks when they should bring this all out in the open, and the woman responds, "All in good time," after which she instructs the man to continue burying their gravestones in leaves. The servants do not want Grace to know that she has left heteronormative time and has passed on to queer time. The servants know that Grace is not able to handle the fact that she is no longer alive because she panics at each instance of interaction with queer time she has.

Shortly after Grace's new servants arrive, strange things begin to happen in the house. One of the first instances is when Grace is in the living room after one of the servants has left the

room. She hears the faint sound of a child whimpering. Grace walks around for a moment and then whispers her son's name to herself as she begins to panic. She runs through the house unlocking each door that she must go through. Grace is in such a hurry that she almost breaks her own rule and leaves a door open behind her. With each threshold she traverses the crying becomes louder and more intense. She screams for her son, running through the door behind where he is studying. She shouts for him to explain why he was crying. However, he looks up at her from his book and explains that he was never crying. She looks around in disbelief and then runs to her second child. Grace bounds through the house screaming out for her daughter as the crying seems to follow her. She bounds through the door where her daughter is reading. Her daughter looks up at her from the floor contently. When her daughter denies being the one who was crying Grace pries her further, becoming agitated. Grace then asks her if she was not the one crying then was it imagined. That is when Grace's daughter explains that it was not either of the children but the boy Victor.

Victor exists in the present, and Grace's daughter exists in the past. The two of them are sharing the same space in time for a moment. The encounter is an example of queer time and the thin line between heteronormative time, queer time, the living, and the dead. Her daughter can also see between times just like the servants and the woman with the opaque eyes. Grace refuses to see this time and instead insists and attempts to create heteronormative time in queer time. Grace begins to pace the floor in disbelief when she is told that the boy (Victor) said that the family would have to leave the home. When Grace demands to know how he had gotten in and out of the room if every door in the house was shut as soon as anyone passed through it. She turns to look at the door her daughter told her he left through and it sits ajar. Grace stares in horror as she realizes she may not be alone.

The women in *The Others* seem to be the ones who lead the way in traversing time. Both the opaque-eyed woman and the servant woman are the two main women that we see traversing the barriers of temporality. However, Grace's daughter does display the ability to communicate with the present as she is the only one who can communicate with Victor. Because those barriers are traversable, we can see into queer time and how the barriers that are broken down affect heteronormative time. The servant is able to move from the 1800s to the 1940s to work for Grace, despite the fact that they are both dead. Since the servant knows that she is dead, she is already aware that she can no longer participate in heteronormative time. She is simply existing on the land that she had died on without truly disturbing the present because she is aware of the way she can interact with both the past-present and present-future. However, the older woman who is acting as the medium for the present-day family does not appear to be completely aware of the way that she can interact with ghosts while traversing into queer time. She does not appear to be able to see Grace or her children. She also does not interact with the family in any other way than by asking them why they are there. She carries over the metaphor of women being able to see into queer time as a human participant in heteronormative time. She is able to interact with Grace's children as they can see her for brief moments, but it is in the last scene of the film when she is able to hear them that she acts as a conduit for queer time, allowing it to be fully expressed simultaneously with heteronormative time.

The Others acts as a bridge between *The Conjuring* and the next film I will discuss, *Insidious*. Not only does *The Others* focus on the present being haunted by the past, but it is the past that is being haunted by the future. *The Others* creates for the audience a full explanation of the multiplicity of temporalities. These multiple temporalities create a doorway into queer time, allowing the ghosts to move between heteronormative and queer time simultaneously. The film

forces the audience to experience the present as the future in the past: the audience follows Grace, who is haunting the present that she is convinced is the past; however, that past is the audience's present, moving into the future. These times begin to collapse in on themselves as all meaning of time disintegrates, and time is depicted as not existing within a vacuum but within each time simultaneously.

Insidious (2010) is the story of Renai (Rose Byrne) and Josh (Patrick Wilson) Lambert whose son is what is described as a "traveler." In the beginning of the film, their son Dalton (Ty Simpkins) is haunted by the face of an elderly woman. He cries in terror, but his parents write it off as him being afraid of the new house that they have recently moved into. After calming him down, his parents put him to bed and all is quiet in the home. However, in the morning Dalton cannot be woken from his slumber. Once his parents rush him to the hospital, the doctors explain that Dalton has fallen into a coma. Dalton is moved back into his home shortly after, as the doctors explain there is nothing that can be done for him in the hospital.

