Eliciting Fear

in

Psycho (1960), Halloween (1978) and The Shining (1980)

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Masters of Arts Research

July 2020
Psycho (1960), Halloween (1978) and The Shining (1980) are seminal films that have been instrumental in both shaping the horror genre and eliciting the emotional response of fear in the viewer. Their respective directors, Alfred Hitchcock, John Carpenter and Stanley Kubrick, each employed and developed specific techniques for producing fear. This research identifies those techniques by close analyses of the formal elements of each film and considers why they are effective. A common core of techniques is shared by all three films: the primary technique for inducing fear is the employment of the subjective camera. Freud’s notion of the uncanny is also significant and each film takes considerable measures to arouse ‘uncanny’ sensations in the viewer through a variety of cinematic techniques. Both Carpenter and Kubrick built on Hitchcock as well as developed new techniques, with the aid of new technology, in order to keep up with changing audience perceptions and expectations.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) ________________________________
Rosemary Long
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give special thanks to Dr Debra Beattie from the Griffith Film School for her assistance with this research.

I would also like to thank the staff of HDR and HLSS departments for their support, in particular, Dr Annita Boyd, Dr Robert Mason and Dr Amanda Howell.

I wish to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to the academic supervisor of this research, Dr David Baker. Your unwavering support and guidance has been invaluable and truly appreciated. Thank you for always being available to answer questions and being so generous with your time and for always coaxing me to do better. You rock.
This research is dedicated to my mother who passed during this process.

Love and light my darling.
Chapter One

INTRODUCTION


Alfred Hitchcock, John Carpenter and Stanley Kubrick are all masters at building suspense and tension. Each has developed specific techniques designed to elicit fear in the viewer. This research identifies these techniques by close analyses of the formal elements of their respective films *Psycho*, *Halloween* and *The Shining* and considers the way in which each filmmaker has built on previous techniques as well as adapted or developed new ones to keep up with changing audience perceptions and expectations. Special focus is given to the way in which each film uses the subjective camera as the central tool for eliciting fear in the audience.

This research primarily involves close textual analysis of appropriate scenes from each director’s film. The analysis is similar in detail to those undertaken by film theorists Victor Perkins (1972) and James Naremore (1973) but focusses on the ways in which fear is created in specific scenes (rather than, say, the rationalisation of character motivation). Each analysis begins with the titles as they set the tone of the film, and works through the key scenes in a sequential order identifying the techniques and explaining how they are capable of eliciting fear in the viewer. All formal elements of the film will be analysed: narrative, mise-en-scène, cinematography, sound and editing. This methodology enables us to see which techniques are the most effective and which have been utilised by all three directors. It also allows us to recognise patterns of repetition within their films and to understand how the contrast and juxtaposition of certain scenes intensifies fear.

It will be argued that the subjective camera is the main technique that all three films use in order to create fear. Subjectivity, as Edward Branigan (1984 p. 73) explains it, ‘depends on linking the framing of space at a given moment to a character as origin. The link may be direct or indirect. In the point-of-view structure it is direct’. Seymour Chatman (1978 pp. 151-152) suggests that the point-of-view shot is the ‘most troublesome’ of critical terms because at least three senses can be distinguished in
ordinary use: *literal*: through someone’s eyes; *figurative*: through someone’s world view; *transferred*: from someone’s interest-vantage. The point-of-view shot in the scope of this study shall refer specifically to the ‘literal’ sense, or as Branigan (1975 p. 55) describes it, ‘a shot in which the camera assumes the position of a subject in order to show us what the subject sees’.

‘Fear’ in this research incorporates a range of emotions similar to the ones Shaver et al (1987) list in their short tree structure. They suggest ‘fear’ divides into the two secondary emotions of nervousness and horror which are further divided into a set of tertiary emotions:

<table>
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<th>Fear</th>
<th>Nervousness</th>
<th>Suspense, tension, anxiety, uneasiness, apprehension, distress, dread, worry</th>
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<td>Horror</td>
<td>Alarm, shock, fright, terror, panic, hysteria, mortification</td>
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The relationship between these emotions can best be explained by Hitchcock who told the American Film Institute (1972 pp. 86-87) that suspense precedes fear and is one of its major components. For him, the way to create suspense was to give the audience information rather than withhold it. Terror is induced by surprise and suspense by forewarning. Another component of fear is shock and in several interviews Hitchcock uses his ‘bomb’ analogy as an example of the difference between the two. He describes watching a film in which people sit around a table having an innocuous conversation when suddenly a bomb goes off. This would shock the audience for a short period of time. If the same scene is played showing the audience where the bomb is hidden along with the information that it will detonate in 10 minutes, then they are worked into a state of anxiety for those 10 minutes.

All three films make repeated use of the uncanny as a tool for eliciting fear. This research shall refer to Sigmund Freud’s (1919) essay, *The ‘Uncanny’* when explaining how this particular phenomenon works. Freud considered the uncanny to be that class of the frightening which proceeds from something familiar that has been repressed—that an ‘uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which
have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed’ (p. 249). He claims it is undoubtedly related to what is frightening; to what arouses dread and horror and with what excites fear in general. Freud attempts to establish a common core to distinguish as uncanny certain things which lie within the field of what is frightening. Citing Jentsch (1906) he asserts that a particularly favourable condition for awakening uncanny feelings is created when there is intellectual uncertainty as to whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one. To these Freud adds the uncanny effect of epileptic fits, and of manifestations of insanity.

In the essay Freud also draws from the themes in the Hoffmann novel, *Die Elixire des Teufels* (1815) and adds to the category of the uncanny the phenomenon of the ‘double’, when characters are considered identical because they look alike. The uncanny experience is heightened when the characters share mental processes such as telepathy or have knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other, or when the character identifies with someone else, so that ‘he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self’ (p. 234). The final theme Freud draws from Hoffmann’s novel is the constant recurrence of the same thing such as the repetition of the same features or character-traits, the same names through several consecutive generations or the same crimes. Freud includes in this class of uncanny the factor of involuntary repetition which ‘surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere, and forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable when otherwise we should have spoken only of chance’ (p. 237). He gives the example of receiving a cloak ticket with the number 62 and thinking little of it until you encounter that same number several times throughout the day.

People, Freud claims, can also be considered uncanny when we believe that they are evil and have special powers that they intend to harm us with. With stories that dabble in the supernatural a sense of the uncanny can be achieved if the writer keeps us in the dark for a long time about the ‘precise nature of the presuppositions on which the world he writes about is based, or he can cunningly and ingeniously avoid any definite information on the point to the last’ (p. 251). Freud states that animism, magic and sorcery, the omnipotence of thoughts, man’s attitude to death, the castration complex and the apparent death and the re-animation of the dead comprise practically all the
factors which turn something frightening into something uncanny.

Another technique all three films utilise is a particular camera movement that Chatman (1985) calls the ‘wandering camera’. Kenneth Johnson (1993 p. 49) explains this movement as ‘moments when the camera as a narrating entity wanders on its own, detached from supporting the story through a character’s point-of-view’. He argues that the camera’s conventional function is to serve character mediation so this liberated movement creates an autonomous presence. He goes on to say that when this particular camera movement occurs, the story which we perceive to be complete briefly becomes a story in the process of creation and we become conscious of it because our conventional expectations have been disrupted by a foreign presence. Filmmakers have found the wandering camera a useful way to establish a supernatural presence, one that he claims is ‘voyeuristic, vague, and sinister’ (p. 54).

A substantial amount of material has been written on the power of film to make an audience emote and there are a range of empirical studies conducted in the fields of medicine, neuroscience and psychology that explore the ways in which cinema is able to elicit the fear emotion by appealing to processes of mental representation, naturalistic processes and rational agency. There is also considerable literature on the thriller and horror genres and the viewers’ emotional responses to them. There is, however, very little information on how cinema achieves these emotional responses. I will consider some of the key literature on the creation and deployment of film techniques that elicit fear, noting that there is a significant gap in the literature because most of it centers around the fields of sound and music. I will follow this literature review with a breakdown of the way my research takes a step towards closing that gap.

The intensity of the film-viewing experience can produce strong psychological effects in the viewer such as anxiety, tension and shock. This in turn can cause physiological effects, including increased heart rate, rises in blood pressure, nausea and vertigo. When viewing a frightening film the brain signals for the hormones cortisol and adrenaline to be produced by the kidneys which causes a rapid heartbeat. Research, such as that conducted by the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore (Miller 2005), has found a direct link between mental stress and dangerous narrowing of blood vessels. The study showed that the blood flow of volunteers exposed to scenes from a
violent war film decreased by 35% but when they watched a clip from a comedy blood flow increased by 22%. Harrison & Cantor (1999) conducted a study to explore enduring fright reactions in the viewer and the results showed 90.2% had experienced fright reactions like the symptoms listed in the DSM-VI for panic attacks that accompany anxiety: increased heart rate, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, chest pain and nausea as a result of frightening media. It also showed that one in four had enduring fright reactions. Hasson et al (2008), undertook a study that looked at how functional magnetic resonance imaging can be used for assessing the effect of a given film on viewers’ brain activity. The following films and TV episodes were viewed: Alfred Hitchcock’s *Bang! You’re Dead* (1961)\(^1\), Sergio Leone’s *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966), Larry David’s *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (2000) and an unedited, one-shot segment-of-reality video filmed in Washington Square Park. The Hitchcock film evoked similar responses across all viewers in over 65% of the cortex, indicating a high level of control on viewers’ minds. The amount registered for the other three were 45%, 18% and 5% respectively. The results demonstrate that certain movies can exert considerable control over brain activity and this activity differs as a function of content, editing, and directing style.

