



The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis (Popular Fictions Series)

By Barbara Creed

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In almost all critical writings on the horror film, woman is conceptualised only as victim. In *The Monstrous-Feminine* Barbara Creed challenges this patriarchal view by arguing that the prototype of all definitions of the monstrous is the female reproductive body.

With close reference to a number of classic horror films including the *Alien* trilogy, *The Exorcist* and *Psycho*, Creed analyses the seven 'faces' of the monstrous-feminine: archaic mother, monstrous womb, vampire, witch, possessed body, monstrous mother and castrator. Her argument that man fears woman as *castrator*, rather than as *castrated*, questions not only Freudian theories of sexual difference but existing theories of spectatorship and fetishism, providing a provocative re-reading of classical and contemporary film and theoretical texts.

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Editorial Review

Review

"By reinstating the repressed mother and "femme castratrice in classic Freudian theory, and by extending Julia Kristeva's discussion of horror and abjection to fresh critical objects, Barbara Creed accessibly and convincingly demonstrates the relevance and productivity of psychoanalytic theory for cultural analysis."

-Annette Kuhn, University of Glasgow

"A substantial contribution to knowledge of the horror film . . . the first study to concentrate specifically on the monstrous-feminine."

-E. Ann Kaplan

"Witty, succinct, a pleasure to read. The critique of Freudian theory comprises a total re-conceptualization of the status of the feminine within psychoanalytic debate."

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