Shortly after bringing Dalton home, strange occurrences begin to happen in the home. The hauntings begin innocently enough, such as shadows moving across the floor. However, as time goes on the supernatural events grow more sinister. Renai begins to hear voices coming from the baby monitor inside of their infant daughter's room, and the family's younger son, Foster, begins to see what he describes as Dalton walking around the house at night to scare him. Renai tells her husband about these events, but he is unwilling to believe her until she is assaulted by a strange man inside the home. After having a nightmare Josh's mother makes a call to her friend and psychic, Elise (Lin Shaye), who was able to help Josh when he was younger. Once in the home with the family, Elise explains that Dalton, like his father, has the ability to astral project. Without knowing what to do with that ability, human souls can be lost inside "The

Further” as they stray too far from their bodies. Dalton thought that he was dreaming and therefore had no fear of what was ahead of him. Elise preps Josh to astral project into The Further so he can seek out the soul of his son and bring it back to his body, bringing Dalton out of the coma.

Insidious demonstrates an attack on the family and family-time. The spirits who walk the earth prey on the weakest link in the family— the children. The children are depicted as the weakest link in the film because of the heteronormative fear that Dalton will not be able to abide by heterosexual time if he is aware of his link to The Further. Dalton is able to astral project therefore creating a stronger link between him and the spirits. The ability to communicate with spirits also means that there is a strong link between Dalton and queer time. Dalton may not traverse queer time and must take his place in heteronormative society. His ability to move between times puts him closer to femininity and therefore further from heterosexuality. Because Dalton is able to see spirits, they are able to use him as a door between their metaphysical world and the physical world in which the family resides. Once Dalton is attacked by the spirit of an elderly woman in his new home, all paranormal activity starts there. Once Dalton falls into a coma, the spirits are able to use his empty vessel to come back and forth between the physical world and The Further.

Beyond an attack on the family, which would already set an audience at unease, *Insidious* depicts an attack on heteronormative time. *Insidious*'s final scenes take place in no-when (a place where there is nothing and no time) in the film called The Further. The Further is described as a place that can only be accessed by the dead and those who can astral project. Elise describes it as “a world beyond our own, yet it is all around us. A place without time as we know it... a place not meant for the living.” When Dalton astral projected, he entered into queer time, a place

without markers. Without those markers, Dalton, who thought he was only dreaming, is lost. With no way to define time or place, he is left in “no-when” as he continues to exist and yet does not exist at all. All time periods keep moving simultaneously and yet no time passes. As I write this I have trouble finding the words that will adequately describe when and what The Further is, as our limited language does not allow for representation of time to exist without a space to hold it inside of. The Further is a representation of the multiplicity of space as well as the multiplicities of time, as all-time has seemingly stopped yet some times, like the present, continue to move forward, while other times in The Further happen in a loop.

The best example of the multiplicity of queer time in The Further is when Josh goes into The Further to find Dalton. Elise has Josh, who is skeptical about his ability, sit down in a chair in front of her. She uses a pendulum to keep time and tells Josh to relax his mind and move away from his body. Josh, who does not believe any of this, opens his eyes. The present goes dark and he realizes that he is alone except for the faint image of Elise on the sofa in front of him. She warns him not to become lost and to keep one foot in “this” world. Josh realizes that he has left his body in the present and that his spirit can now freely explore The Further. The Further is dark, despite the fact that when Josh leaves the present it is daylight outside. The light in The Further reiterates that The Further is no time but is continually drenched in darkness, jarring the audience and the character as all markers of time have been erased. Josh continues to move through a thick mist as his own home disappears. He begins to wander the darkness until he walks into himself as a young boy wandering through The Further. The Further is all times existing at the same time, as young Josh is in the “past” projecting into The Further as a child, and present Josh is in The Further now looking for his son. The two times are able to coincide

with each other because the rules of heteronormative time, specifically family time, and logic do not apply to *The Further*.

Josh is able to interact with another time that is completely unfamiliar to him. He is in a living room with a family he does not recognize. It is impossible to tell who the family is or where they belong. The only thing that can be definitely said about the family is that they are dead. The room is only dimly lit by the lantern that Josh is holding as he walks slowly to the middle of the room to investigate its inhabitants. The family seems as though they are stuck in a time loop. Two figures, a father and daughter, sit on the couch, as the mother stands and holds an iron to a shirt. They never move, but only smile, as the father whistles an eerie tune. Josh passes by the family and through another door, leading him to yet another time where he encounters a young girl sitting alone at a table lit by candles. He is then drawn away by the sound of a shot gun cocking and firing several times. As he re-enters through the door he just passed, the family who was sitting on the couch is now dead with what appears to be another member of the family, the young girl from the table, holding a shot gun in front of them. Just as before, the family is still with no one moving or making a sound. The girl with the shot gun smiles and Josh leaves their living room.