The question of why film has the ability to make a viewer emote has been explored by media psychologist Joanne Cantor (1994) who argues that the connection between film and viewer reaction can be explained in part through the principle of stimulus generalisation. According to this principle, if real life stimulus evokes a particular emotional response, media depicting the same stimulus will evoke a similar though less intense response. Joseph Anderson (1998) argues that motion picture viewers mentally process the projected images and sounds of a movie according to the same perceptual rules used in response to visual and aural stimuli in the world. He discusses how through trial and error films have developed conventions and styles that are realistic and potentially acceptable to every viewer. Anderson claims that filmmakers adhere to standard rules for visual perception in their use of a number of devices such as action-match cuts and jump cuts. He examines the ways in which rules of visual and aural processing are recognised and exploited by filmmakers and he emphasises the power of the film over the viewer. Ed Tan (1996) discusses the reality of the emotional stimulus

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\(^1\) Episode 2 of season 7 of the TV series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*
in film; the identification of the viewer with protagonists on screen and the necessity of the viewer’s cooperation in arriving at a genuine emotion. He argues that film-produced emotions are genuine emotions in response to an artificial stimulus. He then shifts the emphasis from viewers to the filmmakers who he contends generate and manipulate the viewers’ emotional responses through aspects of narrative and other film mechanisms to ensure the successful production of their own desired emotional outcomes.

When looking at the literature to ascertain how filmmakers generate and manipulate the viewers’ emotional response David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (1985) examine the acoustic properties of sound and explore how these properties can be engineered for desired effects, e.g. radical changes in volume for shock value. They suggest filmmakers can create a disparity between the rhythms of sound, editing and image to create a shift in expectation and other desired emotional effects. Alberto Cavalcanti (1985) contends that the picture lends itself to clear statement because the viewer can see what is on the screen and generally make sense of the images but sound can be used in a way that it becomes unrecognisable or unidentifiable, such as when it is not synced with the image or lies outside the diegesis, thereby raising a range of emotions in the viewer from curiosity to fear. Béla Balázs (1985) explores the manner in which the slow approach and recognition of a sound may cause a far more terrifying tension than the approach of something instantly recognised. He examines asynchronous sound—a discrepancy between the sound heard and the image seen in film. If the sound or voice is not tied up to the picture of its source, it may grow beyond the latter and can be used to show pathos or symbolic importance. He also explores the use of silence and how it is one of the most specific dramatic effects of film. An empirical study by Blumstein et al (2012) shows that film-makers manipulate sounds to create nonlinear analogues in order to manipulate our emotional responses. Humans, and many animals, produce and respond to harsh, unpredictable, nonlinear sounds when alarmed, possibly because these are produced when vocal cords and syrinxes are overblown in stressful, dangerous situations. These screams are considered nonlinear chaotic noise and the irregular minor chords trigger an instinctual response such as fear. Nonlinearities in soundtracks can be simulated through the use of technological manipulations; by overblowing brass and wind instrument and by violin players rapidly moving their bows across the strings without losing contact with their instruments. Stuart Fischoff (2005) argues that music acts roughly like a linguistic modifier helping to clarify the particular mood, character,
or emotive significance of a scene or visual action. The signification of character’s emotions, the communication of an overall mood and the arousal of emotional responses in audiences comprise a structure of film-musical affect that corresponds with different levels of emotional engagement.

Jeremy Birn (2006) contends that creating a mood which enhances the emotional experience of the viewer is the paramount goal of lighting design. He argues that colour choices elicit certain emotions, that a warm palette brings excitement and energy to the picture and red causes alarm or apprehension. El-Nasr, (2006) explores the temporal variation of lighting colour and its use in evoking tension and the findings show that high amounts of contrast between light and dark as well as contrasts in colour scheme caused tension in the user. When the amount of contrast was increased over time it caused a high amount of tension and when the amount of contrast was decreased over time, it lowered tension.

Sergei Eisenstein (1942) argues that the psychological meaning of a scene can be greatly emphasised through the use of editing and this can be achieved by breaking up the action into details and then cutting from one to the other so that each detail is presented to the viewer. Making the audience concentrate their attention on the visual details makes them feel what the characters are feeling, thereby drawing them into the situation, which in turn increases involvement. Walter Murch (1992) suggests that the viewer will have difficulty accepting edits that are neither subtle nor total, like cutting from a full-figure master to a slightly tighter shot that frames the actor from the ankles up. The displacement of the image is neither motion nor change of context and the collision of these two ideas produces a mental jarring, a jump, that is comparatively disturbing, which can be used for effect. Reisz & Millar (2010) focus on the differences between smooth and abrupt editing and editing for dramatic effect rather than for realism. They investigate several influential films and the editing choices that were made to make the rhythm work and also to create dramatic effects to elicit emotional responses.

Cantor, Ziemke & Sparks (1984) conducted a study which used the heart rate of subjects as the measure of physiological arousal to assess the effect of forewarning on emotional reactions and physiological responses to a horror film. Results indicate that
For any technique to be effective, the viewer must be involved with the film. Involvement comes by inducing the viewer to identify with the characters and compelling them to think by continually raising questions in their mind and delaying the answers. Syd Field (1984) argues that drama is conflict and without it there is no story. He maintains that for conflict to exist oppositions must arise and you achieve conflict by defining the needs of the characters and then placing obstacles in their way. Caring about the characters and caring whether they overcome their difficulties is a major factor in the area of suspense and dramatic tension. Screenwriter Blake Snyder (2005) contends that liking the person we go on a journey with is the single most important element in drawing us into the story.

Most of the literature on how to create film techniques that elicit fear concentrates on sound and music. By using *Psycho*, *Halloween* and *The Shining* as case studies we will be able to establish a common core of fear-producing techniques that Hitchcock, Carpenter and Kubrick employed, particularly in relation to the uncanny and the subjective camera. By analysing the films in their entirety and covering all of the formal elements (rather than just a particular scene) we will be able to ascertain which of the techniques is the most effective.

The first chapter on *Psycho* examines the narrative structure and its use of the uncanny. It addresses repetition and motifs in the music and discusses the impact of the strings only score. It looks at how the element of voyeurism is established through the choice of lens and via the use of the wandering camera. It considers how contrast in lighting creates mood and reflects the character’s nature; how contrast between shot sizes and angles is used to shock and how contrast in pacing between scenes is used to intensify emotion. The detailed analysis looks at the way in which the subjective camera enables the viewer to identify with Marion and studies the extraordinary measures employed to immerse us deep within her mental state so that we may feel her fear. It analyses how
repetitive the shots are and how they form patterns that arouse the uncanny. The use of visual metaphors and foreshadowing to indicate Marion’s impending doom is discussed as is the considerable impact of experiencing the murder through the eyes of the killer. It studies the shift in subjectivity through the characters and how point-of-view is use as a visual motif to create fear; and it considers the techniques that were employed to keep relatively mundane scenes odd and frightening.

The second chapter on *Halloween* notes the influence the movie *Psycho* had on the creative choices Carpenter made in this film and examines how he expands on those choices and creates new techniques of his own to elicit fear. It addresses the uncanny elements in the film and looks at how repetition within the shot construction, music, action and colour palette creates fear. It examines the aesthetic produced by shooting with the new technology of the time, the Panaglide camera and evaluates how the wider field of view created by the anamorphic lens is utilised throughout the film to create fear. The detailed analysis explores the way the subjective camera takes us through the terrifying identification of being a brutal murderer, then an accomplice to a deranged killer and finally their victim. It shows how point-of-view shots are used in a similar manner as they were in *Psycho*—as visual motifs to evoke fear. It also shows the similarities in the music design and how it generates fear through its high-pitched notes and incessant rhythm.

The third chapter on *The Shining* considers the number and complexity of techniques employed to elicit fear and assesses how closely the film adheres to Freud’s text on ways to arouse the uncanny. It examines how an impression of a supernatural presence is created through the use of both the subjective and wandering camera and how this presence is responsible for a pervading fear. It looks at how symmetry in the shots is created by the use of one-point perspective and how a claustrophobic effect is created by the combination of this perspective, the aspect ratio and wide-angle lens. It considers how the pacing and intertitles also create a sense of things closing in. It observes the use of high-pitched frequencies and the method in which multiple music tracks are layered so they become disturbing. Foreshadowing and the deliberate use of incongruities and their fear producing effects are also evaluated. The analysis shows how the supernatural is established early in the film, followed by the uncanny element and then the incongruities are introduced. As the film advances, the use of the subjective camera and
the ambiguity surrounding certain point-of-view shots become the dominant techniques to create fear.

The concluding chapter compares the three filmmakers in terms of the subjective camera and the uncanny, as well as the other significant techniques they employed and considers both key similarities and differences between the filmmakers in their production of the fear affect.
Chapter Two

PSYCHO

Considered the first modern horror film, *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960) is a seminal work in terms of the methods it employs to elicit fear. What made this low-budget movie, which is still consistently rated as one of the scariest ever made\(^2\), so successful was Hitchcock’s ability to direct the emotional response of viewers through his exceptional control of cinematic technique. He referred to the processes through which the audience are taken in this film as similar to going through the ‘haunted house at the fairgrounds’ or riding on ‘a rollercoaster’.\(^3\) For Hitchcock, the point of making a movie was to cause the audience to emote; discussing *Psycho* he stated: ‘My main satisfaction is that the film had an effect on the audiences ... I don’t care about the subject matter; I don’t care about the acting; but I do care about the pieces of film and the photography and the soundtrack and all the technical ingredients that made the audience scream.’\(^4\) The purpose of this chapter is to identify and analyse those ‘technical ingredients’ in *Psycho* that generate fear. Special attention will be given to the use of the subjective camera as it will be argued that of all the techniques, it is the most effective. The manner in which the uncanny is employed as a tool throughout the film will be considered before moving onto the music and cinematography where an overview of the methods used to create fear will be discussed. The bulk of this chapter is dedicated to the detailed analysis which will demonstrate how the techniques work and why they are efficacious. More significantly, the analysis will show that *Psycho* is a film constructed around point-of-view and it is through the subjective camera that we truly experience fear.