It would appear that Josh's spirit has become almost ghostlike in its existence since he can interact with the spirits in *The Further*. The family is depicted as trapped, forced to relive their pasts over and over as the present moves on around them. Time is not fixed in *The Further*, as the scenes switch back and forth between the present and *The Further*. Josh's physical body depicted in the present, while appearing distressed, does not appear to be in any pain. Time seems as though it continues to move in the present, but *The Further* is slower. While it is not depicted how much time Josh spends in *The Further*, in the present it appears that only moments

have passed yet Josh seems to have been wandering lost for hours. Josh finally finds Dalton chained outside of a door that is inhabited by a demon, a creature who also holds the ability to possess humans but is much stronger than the spirits who haunted Dalton previously. Josh tells Dalton that The Further is not real and that he can leave. Father and son attempt and escape The Further, and once they stop fearing the past and spirits within The Further, they are able to find their way back to their bodies. The act of Josh telling his son that The Further is not a real place is Josh helping his son separate from femininity to begin to abide by the laws of heteronormativity.

Ghosts exist simultaneously within queer and heteronormative time, allowing those who perceive them to likewise move between queer and heteronormative time. The ability to traverse time applies specifically to women because they hold together the fabric of heteronormative time. Ghosts attack families whose center is often the mother figure. Family time is dependent on women and therefore heterosexuality is also dependent on women for procreation. If women are given the opportunity to opt out of heteronormative time, then the boundaries will begin to disintegrate. Without the boundaries of heteronormative time, the meaning of time itself begins to fall apart. That meaning being that humans are destined to spend their time working towards the facilitation of reproduction, family, and inheritance.

CHAPTER 4

Slashers: The Creation of Queer Time

The slasher film in many respects is the quintessential modern horror film subgenre. Since *Psycho* (1960) the horror genre has experienced a shift in what is considered monstrous. In the early days of horror, non-human monsters were popular subjects. From *Frankenstein* (1931) to *The Blob* (1988), monsters reigned supreme in popularity. After *Psycho* was released, American audiences became enthralled with the hyperreality of the truest of monsters – other people. The origin of the slasher was initially based on audience’s fascination with real life serial killers. Audiences know that vampires do not exist, and they know that ghosts do not exist; however, someone taking the life of another human being is a completely plausible situation.

The American obsession with the slasher film begins with real life serial killer Ed Gein who is considered one of America’s first serial killers. Gein inspired not only the events of *Psycho*, but also *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), and more modern iterations such as the second season of *American Horror Story* (2016) (Schechter 5). The slasher is indicative of the “based on true events” tag line that often accompanies films in this subgenre, such as in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) also inspired by Gein. That film opens with voiced-over narration dictating to the audiences that the events they are about to see are real and “one of the most bizarre crimes in American history” (Hooper).

One of the most notable examples of hyper reality in a film creating real fear is *Jaws* (1975). *Jaws* planted a seed within the minds of the audiences, one which they could never forget, taking that fear into the future to affect shark populations. Stefan Lovgren at *National Geographic* quotes Robert Hueter when discussing the effect *Jaws* has had on shark populations: “On the one hand, the movie did damage to sharks, because people saw them as monsters...But

for scientists, the whole *Jaws* thing started working in our favor, because of the overexaggerated public interest in these animals” (qtd in Lovgren). Sharks have become the focal point of public interest as far as aquatic villains go, even though shark attacks are a rare occurrence in comparison to the fear they present.

The modern slasher film creates a fear of things people must encounter in their everyday lives. Between the statement of “based on true events” and the plausibility of the situations, slasher films create real and true fears that stay with audiences long after they have left the theatre. This space between the reaction of fear and the object that the fear represents creates queer time trapping the audiences mind within the film anytime the object of fear is encountered either physically or psychologically. Queerness in slasher films has been looked at by several well-known critics, including Alexander Doty and Carol Clover, who discuss sexuality and body of men portrayed in horror films. Doty devotes an entire chapter of *Flaming Classics* to *Psycho* and the queerness of Norman’s character. (Doty 156). Clover in *Men Women and Chainsaws* also makes specific mention of *Psycho* and the slasher genre, discussing the queerness of characters and actions in film.

Based on the previous research done by Doty and Clover, I will approach the subgenre through a queer lens. Moving a step further, I will argue that slasher films do not represent queer time as the other subgenres I have previously discussed do but, rather, create it. The fear is created through planting a seed of fear in the mind of the audience. That fear is of something that is often normative – the shower, your neighbors, or even going to sleep. These fears are all mundane phenomena that most people are going to encounter in their daily lives. Americans are expected to clean themselves, interact with others, and sleep. These activities are rendered fearful and horrific through the films that I cover in this chapter. *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* induces the

fear of other people. The person living next door could be a cannibal and no one would ever know until it was too late. This film suggests to audiences that they cannot trust those around them. *Psycho* has created the fear of the shower, thus, turning the experience of “the clean and proper body” (Kristeva 71) into fear. After seeing *Psycho*, people may not like to shower when they are home alone, and before stepping into the shower they may pull the curtains back to ensure there is nothing or no one inside. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) induces the fear of dreams and sleep. If audiences cannot sleep safely and exist inside their own minds without the intrusion of someone else, where are they safe? Slasher films create fear of the normative by encouraging a reaction of fear when that ordinary phenomenon is encountered. The viewer becomes trapped in the film, unable to escape its narrative, creating queer time. The creation of a time that exists in film and coexists with the present leaves the viewer in queer time, forced to fear the normative. These films make heteronormativity frightening. Whereas previous chapters have iterated that queer time is unsettling for heteronormative audiences, slasher films create fear that persists long after the film is finished. The past is still infecting the present, not unlike vampires and ghosts do, but it is the fear of the normative, or non-normative quasi human monsters, that creates an entirely different state of being as audiences exist within the past and present simultaneously.

Queer time is what makes the slasher film so horrifying to a heteronormative audience. No one wants to die; however, because slashers create queer time, there is always an impending threat. Not only is there the threat of imminent death at the hands of someone capable of murder but also there is a threat to heteronormativity itself. The audiences are always worried about their physical body, but not often do they think of their minds as being threatened while watching a film. Most people view their minds as a constant with a singular sense of existence. What I mean

is most people view themselves and what they are living as the present and only form of existence that they have. The present is disrupted when slashers bring a threat from the past with them to the present, oftentimes ending the future of the people they come into contact with. When faced with the thoughts of the past coming to the present to cause you harm, you then exist in a place where your mind is no longer safe from the thoughts that haunt you, hours or even days after you have watched a film. That loss of control disrupts heteronormativity, as heterosexuality is based on the notion that no one should ever have same sex desires. However, it is unlikely that one has never had same sex desires or wondered about same sex desires. The haunting of the past includes desires and experiences one abjects in order to maintain the lie of heterosexuality.

The haunting of the mind acts as the revenge of the abject; one abjects the body in order to create identity. The slasher film then disrupts this idea of identity by showing the audience that no one is in control of their own minds. Identity is disrupted through creating a fear of the mundane through the process of experiencing queer time where the viewer is eternally trapped within the narrative of the film, unable to escape the monsters they have merely imagined. The fear is a link to queerness in a sense that heteronormativity craves singularity. Heteronormative time must constantly and continually abject queer time to assert itself as the only and original time, just as heterosexuality abjects queer sexuality. What the slasher film is doing is creating the suggestion that no one is in control of themselves, and control is only illusion. When that illusion is washed away, there is nothing holding together the logic that we are a single identity with a single way of life.

This concept aligns with Halberstam's study of "The Wild," where it is discussed that queerness has become a tired term, because it has been used as an umbrella term for too long and

means too many things. Everything non-normative has ended up under the queer umbrella and Halberstam argues that “queer” cannot hold all of that weight anymore. “The Wild” acts as a place where heteronormativity does not reign supreme and instead no one should expect to be anything; instead human potential and complexity is wild and “unpredictability can thrive” (Halberstam, “Queer Failure”). Halberstam argues that children are not heterosexual by default. Children are nothing; they are limitless human potential when they are born. Children are also often credited with having wild imaginations that allow them to see things beyond the adult comprehension. Monsters are often something that children claim to see and be afraid of. The monster under the bed and monster in the closet are brushed aside by adults as if children have a lower comprehension of the world around them. However, adults have irrational fears as well. These irrational fears are of normative places and situations due to films adults have watched and monsters they have encountered. Through queer time, adults could be able to view themselves as limitless human potential. Then all identities would cease to exist for they would not know what they were if they had nothing to say they were not. In the eyes of the heteronormative, heterosexuality hinges on denying any instance of same sex desire or contact.