Hitchcock revealed to Truffaut (1984) that what attracted him to Robert Bloch’s novel *Psycho* (1959) was the fact that the murder was so sudden and so random. He admitted that the first part of the film regarding the theft of money was a ‘red herring’ or a deliberate misdirection in the story. Unlike the book, which opens with Norman, the film begins on Marion; her narrative was intentionally drawn out to immerse the

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2 Online search results show that IMBD ranks *Psycho* as the number 1 scariest movie ever made and The Guardian, Time Out, Hollywood Reporter, Film Daily and Rotten Tomatoes all list it in the top 10.
3 Cameron & Perkins 2003, Alfred Hitchcock Interviews edited by Sidney Gottlieb p. 47
audience in her plight, to get them wondering whether she would get caught or decide to return the money. The effect of this choice is to focus the viewer’s attention in order to heighten the surprise and impact of the murder. At no point is there any indication that Marion is about to be brutally murdered, so the attack comes as a complete shock. Hitchcock disclosed to Cameron and Perkins (2003 p. 46) that *Psycho* was designed to create fear in an audience by gradually transferring it from the screen into their minds and that as the film unfolds, less violence is required because the harrowing memory of this initial killing carries over to the suspenseful passages that come later.

A significant technique employed to create fear throughout this film is the use of the uncanny. Sigmund Freud’s essay *The Uncanny* (1919) lists madness and the ‘double’ or the dividing and interchanging of the self as phenomena that arouse the uncanny. This is exhibited through Norman who appears passive but is suffering from a dissociative identity disorder that turns him into his psychotic murdering mother. It is also reflected in Marion who, despite her facade of respectability, has on this one occasion, gone ‘a little bit mad’ and stolen a large sum of money. Doubling is created in the many reflections of the characters seen in mirrors and other surfaces, as well as in the physical resemblance between actors. It is present throughout the mise-en-scène and shot structure and is evident in the duality and parallels of Norman and Marion’s nature and their circumstances. The ideas of repression and the reanimation of the dead which Freud also identifies as capable of eliciting the uncanny are exhibited in the film through the Victorian era décor, Norman’s repressed sexual desires which culminate in a violent stabbing symbolic of rape, the images of Mother’s preserved corpse in the cellar, and the taxidermy birds. Visually, the bird imagery is employed at times to startle and disconcert the viewer. It is also used to denote the nature and psychology of Norman and Marion and their position as predator and prey. Freud also lists the constant recurrence of the same thing, or repetition, as one of the phenomena responsible for arousing this perturbing sensation. Repetition presents itself in the score through the use of ostinatos (a musical phrase repeated over and over) and via motifs.

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5 Birds are a central and reoccurring theme in this movie: Marion is from the city of Phoenix which is also the name of a bird in Greek mythology that dies and is reborn out of the ashes of its predecessors which narratively correlates to the transformative death of Norman into Mother. Marion’s last name, Crane, is the name of a tall wading bird, which seems appropriate as she is both dispatched of and disposed of in water. Bates is when a hawk flaps its wings wildly in agitation or fear, much like Mother when attacking Marion in the shower.
Repetition is also prevalent in the shots that form sequences within the film. In one section of Marion’s drive from Phoenix to Fairvale, there is a sequence of four shots repeated four times to form a pattern similar to the music. The final section of her drive from the car yard to the motel is extremely repetitive with the shots alternating between a fixed perspective close shot of Marion’s face or her point-of-view of the road. This repetition and the impact it has on the viewer will be considered in the detailed analysis.

Dolar (2006 p. 61) argues, ‘the voice without a body is inherently uncanny, and that the body to which it is assigned does not dissipate its haunting effect’. Throughout the film Mrs Bates’s voice avoids synchronism, therefore it is uncanny and functions as an acousmêtre, a term Chion (1994 p. 221) describes as ‘a kind of voice-character specific to cinema that in most instances of cinematic narrative derives mysterious powers from being heard and not seen.’ Those powers being: the ability to see all, omniscience, omnipotence and ubiquity. This makes Mrs Bates a formidable and frightening character. Balázs (1985 p. 120) suggests that if the voice is not connected to its source, it may grow beyond the realms of the latter, and the ‘surest means by which a director can convey the pathos or symbolical significance of the voice is precisely to use it asynchronously’. We never see Norman speak in his mother’s voice—even when we know he has become her, the final monologue still comes from off-screen which means de-acousmatisation never takes place. Because of this, John Belton (1985 p. 65) suggests that Mother is not a simple acousmêtre but a truly disembodied entity and that the ‘image and sound here produce a tenuous, almost schizophrenic synchronization of character and voice, which precisely articulates the fragmented nature of the enigma’s resolution and completes an incompletable narrative’.

One of the most acknowledged fear producing techniques in this film is the music, which is occasionally dissonant and atonal. At the time of production, music was used primarily as emotional signalling and a very operatic method of film scoring predominated, but composer/sound designer Bernard Herrmann defied convention and developed a style that was more integrated. His music is composed of cells that often present themselves as ostinatos and these phrases, or motifs, are the main material for

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6 Mrs Bates was played by three different people of varying builds and her voice was recorded by several different actors so as not to give away the shocking reveal at the end.
the score. The opening titles music (prelude), with its slashing dissonance, manic pulse and relentless rhythm, informs the audience that something terrible is going to happen. The prelude uses a dissonant chord that consists of a minor chord with an added major seventh. This has become known as the ‘Hitchcock’ chord and it instantly creates an unstable sound that does not develop or lead anywhere. The prelude returns six times throughout the film, most notably on the drive from Phoenix to Fairvale during which Marion is in an unstable state on a journey that does not seem to be leading anywhere.

The murder cue is one of the most recognisable in cinema history and has become synonymous with horror. It is an integral part of the murder as its fast tempo and screeching violins assault the ears and each glissando strikes fear into the viewer. This music is a motif connected to the murders and we hear it four times throughout the film, each occasion evoking the horror experienced during the slaughter of our female protagonist. There is a three-note motif that appears in the parlour when Marion suggests putting Mother in an institution and we are given an insight into Norman’s insanity by his peculiar reaction. This madness motif is repeated as he spies through the peephole and during the clean-up of the murder, reminding us of our initial mistrust of him and finally confirming it when we hear it again as Marion’s car is pulled from the swamp. The slow, dreamy chords in the opening scene recur several times throughout the film, often being juxtaposed against harsher cues to create contrast. The stolen money also has an anxiety producing motif connected to it and is repeated several times during the film.

Throughout the cinematography a range of techniques were designed to intensify audience involvement and to elicit the fear emotion. One of these was the use of the ‘wandering camera’ to establish a voyeuristic presence which creates an uneasy feeling in the viewer as they become a peeping Tom to the events taking place. This presence is first felt in the opening scene when the camera slips under the blinds of a hotel window, moves across the room then stops to watch two post-coital lovers. This presence is again felt in Marion’s bedroom when she turns her back and the camera wanders across the bed to show us the envelope of money and her suitcase. The best demonstration of this

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7 It is well documented that Hitchcock had not wanted music in the shower scene or in any of the motels scenes leading up to the murder and it was Herrmann who convinced him otherwise.
technique comes after the shower murder when the camera retreats from the dead eye of Marion, slides along the bathroom floor into the next room and comes to rest on the newspaper containing the money. The detailed analysis explores these and other examples of the wandering camera and its disturbing effects.

Another cinematic technique, devised by Hitchcock and applied by cinematographer John Russell, was to shoot the majority of the movie with 50-millimetre lenses. On the 35 mm cameras of the day such lenses did not distort the image like a telephoto or wide-angle lens would and so gave the closest approximation to human vision. This allowed the camera to be the eyes of the audience and to let them view the action as if they were seeing it themselves; it also reinforces the sensation of voyeurism that the wandering camera establishes.

Contrast is prevalent throughout the cinematography and is employed as a tool to shock and intensify emotion. Contrast in the lighting, which is made more appreciable by the black and white film stock, was used to create different moods and to reflect the different nature of the characters. This is evidenced in the parlour where low-key lighting which generates shadows and creates a feeling of unease is used on Norman, whereas high-key lighting which creates a feeling of lightness and cheerfulness is used on Marion. At various times throughout the film considerable contrast in shot sizes and angles has the effect of shocking the viewer, such as when it cuts from a high-angle long-shot to a close-up as Arbogast is stabbed in the face. The contrast from balanced compositions to unbalanced and from normal angles to odd angles throughout the parlour scene produce a similar affect. Certain scenes or sequences which differ radically in pace and style are juxtaposed against one another to create contrast—this is first noticed when the frenetic titles sequence is followed by a long, slow pan over the city and is best exemplified when the abstract montage of evisceration in the shower is juxtaposed against the slow, laborious clean-up. When two very different scenes are juxtaposed like this the contrast between them has the effect of highlighting, and therefore intensifying, the emotional impact of each scene.

The most important cinematic technique and one that was exercised repeatedly throughout the film is the use of point-of-view shooting, which was quite progressive in an era where most films were shot objectively. The subjective camera is used in this
film as a way of creating identification with the character; to intensify audience involvement; and most significantly to create fear. The subjective perspective grounds the scene in the mental or emotional perspective of a particular character and allows the viewer to experience what that character is feeling. Hitchcock’s use of the subjective camera is almost interactive, at times placing the viewer deep within the action so they may see and experience it virtually. Conventionally, it is the protagonist’s point-of-view that the audience share and it is one they have been conditioned to trust and rely on to take them through the film from start to finish. 

_Psycho_ defies this convention and shatters that trust when Marion’s point-of-view is terminated. It then confuses and destabilises the viewer further as perspective shifts through the characters. As the film progresses point-of-view shots are used as visual motifs to create fear in the same way musical motifs are used—to evoke emotion experienced in previous scenes.

**ANALYSIS**
The analysis will start with the titles and work through the film in a sequential order examining the methods employed to elicit the emotional response of fear. Through this process it will become evident that of all the techniques, it is the subjective camera that has the greatest impact.

From the opening cell the abrasive tonality of the strings in the title’s score immediately commands the viewer’s attention and sets the tone of the film. The graphics are frenetic and the title ‘Psycho’ fractures and re-joins. The horizontal and vertical bars that streak back and forth present as a stylistic representation of a knife stab, a composition that is repeated throughout the film. The score is also repeated often to inject energy into scenes and heighten tension. The titles sequence really captures the film’s elements of frenzied stabbings and fractured minds and foreshadows what is to come.