Texas Chainsaw Massacre plays on the fear that almost everyone has at some point in their life. Can they trust the people who are around them? Franklin (Paul A. Partain), Jerry (Allen Danziger), Kirk (William Vail), Pam (Teri McMinn), and Sally (Marilyn Burns) are travelling to investigate reports of vandalism and grave robbing on the grave of Sally’s and Franklin’s grandfather’s tombstone. The friends stop at a gas station to refill, but they learn that the pumps are out of gas and continue to their destination, taking note to return to the gas station once the gas is delivered. The Cook (Jim Siedow) is working at the gas station but is currently unnamed in the film. Once they arrive at the old home of Franklin and Sally’s grandparents they

tell the others about a local swimming spot, and Kirk and Pam head off alone to find it. While looking for the swimming spot the pair stumble across a house and Kirk goes inside to ask about gas. Suddenly, Leatherface (Gunnar Hansen), a large man wearing a mask of human skin, appears and kills Kirk with a hammer. Pam, becoming concerned, goes into the house to look for Kirk. She is stopped by Leatherface and impaled on a meat hook, and then forced to watch as Leatherface butchers Kirk with a chainsaw. Jerry goes out to look for Pam and Kirk as the sun begins to set. He finds Pam in the freezer but before he can free her, Leatherface kills him. Sally and Franklin become concerned that no one has returned. The two head out to look for their friends, but Franklin is killed by Leatherface. Sally, while looking for her friends begins being pursued by Leatherface. She stumbles onto Leatherface's house and wanders upstairs finding the bodies of two elderly people. The woman is very much dead, but the man seems to be clinging to life. Leatherface tracks Sally to the house and chases her. Sally frees herself by jumping from the second story window of the home. The elderly man turns out to be who the Cook refers to as Grandpa (John Dugan). Sally runs back to the gas station, where the Cook says that he can help her. He then takes her back to the house where he and Hitchhiker (Edwin Neal) terrorize her. While Sally is bound and gagged, Leatherface, now dressed as a woman, prepares to serve dinner, which can be assumed is human remains. The Hitchhiker goes upstairs to get Grandpa for dinner. When the men decide that Grandpa should kill Sally, he turns out to be too weak to get the job done. Grandpa gives Sally the chance to escape. Despite being chased she escapes on the back of a passing pickup truck.

The film creates a sense of mistrust of those around us. Everyone has heard of the hospitality of others, places where you could leave your doors unlocked and trust your neighbors. However, what *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* does is plant the seed of distrust in the audience. In a

time where it was believed that someone could trust those around them for help if they needed it, Kirk is evidence that walking into someone's home uninvited, no matter how innocent your intentions, can lead to an untimely demise. This fear is further amplified by Pam, who goes searching for Kirk after he has been missing for a while. What these scenes tell the audience is to be afraid of strangers. The communication of what to be afraid of begins the creation of queer time. After viewing, the film stays with the viewer. The fear creates a fear within the viewer, as anytime they are reminded of the film, they will return to the feelings of fear they felt while watching. When they need to ask a stranger for help the scenes of Pam and Kirk will play inside their minds, reminding them that if they encounter a stranger they could be a cannibal looking for their next meal.

There is another level to *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and its relationship with heteronormative time through the murder of the young friends but also the disruption of family time through the representation of the family in the film. The film appears to favor those who practice heteronormative time in a way. The family of Leatherface, the Hitchhiker, and the Cook elect to allow who they reference as Grandpa to kill Sally. The moment they lapse into heteronormativity is the moment that Sally is allowed to escape. Heteronormative time is reliant on heterosexuality to continue forward in the cycle of repro-time, family time, and time of inheritance. The cycle of heterosexuality is stopped in the film by Leatherface, through the killing of all the young characters in the film except Sally. The cycle is stopped deliberately by Leatherface. He sees no need for women or heterosexuality at all, other than for food. He is amorphous and takes on the role of a woman when one is required. Leatherface's sexuality is depicted during the dinner scene when the Hitchhiker and the Cook are preparing for dinner. Leatherface enters the scene dressed as a woman carrying dinner to be placed on the table. The

meaning of family to Leatherface and his relatives is not reproductive; Leatherface does not need a mother as he becomes her. Family is a bond that they share not through blood relation but the shared consumption of human flesh. The family does not desire the human body for sex, as most heteronormative interpretation of desire would indicate. However, they desire the body for nourishment and food. I speculate the perversion of heterosexuality causes Leatherface to be upset by sexual bodies; therefore, he elects to use the bodies for food instead of pleasure. Queer time is created through the family dynamic of the film as well as its treatment of those in child-bearing age. The family appears on the surface as regular people living in rural united states, however, it is the fear that is created that stays with the viewer anytime they pass through a small town.