The first scene opens with an elevated wide-angle pan across a city skyline, the location, date and time (2:43 pm) are overlaid as the camera arbitrarily moves in towards an open window of a hotel. The accompanying music is played legato, this and the slow pace and lack of movement within the frame is in stark contrast to the opening titles. The camera slips under the blinds and takes a second to adjust to the lowered light; it scans the room and comes to rest on two half-undressed lovers. Due to the exactness of the time and choice of low-rent hotel we deduce that this is an illicit affair
that we are voyeurs to. The leisurely pan across the city, randomness of the choice of building and room to enter and the way the camera slips under the opening of the window all suggests the perceptual slant or point-of-view of the narrator, one who may be a peeping Tom. This scene was designed to shock the viewer by defying convention—at the time a woman in bed was supposed to have her feet in contact with the floor indicating that she was sitting rather than engaged in love making but Marion was lying down with her feet in full view. Sam then joins her and for the first time in a mainstream American film they play an intimate couple in bed. The licentious behaviour of Marion would have been shocking at the time and not typical of the actions of a protagonist, but the audience soon learns that she is hopelessly in love with Sam and desperately longs for marriage and respectability; but he is in debt and does not believe he can provide a suitable life for her in matrimony.

After leaving the hotel Marion returns to work where her younger, less appealing co-worker, Caroline, prattles on about her wedding night. A client, Cassidy, brags about his wealth and the fact that he is a tax evader; he flaunts in Marion’s face the forty thousand dollars he is using to purchase a house for his daughter’s upcoming marriage. Cassidy and Caroline speak about marriage and money whilst Marion sits in front of a picture of a barren desert landscape, symbolic of the fact that she has neither. This prepares us to be more accepting of her decision to steal the money, even if it goes against the principles of a protagonist a 1960s audience would willingly identify with. As Marion, all dressed in white, leaves the office with the intention of banking the money her shadow is behind her.

Via a match cut she enters the next scene into her bedroom but this time her shadow precedes her and she is dressed in black, which subtly reflects the change in Marion and foreshadows her actions. She looks towards the bed but rather than showing us what she sees the camera hesitates until her back is turned and then tilts down to reveal an envelope. It dollies in for a close-up in which the money inside is clearly visible then pans to her open suitcase, disclosing her intention to steal the money. The way the camera does not facilitate the action of the character but moves independently while her back is turned creates an uncanny sensation, almost as if the inanimate apparatus has

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8 Hare, W. 2007 p. 236
become animate and wants to show the audience what it already knows. This draws the viewer in and creates a real sense of being present in the room—as Marion is in her underwear, this presence, like in the opening scene, is voyeuristic. The close-up of the envelope of money has a similar effect, as Doane (2003 p. 94) states, ‘the close-up transforms whatever it films into a quasi-tangible thing, producing an intense phenomenological experience of presence’. This presence places us in a closer relationship to Marion, the money and the action that is taking place, making our involvement more subjective. When the camera first rests on the money Herrmann’s strings-only music commences at a low volume—it initially presents as ostinato but there are notes unexpectedly absent which breaks the flow and creates unease in the listener.

As Marion dresses she looks at the stolen cash and again the envelope is shown in close-up but this time from her perspective. This is the first in a long line of subjective shots designed to aid identification by helping us understand her thought processes. It is through Marion’s eyes we see her hand place items into the suitcase and later flip through her personal documents and it is through her eyes that we repeatedly see the envelope of money. Changing the shots from objective to subjective allows us to experience Marion’s crime and emotional situation as if it were our own, which in a way makes us complicit. As Marion moves around the room we see a photo of her parents on the wall, their eyes averted like they are unable to watch her transgression and a photo of a young child symbolising the loss of Marion’s innocence if she steals the money and also what she may never have if she does not. As Marion moves around the room the framing of her stays in medium close-up enabling us to clearly comprehend the uncertainty and anxiety she feels about what she is doing. A change occurs in the music when Marion shuts the suitcase, there is a variation in the timbre of the ostinato signifying that the time has come for her to decide if she is going to commit larceny. She sits on the bed and takes one last look at the money and her decision is made; as she leaves the room she passes the bathroom, where its visible shower foreshadows the consequence of that decision.

9 Script Supervisor Marshal Schlom expressed his concern to Hitchcock at the repetitive number of shots of Marion looking at the money. He responded to Schlom by telling him, ‘I always want the audience to think what she’s thinking. The minute I lose one person I’ve lost the entire audience.’ (Rebello, S 1990 p. 134)
The material continues to be treated in a subjective manner as Marion drives out of town with the cash. We can better understand how the handling of image and sound builds tension and allows us to experience Marion’s emotions of panic and fear by breaking down the action into shots. In the first shot of this sequence as Marion drives we enter her mental subjectivity and hear the voice of Sam who seems surprised to see her. She stops at the lights and her point-of-view (POV) of the passing pedestrians is followed by a shot of her chewing nervously on her finger. We return to her subjectivity and see her boss, Lowry, crossing the road; he smiles and acknowledges her. A cut back to her smiling quickly reverts to her POV and we watch Lowry stop in his tracks and give a perplexed look (Marion was after all meant to be ill in bed). As we are seeing through her perspective Lowry appears to be looking directly at us which increases the anxiety we feel. The smile wipes from Marion’s face, which is now framed tighter, and is replaced with panic—the dissonant titles music returns emphasising this panic.

Through her eyes we see Lowry walk off; the reverse shot shows the stress on her face as she drives away. This short sequence could have been handled in three shots but instead was broken into nine, four of which are Marion’s POV and the rest are her reacting. The effect of breaking the sequence into nine shots means the viewer is immersed in her subjectivity, enabling us to emotionally identify with her.

The next scene opens with a wide shot of Marion’s car parked next to a telephone pole on a deserted road. The pole, which appears to bisect the screen, is in keeping with the vertical and horizontal design theme. The silence, stillness, proximity and duration of this shot is in stark contrast to the previous ones. A police car drives past then reverses back. The officer approaches Marion’s car and we see his POV of her asleep on the front seat; he taps on the glass. She sits up and her first view of the officer is in an unusually tight close-up, this odd image comes as a shock to the viewer and cements the policeman’s position as a threat in both Marion’s and the audience’s mind. She panics and we see a close-up of her reaction before it cuts to an objective shot of her turning on the engine to leave. The officer stops her and as he questions her over the next 70 seconds all of the shots are either a close-up of Marion or her close-up POV of the policeman. All the while, the officer’s dark sunglasses obscure his sightline so he appears to be staring straight at us, which serves to make us complicit with Marion. This tense exchange breaks as it cuts to an objective shot of her removing the envelope of
money from her bag in order to retrieve her driver’s licence which the officer checks before letting her go. Within this scene there are 35 shots of which only nine are objective, four are seen from the policeman’s POV and rest are either a close-up of Marion or her POV. This prolonged entering of her subjectivity through these scenes enables us to feel her fear as if it were our own and the number and frequency of shots increases the pace and builds the tension.

Herrmann’s titles score pounds back in as Marion drives off. Over her shoulder we can see the police car trailing her. If we break down the action from here until Marion turns into the used car yard we can determine that of the 17 shots, 16 are either Marion’s POV or a medium close-up of her. We can also ascertain that there is a sequence of four shots repeated four times to form a pattern, consisting of Marion’s POV, MCU of her, her POV, MCU of her (see appendix for breakdown). The repetition of these shots arouses an uncanny feeling in the viewer. Freud (1919) writes of the dominance in the unconscious mind of a ‘compulsion to repeat’ proceeding from the instincual impulses, and how, when powerful enough, it can cause neurosis. He states that whatever reminds us of this inner ‘compulsion to repeat’ is perceived as uncanny.

In this final section of the drive from the car yard to the motel great measures are employed to ensure we identify with Marion and experience the anxiety and fear she is feeling. We enter her mental subjectivity and hear the voices of the police officer and the salesman discussing her dubious behaviour. As established earlier, giving us access to a character’s visual and sound perspective enables us to experience the action and her emotional situation as if it were our own. The potential for identification, and thus elicitation of fear in the viewer, is increased if the plot penetrates into the character’s mental subjectivity and we hear internal commentary reporting her thoughts, as we do in this sequence. A dissolve takes us further in time to Marion’s POV of the road. A quick reverse shot of her and another POV submerge us deeper into her psychological state. She now imagines the voices of Lowry and Caroline who seem concerned that she has not shown up for work. The next ten shots alternate between Marion and her view of the road as it gradually changes from day to night. Dominance is given to Marion’s face with the shots of her being considerably longer in duration than her POV. The framing moves in closer when we hear Lowry come to the realisation that she has stolen the money and it ends in a close-up when Cassidy’s voice is heard. The close-up, or
what Doane (2003 p. 90) calls the ‘privileged receptacle of affect’ allows us to experience every slight nuance on her subtly animated face.

As Marion hears Cassidy’s angry voice talking about the money and how he is going to ‘replace it with her fine, soft flesh’ she smirks which is an odd response we do not expect. Through the sustained use of the subjective camera we have been conditioned to believe the identification process with her will continue but that identification is contingent on Marion feeling remorse, so her response seems counterintuitive. Her odd, manic smile could be a result of delirium, however the true meaning of it and its uncanny effect is not revealed until the final scene in the prison cell when Norman (as Mother) gives exactly the same smirk (fig. 1).

![The uncanny smirk](image)

When Cassidy’s voice-over finishes the volume of the music increases and is played loudly over the following ten shots. Rain begins to splash on the windshield and quickly becomes torrential; the wipers slash back and forth as Marion struggles to see through the onslaught of rain and the blinding lights of passing cars. The pace increases as the shots become shorter in duration and the framing around her tightens, reflecting her growing anxiety. The strong rhythmic drive and incessant quaver movement in the music escalates the tension, as does the pounding sound of the rain. The shots now cut rapidly between Marion and her POV, each shot in equal duration lasting a couple of seconds. The more afraid she becomes, the closer the camera frames her and the closer we identify with her and her fear. The increasing pace of shots combined with the tighter framing, mounting tempo of music, slashing wipers, bright lights and repetitive shots all combine to create a sensory overload resulting in heightened tension and anxiety in the viewer.
The framing pulls back a little from a tight to a normal close-up and the duration of the shot increases—this signifies that Marion has unwittingly turned off the Highway. Herrmann’s music ends on a deep minor chord, the only sounds heard are the rain and the windshield wipers. The following 17 shots alternate between close-ups of Marion and her POV. Her anxiety is evident as she struggles to see through the rain and darkness. A beacon of light appears in the distance and as she approaches it we see the Bates motel sign; she pulls over and stops outside the reception office. Hitchcock gave a request to the sound department that the audience should be strongly aware of the silence and odd dripping noises that follow.¹⁰ This dripping noise has the potential to disturb the viewer because, as Chion (1994 p. 15) notes:

> Sound with a regular pulse is predictable and tends to create less temporal animation than a sound that is irregular and thus unpredictable; the latter puts the ear and the attention on constant alert. The periodic rhythm of the sound of dripping water unsettles the audience’s attention through its unequal rhythm and keeps them on guard as each repetition occurs slightly off the moment they are awaiting it.

Of the 43 shots in the last leg of the drive all of them are either close shots of Marion or her POV. This section has been completely subjective and incredibly repetitive—an uncanny Freudian reminder of our own unconscious ‘compulsion to repeat’ slipping us into a state of neuroses similar to Marion’s.

We first see the large gothic house on the hill behind the motel through Marion’s eyes; the juxtaposition of the house against the low-set motel comes as a startling image and is in keeping with the horizontal and vertical design theme. As Norman checks Marion into the motel the uncanny double image of her created by her reflection in the mirror arouses a sense of unease but the newspaper in her handbag with the word ‘OKAY’ prominently displayed lulls us, as does Norman’s gentle demeanour. After a long period where the camera’s subjectivity has been held by Marion there is a shot that favours Norman as he tries to decide which room to put her in. Norman shows her into cabin 1;

¹⁰ Rebello, S 1990 p.137
once he leaves she moves about the room looking for somewhere to hide the envelope of money. The music first heard in the packing scene and later in the car yard bathroom reappears; it is the motif music connected to the money. She wraps the envelope in newspaper and places it on the bedside table next to a lamp shade that has a picture of a sailing ship at full mast. This is a visual metaphor of the idiom ‘that ship has sailed’ meaning, unfortunately for Marion, it is too late to change this situation—the dire consequences of which end in her demise (fig. 2).

Through the open window we hear Mrs Bates berating Norman for wanting to bring Marion into the house. This is the first time we hear her voice and it functions as a typical active off-screen sound—it arouses curiosity, engages the spectator’s anticipation and raises questions. Doane (1985 p. 167) suggests that ‘there is always something uncanny about a voice which emanates from a source outside the frame’ and Hitchcock incorporates the disturbing effects of the voice-off often throughout the film. As Marion exits the room she looks at a framed picture on the wall of two ducks, one of which is sitting. This is another visual metaphor meaning Marion has no protection against the forthcoming attack (fig. 3). These subtle messages alert us subliminally to the danger ahead.

Figs. 2-3 Visual metaphors

Norman returns with the tray of food and a conversation takes place at the door to her cabin. The romantic opening scene music returns; she invites him to eat in her room but he hesitates and we see a shot of Marion from his perspective in which the sightline is too high causing her to look diminutive, almost like prey. It is not a true POV shot but is very close and it gives us insight into how he perceives her. His image is reflected in the window creating a sense of the uncanny as well as alluding to his double personality.

In the parlour scene several techniques are used to illustrate the psychology of the
characters and to create fear in the audience. The most obvious being the imagery and symbolism of the taxidermy bird mounts. When Norman enters the parlour and turns on a lamp several small stuffed songbirds are visible on and around the lamp table. Marion stands in the doorway and the next shot, seen from her POV, is a startling image of a large stuffed owl, its wings spread, casting hard shadows on the ceiling. We see her react and then her POV of a crow on the adjacent wall that casts a long shadow, making it appear twice its size. A good example of foreshadowing can be seen in the way the crow has its beak pointed over a clock with angels and cherubs depicted on it. As Norman offers Marion a seat on the couch next to the lamp table the owl hovers above him in a menacing way. The choice of birds is significant not only because the crow and owl are predators and symbolize Norman’s true character but because crows are commonly thought of as harbingers of evil and death in Western literature and ‘Owls’, Hitchcock told Truffaut (1984 p. 282) ‘belong to the night world; they are watches, and this appeals to Perkins’ masochism’. The tiny songbirds that surround Marion signify her gentle nature and ultimately her position as prey, as do the angels and cherubs on the clock.

Another technique used to create atmosphere and to shape our perception of the characters is the contrasting of light. Through the use of low-key lighting cinematographer John Russell was able to produce high contrast between light and shade and generate shadows which create a sense of drama, mystery and intrigue as well as creating depth and texture. The existence of shadows automatically creates a feeling of unease in the audience as they raise the question of the unknown and ambiguous. Throughout the scene this style of lighting is used on Norman, whereas for Marion high-key lighting is used. High-key lighting is a technique in which mid-grey to white tones predominate and create a feeling of lightness, and cheerfulness. Marion sits facing the camera, dressed in pale coloured clothing and the only source of lighting in the room is the lamp located on the table next to her. She is bathed in high-key and fill light which creates an even softness and the walls behind her are brightly lit. The shot is flat with little depth to it, creating a sense of tranquility. Surrounding Marion are the curved lines of the picture frame, the milk jug, the lampshade, the small table in front of her. All of this light and roundness reassures the viewer that the protagonist, whom Hitchcock has gone to great lengths to get us to identify with, is a good person despite her recent folly. Conversely, Norman is dressed in dark clothing and is surrounded by
the dark, angular lines of the framed paintings and cabinet. More straight lines are created by the candle sticks, the perch and legs of the taxidermy birds and an open book that all sit on top of the cabinet. Low-key lighting with little fill and backlight is used making him cast hard shadows. He is shot diagonally and the converging lines of the corner of the room behind him create a sense of depth and volume. The use of converging lines draws the viewer’s eye toward the subject and a diagonal line gives the shot a feeling of action and excitement, it also conveys a sense of motion throughout the scene. Although Norman has only just been introduced to the story, the way the shots of him are constructed captures the audience’s attention and spikes their interest.

At various times throughout this scene anxiety is produced by particular camera angles, shot sizes and framing. As Marion and Norman begin their conversation the camera is near eye level. When Marion mentions her disapproval of the manner in which she heard his mother speak to him there is a dramatic and sudden change to an unnaturally low camera angle (fig. 4). This comes as a shock and suggests that Norman may be a potential threat. From this perspective Norman is framed with the birds of prey which visually intensifies the threat but his passive voice and words contradict this as he tells Marion that the most offensive deeds he wants to do to his mother are ‘defy and curse her’. A short time later when Marion mentions putting Mother in an institution there is an abrupt cut to a close-up of Norman who then leans into the shot creating an odd composition by leaving his face too close to the edge of the frame (fig. 5). It is customary to leave extra space on the side of the screen the subject is looking to; going against this practice creates an uneasy apprehension not only because it looks and feels wrong but because it announces to the audience that potentially Norman, like the composition, is unbalanced and close to the edge. Adding to this sense of dread is the image of the blackbird behind Norman which now appears to be pecking at his temple.

![Fig. 4 Odd angle](image1.jpg) ![Fig. 5 Too close to the edge](image2.jpg)
Marion perceives Norman’s oddness but is not concerned by it as he also appears to be kind and gentle, a harmless victim trapped in a life he cannot escape from. It is the realisation of the similarity between their situations that makes Marion decide to return the money.

Norman’s demeanour changes when Marion leaves the parlour. As he stands near the wall, the lens choice foreshortens the room and he appears crowded in by the predatory owl above him and the gentle pheasant below, both reflective of his dual nature and the ambiguity that surrounds it. The low-key lighting keeps one side of his face in darkness and this image is reflected in the glass of the cabinet arousing the uncanny (fig. 6). He removes from the wall a portending painting, (a replica of Willem van Mieris’s *Susanna and the Elders* (1731), in which a naked Susanna is spied on then accosted by two old men as she bathes) to reveal a peephole into Marion’s cabin. The pitch of the strings becomes higher as Norman moves his face towards the hole and it is from his POV that the audience see Marion undressing. The viewer once again becomes a voyeur but this time through the eyes of a peeping Tom. The next shot of an extreme close-up of Norman’s eye looking through the hole forces the viewer to further identify with him and his unsavoury actions (fig. 7). Extreme close-ups are used for emphasis and emotional impact and can create anxiety and uneasiness in the viewer because it is closer than most people usually like to get to someone they do not intimately know. The audience already has an inkling of Norman’s disturbed mind but the action taking place here forces them to identify with him in a disturbingly intimate manner and to look upon the actions taking place so they themselves are forced to also violate Marion’s privacy. When Norman replaces the painting, he is framed only with the predatory owl. The sight of Marion’s half naked body has left him in vexed contemplation. A change from bowed to plucked strings occurs at the point where a decision seems to come to him.