Just as the family in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* creates a fear of rural America, Norman Bates creates the fear of the shower in the 1960 classic film *Psycho*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. The film begins with a young woman named Marion Crane (Janet Leigh), who has stolen money from her boss and fled her town in an attempt to escape from her current life. Prior to this she had a disagreement about her future with a man she has been seeing. After fleeing from her boss, Marion finds herself checking into the secluded Bates Motel. After listening to Norman's (Anthony Perkins) story of how he feels trapped in the area, Marion takes this as a cautionary tale and decides she is going to head back to Arizona and make amends for what she has done. However, she never has the chance to return to her old life. Marion is stabbed to death in the shower by a mysterious female figure after Norman watches her undress from a peephole behind a wall. A week later Marion's sister Lila (Vera Miles) arrives to confront Marion's boyfriend Sam (John Gavin) about her disappearance. When neither of them knows where Marion is, the pair is questioned by a private investigator. Arbogast (Martin Balsam) is hired to

find the 40,000 dollars that she took off with. Arbogast goes to the hotel to question Norman about the whereabouts of Marion. At the motel Arbogast asks to speak with Norman's mother but before he gets the chance, he is murdered by Norman. Worried that something bad has happened, Lila and Sam go to the local sheriff and explain the situation. They are dismissed and take matters into their own hands. The pair are attacked by Norman after Lila discovers the corpse of Norman's mother, Norman is subdued, and the film ends with Marion's car being pulled from a swamp.

The viewer is placed within the narrative; they begin to experience the world of Marion Crane. She is the character that the audience follows through the first half of the film until her untimely death. What creates queer time for the audience in this film is the scene in the shower. The shower is a place of great intimacy where the person inside is at their most vulnerable. The senses are dulled in the shower by the sound of the water and the steam created. Because Marion is killed inside her shower this leaves the audience with a fear of the shower. Queer time is created through the memory of the film being called on every time someone who has seen it encounters a shower. People may not shower at night because of the vulnerability that is created from the shower, and that fear stems from the seed planted by *Psycho* that audiences are not safe inside their homes. The place where they are the most vulnerable becomes the place where they fear the most in home, as they are forced to check the shower before stepping inside and locking the bathroom door to ensure they are safe from anyone lurking outside. Marion is unaware of the figure that lurks closer to her. The figure wears a long dress with a ruffled high neckline and sleeves that hit below the wrists. The figure's hair is pulled tightly into a bun with the sides of the hair parted directly down the middle of their head. Butcher's knife in hand, the figure stabs Marion multiple times as she screams, her body exposed, with close up shots of her face, hands,

belly button, and thighs. The thought of the film continues to haunt the viewer anytime they encounter a shower. The images of Marion being butchered will haunt their minds dragging them from the present to the past.

Lastly is the threat of the past coming back to take hold of the future. Norman's mother haunts him despite the fact that she has been dead for over ten years. Norman is no longer in control of his mind or of his gender; instead it is his mother who controls his thoughts and actions. Unlike ghosts, Norman's mother has not come back to haunt him in a way that would indicate her spirit has returned to this world. His mother haunts him within his own mind, prompting him to kill the woman that he is attracted to. The attraction to Marion is interesting because Marion is older than Norman. Because he has an attraction to an older woman, that woman is then equated in his mind to his mother because of the place that she holds in his psyche. Therefore, anyone that he desires must be older than him, so he can envision his mother. Because this is a violation of the incest taboo, he is unable to cope with his desires. Then Norman, who killed his mother and her lover out of jealousy, is haunted by his deeds. He continues to hear her voice, as she speaks to him through his own mind. Audiences also learn that Norman keeps his mother's preserved body in the home with him. The first scene in the film where Norman speaks with his mother is when Marion arrives at the motel. After Norman invites her to have dinner with him, Marion stares out the window at the silhouette in the house across from her window. Two faint voices are heard as they bicker back and forth. The female voice of Mother chastises Norman for the way he looks at Marion, warning him against the dangers of lusting for a woman, while Norman fights back pleading with his mother to please stop, that he isn't interested in her, he just wants to make sure that she eats. It is the constant voice of the mother that compels Norman to put on a wig and dress and kill Marion as she showers. Through

the depiction of the past haunting the present and the disruption of heteronormative time paired with the queer time created, the audience is transported back to the film when they see something that reminds them of it, and this creates a fear in the heteronormative audience that they can never escape.

Norman is a fictional character who runs a fictional motel, in a place in America the audience may never visit. What is frightening about *Psycho* is what happens after the film is over. An audience member goes home, to their hotel, or anywhere they perceive as a place of safety. Once they decide to shower is when *Psycho* creates queer time, trapping the member in the narrative. They begin to shower, and hear a noise, the walls creak, or something in another room falls over. Instantly they may turn off the shower or peek their head outside for reassurance. They are in space that is supposed to be reserved to house us at our most vulnerable, and yet Norman Bates still lurks in their minds as they shower.