*Fig. 6 Telephoto lens & Low-key lighting*    *Fig. 7 Extreme close-up*
The shower scene was designed from the outset to send a shock wave through the audience. Its objective to shock is confirmed by the fact that this was the first Hollywood film to show a toilet flushing and reproduce its sounds.\textsuperscript{11} Toilets had only been glimpsed on very rare occasions in film as they were considered vulgar and it was offensive to show them. The choice of bright white tiles, shining fixtures and high-key lighting give the bathroom a sterile, inviting feel that was no doubt designed to belie the carnage that is about to take place. The sound of the toilet flushing is accentuated, as is the shower curtain being pulled back and the opening of the soap packet. These heightened sounds pull the scene toward the material and concrete which focuses our attention and immerses us in the action. Marion turns the taps on and we see a subjective view of the showerhead as the water sprays down, so the audience is still being manipulated into identifying with her. The entire construction of the narrative to this point has centred around the plight of Marion—the motive for the theft, the relentless point-of-view shots, the entering of her mental subjectivity through her thoughts were all devised to establish identification with her and her plight. The audience at this stage would be happy that this person who they have invested their energy into and whose emotional journey they have shared is a good person and has made the right decision to return the money. They would be wondering what repercussions she will face back in Phoenix, but at no point would they be expecting what is about to happen.

Through the shower curtain we see someone enter—this immediately creates suspense that is heightened by the fact that Marion is unaware. The curtain is ripped open; the intruder is backlit and shot from above but we can distinguish the silhouette of an elderly lady holding a large knife. Herrmann’s high-pitched strings abruptly commence in time with Marion’s screams—the violins’ slashing glissandos are used percussively suggesting the knife strokes. In amongst the screeching violins and Marion’s screams, can be heard the disgusting sound of the knife piercing her body eight times. Throughout the murder we do not hear Mother utter a sound which makes her and her savage attack more terrifying. Just as an acousmêtre can be powerful and frightening, so can the body without a voice—the mute character—especially when engaged in acts of

\textsuperscript{11} Kolker, R 2004, Alfred Hitchcock’s \textit{Psycho}: A Casebook, Oxford University Press, New York
violence.

It was Hitchcock’s idea to shoot the murder in montage as he was a strong believer in its power to create violence and emotions and to engage the audience in the action.\textsuperscript{12} Breaking the action up into small pieces, as opposed to simply recording it, gives the viewer a far more subjective experience and therefore has greater control at eliciting fear. Due to the restrictions of the Motion Picture Production Code of 1930, acts of violence up until this point in cinema had largely been kept off-screen and sound had been used, by the power of suggestion, to represent the deeds. It is well documented that Hitchcock claims that at no point do we see any taboo bits of Marion’s body, nor does the knife ever touch her. Through montage he was able to create the illusion of complete nudity and eight violent stabbings which allowed him to skirt around the code’s guidelines and get the film past the censors. The director was also aware of the terrifying and confounding impact shooting and editing in this method would have on the viewer. He told Leonard South, ‘I’m going to shoot and cut it staccato, so the audience won’t know what the hell is going on.’\textsuperscript{13} Graphic designer Saul Bass responded to Hitchcock’s brief by presenting a storyboard of shots consisting of varying sizes, angles and positions, all based upon a series of repetitive images. He noted that there was a lot of motion but little activity in the scene and that the movement was very narrow and the amount of activity to get you there was very intense.\textsuperscript{14}

Much of the scene’s effectiveness can be traced to the near overload of visual and auditory sensory data that is forced on the viewer. A sense of agitation is produced by cutting in rapid succession different aspects of the same action—this type of editing leaves the viewers shocked and striving to interpret the information they have just witnessed. The magnitude of movement within the frame as well as the cutting rate influence the audience’s perception of a scene’s speed so if the subject is in a frenzy of motion, like Marion is in this scene, cognition of her movements become virtually incoherent resulting in perceptual overload, heightening the fear of the attack. The shots

\textsuperscript{12} Hitchcock told Bogdanovich (1997 p. 522) ‘In Rear Window, where Jimmy Stewart is thrown out of the window in the end, I just photographed that with feet, legs, arm, heads. Completely montage. I also photographed it from a distance, the complete action. There was no comparison between the two. The never is...It is much more affective if it’s done in the montage, because you involve the audience much more.’

\textsuperscript{13} Rebello, S 1990 p. 101

\textsuperscript{14} Rebello, S 1990 pp. 104-105
used in the stabbing sequence are a barrage of medium, close-up and extreme close-ups seen from different points-of-view. From the time the curtain is ripped back until Mother runs from the room there are 32 shots of which only two are objective. Hitchcock was brilliantly aware that the true impact of the murder could only be felt if the viewer were in amongst the action. And feel it they did through the unremitting identification with the characters brought on by the use of the subjective camera. Surprisingly, only seven of the shots are seen from Marion’s POV and 23 are from the killer’s POV. This was unprecedented as no movie had been bold enough to force the viewer into the middle of a brutal homicide and make them experience it as both the victim and, more significantly, the perpetrator.

Throughout the murder, Hitchcock succeeds in shocking the viewer while also concealing the identity of the attacker and, for censorship reasons, not showing any nudity. Marion is stabbed so many times and loses so much blood that the viewer is left categorically aware that there is little chance she will live. After the stabbing is complete the music shifts abruptly into a slow sequence of bass chords in a minor key. The subsequent shots are filmed in an objective manner as Marion slides down the wall and reaches out for the shower curtain; the music stops and she falls forward, her head striking the floor with a loud thud, effectively ending her narrative. We see a subjective view of the shower head squirting water but, like the audience, the camera has no subject to attach the image to. In amongst the shock and horror the audience is experiencing this shot cements their sense of loss and abandonment. The camera then pans past her legs and watches as her blood and water wash down the drain, reminding the viewers that they are once again voyeurs to the action.

Over the drain is superimposed an extreme close-up of the lifeless eye of Marion. This image perturbs as staring into the eye of a corpse is both macabre and an obstruction. The shot pulls back from the subject that has held its focus since the opening credits; the disturbing effects of the wandering camera are felt as it slides along the bathroom floor, out into the room and rests on the money wrapped in newspaper. The word OKAY in large font on the newspaper now ironically emphasises the fact that everything is

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15 He hints at this in his interview with Truffaut (1984 p. 265) when he gave the following analogy, ‘If you’re going to show two men fighting with each other, you’re not going to get much by simply photographing that fight…The only way to do it is to get into the fight and make the public feel it’.
definitely not okay. The camera moves away from the money to the open window to reveal Norman running towards the motel from the house.

After the murder, the sound of the shower running continues for several minutes creating what Chion (1994) calls the ‘anempathetic’ effect. This occurs when music or sound exhibits conspicuous indifference to the tone, emotion or action on-screen by progressing in an undaunted, steady, and relentless manner as if nothing had happened. This juxtaposition of image with indifferent sound has the effect of intensifying the emotion. The way the shower mechanically keeps running during and after the murder adds a heightened sense of reality to the scene and creates a strong sense of the tragic; increasing both the fear and devastation felt by the viewer.

The shower murder scene occurs about 45 minutes into the film and is quite short but suddenly the whole basis of the viewer’s engagement in the film is obliterated. Narratively-speaking, there is just no expecting the occurrence of such a horrendous act, especially at the time of Marion’s redemption. As Wood (1989 p. 146) asserts, ‘the murder is as irrational and as useless as the theft of the money’ and ‘the meaninglessness of it (from Marion’s point-of-view) completely undermines our recently restored sense of security’.

Not only did the audience just witness a murder scene so violent and shocking they are left disoriented but Hitchcock then forces them through the excruciating process of the laborious clean-up of the aftermath. The screeching violins return as Norman runs down the hill from the house and they cease once he reaches the entrance of the motel bathroom. He stands there for several seconds before recoiling and covering his mouth in horror. It is significant that we do not see his point-of-view of the carnage in the bathroom but only his reaction to it. Seeing through Norman’s eyes so soon after the stabbing would align him too closely with the murderer whose perspective we have just shared. All of the literature (including Wood) that I have read on this scene claims that it is Norman’s POV we share from the start of the clean-up and that it is through his perspective we see his bloodied hands but, in actual fact, he turns to the camera and reveals his hands to the audience (fig. 8). Although the camera shares a similar perspective to Norman’s, true point-of-view shots come later in the scene. Even when he washes the blood off his hands we are not seeing through his eyes but share a close
perspective. A sustained use of the subjective camera in this scene would make us experience Norman’s feelings of panic, fear and disgust which would eclipse the most important emotion we need to feel which is sympathy. We are given partial identification with him and it is only by watching him painstakingly clean away all traces of evidence, so as to protect his mother, can we feel for him and therefore effectively begin to appropriate him as our new protagonist. Although what he is doing is perverted we sympathise with his agonising predicament and our attitude towards him is one of forgiveness, even admiration at his devotion to his Mother.

![Fig. 8 These are not Norman’s POV](image)

We experience our own emotions of fear and disgust by having to watch Norman clean away all traces of Marion, at close range and in sharp focus for what seems like an eternity. To increase the unease and discomfort felt by the viewer, Hitchcock had the crew cut a hole in the set wall and shine a strong lamp through it to make the shots that much sharper.\(^{16}\) We are both disgusted and devastated as we watch the lifeless body of Marion, a character we have gotten to know intimately, being dragged across the floor, wrapped in the shower curtain and disposed of in the boot of her car. The slow, methodical way this scene is filmed is in stark contrast to the frenzied, abstract rendition of the murder, as is the music which is now a slow foreboding rubato. This contrast has the effect of intensifying the impact of the murder and making it seem all the more real.

The clean-up sequence is almost 10 minutes long, which is three times the length of the murder and almost one tenth of the duration of the film. Throughout this sequence we are not only left struggling to come to terms with the horror we have witnessed but also struggling to comprehend how the narrative will progress now that the protagonist has been killed. The longer we watch Norman clean away the evidence the more complicit

\(^{16}\) Rebello, S. 1990 p. 114
we become and the more we are forced to identify with him as we have no other character to identify with. When he returns from placing Marion’s body in the boot we share his POV as he picks up the cabin key off the floor. He then moves around the room packing up her belongings but overlooks the newspaper containing the money. The anxiety we feel in relation to this confirms that our affinity is now with him, as does the panic we feel when the lights of an approaching vehicle illuminate him before he has a chance to place Marion’s suitcase, and the mop and bucket in the boot of her car. Norman returns to the room for one last check and notices the newspaper. He picks it up without realising the money is inside and throws it and the motive for Marion’s journey into the boot, tragically underscoring the futility of the theft and murder.

Norman drives to a nearby swamp and pushes the car in; he stands back and nervously watches. The disconcerting silence is made worse by the sucking sound of the swamp. We see Norman’s POV of the sinking car seven times and his reaction eight. Exploiting the use of the subjective camera here not only creates suspense but it also allows us to see and hear as Norman does and to experience his anxiety first hand. Hitchcock intensifies the suspense and anxiety by having the car hit a snag and stop sinking for several seconds. The camera then lingers over the boot of the car as it sinks in order to underline Norman’s lack of knowledge of the money and the senselessness of the theft.

The subsequent scene in Sam’s hardware store introduces us to Marion’s sister Lila and the detective, Arbogast. As Sam and Lila talk there is an unusual close-up of Arbogast standing outside the glass door. Introducing him in this manner portrays him as a potential threat and arouses the uncanny as the shot is almost identical to the one of the police officer as seen through Marion’s eyes (fig. 9). The shot returns to Sam and Lila and it is not until several seconds have past and they turn and look directly into the camera do we realise we are sharing Arbogast’s POV, which is surprising as we have no idea who this character is. We soon learn he has been hired to find Marion and his intentions are honourable.
We share his POV again when he is at the Bates motel as he looks at Norman and then up at the house; both times we see his reaction which encourages us to identify with him. When he returns to the motel later that evening we again see through his eyes as he looks up at the taxidermy crow and the owl—these shots are uncannily similar to the ones experienced by Marion earlier in the film when she first entered the parlour. More importantly, POV is being used here as a visual motif in the same way musical motifs are used—to evoke emotion experienced in previous scenes. Because we shared Marion’s POV so intensely in the lead-up to her violent death an association between the two was formed and the more we see through Arbogast’s eyes the more we fear for him. He makes his way up the hill to the house and once inside we share his POV and reaction several times before a single shot of him walking up the stairs is intercut with the door to Mother’s room opening. The camera is then taken to ceiling height and the shrieking violins of the murder motif return as a high-angle shot shows Mother running from the bedroom with a carving knife in hand; as she brings the knife down it cuts to a big close-up of Arbogast’s head. The camera is placed so high to conceal the true identity of Mother and to create a shock from the sudden juxtaposition of the image sizes.\(^17\) Although there is not an establishing shot of Mother looking we are seeing the detective from her POV as blood squirts from his face and he falls backwards down the stairs with her in pursuit. She jumps on him and it cuts to a shot of her raised arm, knife in hand, plunging in and out of frame as we hear his groans. The detective’s screen time may be short but it is significant, as through the construct of POV, the audience is encouraged to take him on as their protagonist and to place their faith in him to carry them through to the end of the film and bring Marion’s killer to justice. This faith is shattered, creating a mistrust of POV.

\(^17\) Hitchcock talks about the impact the juxtaposition of shots has in *Dialogues on Film: Alfred Hitchcock*, American Film Institute (2003) p. 95
Although the most terrifying aspects of the film, the two murders, are over, Hitchcock continues to generate fear through lighting composition: by going against the rules of continuity editing; and through the use of the subjective camera. When Sam goes to the motel looking for Arbogast there is a shot of Norman standing by the swamp, his sombre face is lit in low-key lighting, creating a sinister image that is more dark than light (fig.10). This image is so far removed from the ‘Norman’ we were first introduced to, making our suspicion of him grow.

Fig. 10 Shadowy Norman

Sam and Lila go to the Deputy Sherriff’s house and during the conversation with him and his wife the 180-degree rule is broken several times. Under this rule the camera must remain on one side of an imaginary line bisecting characters; crossing the line causes confusion and disorientation for the viewer because the characters appear to switch positions. In this case, it is the wife that switches positions, making it seem as though she has an identical twin who appears and disappears throughout the scene (fig.11). This is disconcerting to watch and it arouses the uncanny through the doubling up and then dividing of the character.

Fig.11 Breaking the 180-degree rule

In the subsequent scene, the camera holds its position at the base of the stairs as Norman
walks up and into Mother’s room—the overtly feminine manner in which he walks hints at his dual identity. A sense of voyeuristic haunting is created as the camera then ‘wanders’ on its own up the staircase, past the open door and up to the ceiling. It makes a 180-degree turn and tilts down framing a high-angle shot of the top of the stairs. This framing is identical to the framing in the earlier shot where Mother stabs Arbogast. The high-angle is used to conceal Mother’s identity as Norman carries her body down the stairs and to arouse the uncanny through the repetition of the shot.

The following day Lila and Sam drive out to the motel and as they get out of the car it cuts to a shot of Norman peering out of Mother’s bedroom window. We then share his POV of them twice, both times followed by his reaction so again, we are being directed to identify with him and to reinstate him—now that Arbogast is gone—as our protagonist. This is disconcerting and adds to our confusion and mistrust of POV as we have also been directed to consider him odd and question his character. After Sam and Lila check-in to the motel the forced identification with Norman continues—as he watches them walk to their cabin we see his POV three times, each followed by his reaction. POV is again being used as a visual motif to evoke fear in the viewer.

This identification and creation of fear through POV is then amped up as it shifts to Lila. As she makes her way up to the house, considerable suspense is built from her moving POV that is intercut with closer and closer shots of her face. All up, we see her POV of the house nine times followed by her reaction before she opens the door. This builds fearful anticipation of what she will discover in the house. It also makes us fear for her as we have been primed to think that whosever subjectivity we are sharing is the next one to be killed. To add to the confusion around POV some of the shots of Lila appear to be from the house’s perspective, personifying it as an evil character in the narrative.

Lila enters Mother’s room and the mise-en-scène, like that of the parlour, is reflective of the disturbed mind of Norman/Mother. The furnishings and ornaments are from the Victorian era and are representative of Mother’s repressive nature. Suspense is built through the continuous use of subjective shots followed by reaction shots (we see her POV five times) as well as knowing that there is a knife-wielding maniac in the house somewhere that could, at any time, attack her. Norman’s bedroom is even more
disturbing than Mother’s. Through Lila’s eyes we see an oversized doll and dollhouse; a stuffed bunny rabbit; and a small single bed and after each we see her shocked reaction. It is a room you would expect a child to own and demonstrates Norman’s lack of psychological development past the time of his father’s death.

We see Lila’s POV of Norman running towards the house; she hides in the stairwell and again we share her POV, this time of the door to the basement. She enters and makes her way through the dark room to the fruit cellar and opens the door. Through her eyes we see the back of Mrs Bates seated in a chair; it is a startling image as the perspective of the light bulb creates an enormous bright globe above the right-hand side of her. Again, we see Lila’s POV but closer and the odd composition of the old lady sitting alone, facing the wall is unnerving. When Lila touches Mrs Bates on the shoulder, the chair turns around revealing her ill-preserved corpse that appears to lurch forward at the last second. Lila screams, knocking the lightbulb into a spin—as Mintz (1985 p. 296) notes, both sound and light attract our attention and when both are used, the result is an inability to focus completely on either one of the stimuli presented. The result will be a diffusion of faculties leaving the viewer disconnected and dislocated by the conflicting demands on their attention. The horror of seeing of Mrs Bates’s corpse is directly followed by Lila’s POV of Norman running in dressed in women’s clothing, wearing a wig and wielding a carving knife. Over Herrmann’s murder motif of shrieking violins, he yells, ‘I’m Norma Bates!’ The reveal that Norman is also Mother is shocking as Hitchcock manages to keep her true identity hidden throughout the film. It would have been, to the audience at the time of release, confronting and very risqué due to the queer sexual connotations.

It is fitting in a movie so centered around POV that the final subjective shot (of the fly) comes through Mother’s eyes. Perkins then, in an uncanny reminder of Marion, grins directly at the camera. The last technique to create fear that Hitchcock uses is the subliminal image of the shriveled skull of Mother smiling out from Perkin’s face (fig.12). Hitchcock’s request was that he wanted the image to be so quick that the

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18 It was Saul Bass’s suggestion to use the light and he said of the idea, ‘The swinging light caused the light to change on the face and gave it a sort of macabre animation that almost made the face look like it was doing something like—laughing, screaming, whatever—when you knew it was dead.’ Rebello, S. 1990 p. 126
audience would question whether or not they actually saw it. The end shot of the car being pulled from the swamp perpetuates the horror as the viewer is left to imagine the police opening the boot of the car and discovering Marion’s naked, decomposing body wrapped in a shower curtain (fig. 13).

Fig. 12 Superimposed  
Fig. 13 A grim discovery

 Psycho is a movie that defied convention and forged new ground by giving a candid depiction of sex and violence. Through the use of montage, it was able to circumvent the Production Code and deliver an impression of a brutal stabbing unlike anything the audience had seen before and it radically killed off the protagonist and a major star when both were expected to survive to the end. In an era when music in motion picture was used operatically Psycho employed an all strings score that was dissonant and at times atonal, one that has been replicated in other films to evoke a sense of menace and heightened shock like Jaws. It is a film that uses many devices to terrify but of them all, it is the sustained use of the subjective camera that has the most impact. Commencing early in the narrative when Marion is packing, we are repeatedly shown her POV of the envelope of money followed by her reaction which allows us to understand the apprehension she is feeling about stealing it. Subjectivity enters a deeper level when she flees town and we not only share her visual and aural perspective but her mental one as well. Throughout the drive the shots become so subjective that from the car yard to the motel (43 shots and three minutes of screen time) we only see her POV or her reaction. This enforced identification enables us to enter a state of mind similar to hers and experience her intense anxiety. Once at the motel it is through the subjective camera we see water spaying down from the showerhead and we repeatedly see the knife coming towards us. Through Marion’s eyes we endure the attack and consequentially feel her terror. Conversely, it is also through the subjective camera that we are forced to violate

19 Rebello, S. 1990 p. 135
Marion’s privacy, along with Norman, as he spies on her undressing. Most horrifically of all, it is through those same eyes we stab Marion to death and then dispose of her body in a swamp. Point-of-view shots are then utilised as a motif to create fear by reminding us of the carnage associated with them. The shifting of subjectivity through the characters further destabilises as it undermines the certainty of knowing who to identify with and therefore trust. This shifting point-of-view, along with the choice of murder weapon and the connection between promiscuous sex and violent death that Psycho established are just a few of the many tropes that the slasher sub-genre appropriated.
Chapter Three

HALLOWEEN

This chapter on Halloween (1978) assesses the significant influence Psycho (1960) had on the choices Carpenter made in order to elicit the emotional response of fear in the viewer. It further examines how he expands on those choices as well as utilises the latest film technology to develop new techniques of his own. There are obvious parallels between the films, starting with the camera intruding on two lovers in the opening scene in order to place the viewer in a voyeuristic position. Both antagonists are psychotic voyeurs, and women who engage in ‘promiscuous’ sex are murdered by butcher knife in places associated with privacy and safety. Both films, as I shall demonstrate, then force the viewer into the disconcerting identification of being an accomplice to the murderer. In both films the most vicious murder is shown first, which serves to instil in the minds of the audience an anticipatory fear of what is yet to come. Both have a character named Sam Loomis, and both film scores are simple and repetitive and make use of extremely high-pitch notes. Whilst Carpenter’s direct references and surface similarities are undeniable, through this chapter it will be argued that the real parallel between these films resides in the methods in which they use the subjective camera to create fear.