Just as Norman lurks in the minds of those who have seen *Psycho* and dare to clean themselves after, Freddie from *A Nightmare on Elm Street* exists in the dreams of those who sleep after viewing the film. Freddie is the ultimate representation of queerness because he embodies the fear of queerness in its most simplistic form, that one might not be able to determine or control their desires. Freddie represents that we are not even safe in our most sacred place inside our minds. If he has access to our dreams and deepest vulnerabilities, then we are not in control of our thoughts and desires.

A Nightmare on Elm Street begins with a young girl being stalked through a boiler room. A man follows her around the room, wearing a glove made of blades. The man slashes out at the girl, leaving distinct tears in her night gown. Tina (Amanda Wyss) wakes up from the nightmare unharmed, but her mother points out the mysterious slash marks in her nightdress. The next day

Tina is consoled by her friend Nancy (Heather Langenkamp) and her boyfriend Glen (Johnny Depp). Since Tina's parents are going out of town, the three decide to have a sleep over and Tina's boyfriend Rod (Jsu Garcia) joins them. When they are settling down to go to sleep, Rod is awakened by Tina thrashing in her sleep. Tina is fatally slashed by an unseen force and Rod flees the home. Nancy and Glen blame Rod for the death of Tina and he is arrested. The next day Nancy falls asleep in the classroom and is greeted by a man who calls himself Freddy. He chases her around the boiler room until she burns her arm on a pipe and wakes up. At home she falls asleep in the bathtub and is nearly drowned by Freddy. Nancy and Rod determine that Freddy is responsible for the death of Tina. Growing more fearful of falling asleep, Nancy has Glen watch over her as she sleeps. Nancy is attacked again and this time when she wakes up she has Freddy's hat in her possession. Nancy and Glen want to know why Freddy is haunting their dreams. Nancy's mother tells her that Freddy was a child murderer who was freed of charges on a technicality. In an act of taking the law into their own hands, the parents burned him alive. Nancy plans to bring Freddy into the real world and kill him. Nancy sets him on fire but finds flaming foot prints coming out of the basement. Nancy tries to render Freddy powerless by not fearing him. Suddenly she finds herself outside dressed for school. Nancy enters the car as her mother is grabbed by a razor clad hand and pulled through a window.

A Nightmare on Elm Street preys on audience's most vulnerable time--when they are sleeping. Everyone needs to sleep. It is what many people look forward to at the end of a long day. Sleep is the place where for what feels like only moments someone does not exist. We are not functioning in the world around us and will have no recollection of the time that will have passed while we were sleeping. Sleep, much like the shower, is an intimate time. People only share a bed with those they are most comfortable with, doors are locked, lights are turned out,

and for a few short hours all of the world fades away. Sleep is a vital part of human existence. Without sleep people become irritable and lose the ability to function altogether. What *A Nightmare on Elm Street* does for the viewer is create a fear of going to sleep. Freddy is only able to hunt and kill as he exists in the dream world. The characters in the film are only safe when they are awake. This concept is set up early in the film when Tina is having a nightmare about a man chasing her in a boiler room. She awakens unscathed but visibly shaken. Everyone has nightmares where they are woken up shaken, haunted by what happened in their dreams, even if they were not real. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* opens the possibility that your dreams can hurt you, and what happens during your nightmares can affect your sleeping body in real time. Queer time is created after the film is over, when the heteronormative audience is finished watching and they try to go to sleep that night, the thought of the film being carried with them as they return to what they believe is heteronormative time. However, because the film (the past) lingers in the minds of the audience, they are still controlled by the conventions of the film. The memories of the film begin to flood back to the mind, as they lie down to sleep that night after watching. Their dreams are no longer a safe or sacred space, and they are no longer safe inside the most personal space they inhabit, their minds.

A Nightmare on Elm Street also works on another level to continue to disrupt heteronormative time. The parents of Tina, Nancy, Rod, and Glen reveal that Freddy, the man who has been haunting the teens in their dreams, was a man who was convicted of murdering children in the neighborhood. To protect family time, the parents, in an act of vigilante justice, burned the man to death to ensure that no one's children were harmed again. This act was supposed to ensure that the children could grow up and continue in the cycle of heteronormativity. The kids would not have their life cut short by a monster who was looking to

end the cycle of heteronormativity before it ever began. However, this was not the end of Freddy as the parents had thought, and their past returns to haunt them as he takes revenge on their kids. Freddy begins to disrupt the cycle of heteronormativity. Freddy kills the teens who are coupled off, ensuring that they will never move into adulthood to begin their own family time and time of inheritance, and they will never see their parent's time of inheritance, thereby dismantling heteronormativity through its most vulnerable participants. The parents of the teens can never escape their past, and the loss of their children serves as a constant reminder of the deed they had committed.

Finally, and arguably the most interesting factor of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, is the simultaneous representation of queer time through the time of dreams. Most of the scenes that contain the deaths of the characters do not actually take place in reality but in dream time. The hyperreality of the slasher film begins to fall away, as the audience is plunged into the time of dreams. This is a time where anything can happen; dreams are not bound by the markers of reality or heteronormative time. Dream time is another instance of queer time that exists within the film industry. A dream space takes place inside the mind where it should be the safest place. However, due to the fact that Freddy preys on his victims inside their dreams— a time that not even heteronormative time can control— makes dream time even more dangerous. When time and sense collapse inside a dream, no one is safe anywhere, in the most private of places. The idea of dreams ties back to the creation of queer time because queer time is created in this dream space through the thoughts that bring the audience member back to the memory of the film. Each time an audience member sleeps they risk reliving any number of films they have seen, placing them in the past, if only for a moment.

In each of the slasher films discussed in this chapter a final girl is left behind. She lives through the carnage and death of the slasher and is forced to carry on her life after the events. In the same vein, some of the audience is also trapped as the final girl. The final girl is the only girl left to face the killer and survive; she is also the one who must remain to tell the story of what happened. Based on Clover's definition of the final girl, she is fluid in gender interpretation, allowing her to be embodied by all of those in the audience, who also become the final girl as they finish the film. According to Clover: "the final girl is boyish... just as the killer not fully masculine, she is not fully feminine" (Clover 40). What this means is that the final girl possesses a sense of androgyny that allows her to mirror the killer in some way. The audience is also forced to live with the memories and carry the film with them even after they have left the film behind. Clover's argument continues that the final girl must gain her masculinity, shed her damsel in distress nature, and face the killer head on. The final girl must experience horror to be able to move forward from helplessness into the role of the final girl and be purged of her undesirable qualities. These undesirable qualities I would argue, are heteronormativity. The final girl must be able to come to terms with her queerness, allowing her the vision of a time without boundaries or binaries where she does not have the compulsion of heterosexuality (Rich 631). The same can be said for the audience of the film. They experience and survive true horror while watching slasher films. Audiences often leave slasher films knowing the cardinal rules of survival begin with not having heterosexual sex. This information is stuck with the audience, and they can never stop being the final girl as they are often the only ones to walk away from the slasher and live (Clover 44).

While some moviegoers walk out of the film as the final girl haunted every day by what they have seen, others leave enjoying the experience, feeling as though they have something in

common with the slasher on screen. Linda Williams writes that horror is only one of three genres that is experienced with the entire body (Williams 267). There is an undeniable pleasure that is derived from watching slasher films, even more so, something that induces the reaction of laughter. More specifically, in films such as *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, there are elements of the absurd that feel out of place, yet we laugh. When Freddy chases Tina in her death scene, his arms seem disproportionately long compared to the height of his body. This image of the dangerous looking absurd creates an uncomfortable laughter, leaning closely into the uncanny; he appears to be something familiar, yet he is dangerous and not to be confronted. Another example of this is in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* when Sally has been captured by the Cook and Hitchhiker. They are going to allow Grandpa the chance to kill her with a hammer. They place the tool in the feeble hands of the old man, cheering him on to kill her. Each time he holds the hammer in his hands, it falls to the floor and a disappointed mumble falls over Cook and Hitchhiker. Sally, on the other hand, is faced with her impending doom and being teased with the promise of another day at every drop of the hammer. While the scene in its essence is meant to be the serious life and death struggle of a young girl looking for a way to make her escape, there is something humorous about the image of an elderly man unable to hold a hammer, continually dropping it despite the cheering of young men around him clearly more capable of wielding the weapon.

Audience members under the cover of darkness of a movie theater are allowed to experience queerness safely under the nose of the heterosexual hegemonic. What I mean by this is that movie theaters in and of themselves are incredibly heteronormative in nature, and yet, what is behind the door in darkness could subvert all expectations. Movie theaters present themselves as large visually displeasing square buildings, where patrons wait in line for a ticket,

and then are directed to the proper door to move through (much like heterosexuality). Then as the film begins they can be transported to a representation of queer time or create it for themselves as they watch a horror film. Horror allows for a sort of voyeurism, letting the audience experience what it is like to be both the victim and the perpetrator. The question then becomes why would you want to make yourself afraid in the first place? There is an allure within the horror genre, specifically the slasher subgenre, that allows the audience to reveal their own perversities in an anonymous way.

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APPENDIX A

OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY APPROVAL LETTER



Office of Research Integrity

January 9, 2018

Melody Cooper
1408 3rd Avenue
Huntington, WV 25701

Dear Ms. Cooper:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled "*Queer Theory and Horror Prospectus*." After assessing the abstract, it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction, it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director

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