This discussion begins by addressing the uncanny elements of both Michael’s character in particular and Halloween as a whole. It then looks to the formal elements of music and cinematography for an overview of the methods and technology employed to induce fear before moving on to an analysis of the film which demonstrates how these techniques work together. Through the analysis it will become evident that Halloween utilises the subjective camera to generate fear in a very similar manner to Psycho, particularly in the way it enforces identification and makes the audience experience a brutal murder through the eyes of the perpetrator. It then uses the subjective camera to shift that identification so the audience become an accomplice to the murderer and finally his victim. Like Psycho this film unsettles the audience by creating a mistrust of point-of-view shots as well as using them as a visual motif to evoke the fear affect experienced in previous scenes.
In the documentary, *A History of Horror* (2010), Carpenter reveals that *Halloween* and the character of Michael Myers were inspired by a scene in *Psycho* when Mrs Bates appears unexpectedly in the frame at the top of the stairs to kill the detective: ‘That moment of coming out of nowhere influenced me for *Halloween*. If you establish this guy and you establish that he can be anywhere, then the audience will start to believe he can be anywhere, in any shadow.’ The character he and Debra Hill created for this film is masked and unknown, much like Mrs Bates whose face we never see; he is also seemingly indestructible and omnipresent. He appears to be human, yet he is stripped of all humanity. No explanation is given for why he kills, and he carries out his murders in a cold, mechanical way. The mask he wears is pale and emotionless, preventing us from seeing his eyes, thereby preventing any form of connection or indeed identification with him. He is silent, except for his signature breathing and makes no sounds even when he is gouged in the eye, stabbed in the abdomen and shot repeatedly. He is, as his psychiatrist Dr Loomis reminds us often throughout the film, an unstoppable evil stripped of emotion and voice.

Carol Clover (1992 p. 30) points out that in films like *Psycho* (1960) ‘the monster is an insider, a man who functions normally until, at the end, his other self is revealed. *Halloween* (1978) and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) before it, introduced another sort of monster: one whose only role is that of killer and whose identity is clear from the outset.’ She goes on to suggest they may be recognisably human, but only marginally so, just as their presence on screen is marginally visible to the victims and the spectators. *Halloween* largely pioneered the idea of an unknown, indestructible antagonist. He is the killer who will not die. *Halloween: The Inside Story* (2010) asserts that the only other character like that in modern horror is the shark in *Jaws* (1975). ‘It does what it does and keeps coming back. It too is an unstoppable thing.’

*Halloween* fulfils many of the criteria as set out by Freud (1919) in ‘The Uncanny’. The essay states that manifestations of insanity can arouse this sensation and he asserts that, ‘we can speak of a living person as uncanny, and we do so when we ascribe evil intentions to him … in addition to this we must feel that his intentions to harm us are going to be carried out with the help of special powers’ (p. 423). Michael therefore is an uncanny character as there is no doubt from the beginning that he is insane. Dr Loomis
describes him as having ‘no conscience or understanding of good or evil, right or wrong’ and tells Sheriff Brackett, ‘I spent eight years trying to reach him and then another seven trying to keep him locked up because I realised that what was living behind that boy’s eyes was purely and simply evil.’ As the film progresses, we become aware of Michael’s ‘special powers’ of omnipresence and immortality, the latter fulfilling another uncanny criterion the essay lists, that of the ‘apparent death and the re-animation of the dead’ (p. 246).

*Halloween* is structured around repetition and Freud lists repetition or the constant recurrence of the same thing as one of the phenomena responsible for arousing the uncanny. Repetition is present in the shot construction with Michael’s recurrent appearance in the corner of the frame as well as in the frequent use of reverse tracking to reveal him watching over other characters. Camera and actor movements are also repetitive with certain actions in the initial scene being recreated several times throughout the film, along with a frequent use of the subjective camera, to create fear. The film analysis will show that quite often what we believe are POV shots actually turn out not to be so; consequently, they have an additional uncanny effect on the viewer by having the familiar become unfamiliar.

The repetitive use of colour is employed as a tool for eliciting fear and the majority of the palette of the film is made up of black, red and orange. Black is the colour associated with fear and the unknown as well as death. Red is the colour of fire, blood, Satan and is associated with danger; it is an aggressive colour that creates feelings of excitement. It is a very emotionally intense colour that studies have shown increases respiration rate and raises blood pressure. It is for these reasons the combination of black and red is used so prolifically in the horror genre, especially in the artwork for the film posters. Orange is associated with autumn, pumpkins and the uncanny celebration of Halloween. This combination of colours is displayed in the opening titles when against a black background appears red font that turns to orange and then it occurs in nearly every scene throughout the film.

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20 Al-Ayash *et al*., 2015, The influence of colour on student emotion, heart rate, and performance in a learning environment
Repetition is evident in the score through the use of ostinatos, motifs, sound effects and synthesiser stings. Music constantly alerts the audience to imminent danger throughout this film. Carpenter described the score as extremely minimalistic almost sounds and beats but believed it added enormous power to the film. He claims he was greatly influenced by composer Bernard Herrmann who scored *Psycho* (and a number of other Hitchcock films), as he believes he was able to produce the maximum effect with the simplest means.\textsuperscript{21} The score is effective because it builds tension with its insistent rhythm, its simplicity and repetition, much like the film itself. Due to budget constraints that only allowed a minimal amount of studio time, the fully synthesised score was composed and performed by Carpenter in three days.\textsuperscript{22} The main musical theme that is first heard over the titles has a 5/4 time signature which is punctuated by repeated, descending piano figuration. Western music tends to favour 4/4 time so 5/4 is unusual and can be unsettling. Any anxiety created by the time signature is heightened as the ostinato continually sequence through a number of minor chords which Murry Leeder (2014 p. 31) believes ‘destabilises any sense of tonal certainty’. It is quite similar to the titles music in *Psycho* in the fact that it uses simple, recognisable melodic phrases with ostinato patterns and an incessant quaver note, or in this case a semiquaver note, to constantly drive the music forward. This music becomes the leitmotif for Michael, pre-empting or announcing his presence on screen. It is also used to signify his presence when he is not physically in the frame which works in tandem with the Panaglide shots to establish his omnipresence.

As well as *Psycho* being the inspiration for *Halloween* and the score being influenced by Herrmann’s work, Carpenter also acknowledged that the primary influence on the style of the movie was the work of Alfred Hitchcock and the way his moving camera would bring you, without a cut, from one room or set to another, and he suggests he took his knowledge and appreciation of Hitchcock’s work one step further with the Panaglide, Panavision’s version of the Steadicam.\textsuperscript{23} Although on a limited budget, he chose to shoot with this camera which was a relatively new invention and had only been used in a few movies. Because the Panaglide mechanically separates the operator from

\textsuperscript{21} Audio Commentary, *John Carpenter’s Halloween* (2011) Umbrella Entertainment
\textsuperscript{22} Halloween cost $325,000 to make and went on to become one of the most financially successful independent films of all time, generating over 70 million at the box office worldwide.
\textsuperscript{23} Audio commentary, *John Carpenter’s Halloween* (2011) Umbrella Entertainment
the camera, the footage looked significantly different to the handheld camera shots that had previously been used to represent the walking POV motion of a character. At the time of the movie’s release the unusual gliding effect of the new technology would have been eerie and unsettling. Cinematographer Dean Cundey combined this gliding action with the technique of gently swaying the camera, to create a specific motion which he used to great effect to represent the presence of, and supernatural element to Michael Myers’ character. Every time a shot has this particular motion we believe we are seeing from Myers’ POV and as previously mentioned, it often turns out not to be the case, either way, it has a terrifying effect.

Along with the choice of camera, the decision to shoot with anamorphic lenses really had an impact on how frightening the film is. The anamorphic wider field of view is considered to be a more immersive experience for the audience as the eyes need to track and scan the image to take in all the information, thereby creating greater participation in the film. Sheldon Hall (2004 p. 70) commended Carpenter’s effective use of the widescreen format:

The desired audience response, of fear and apprehension leading to prolonged suspense climaxed by sudden shock, derives precisely from the spectator’s eye being allowed to wander across the breadth and into the depth of the frame. Areas of shadow and darkness are purposefully arranged to invite and tease the gaze, rather than to deflect it to a principal point of interest.

The anamorphic wider field of view is utilised in the night-time scenes where the perimeters of the shots are concealed in shadows offering a cornucopia of places for Michael to be lurking. In the daytime scenes, the increased depth of field created by the wide-angle lens proliferates the number of hiding spaces, which encourages the eye to scan the distance of the shot for every possible sign of danger.

Carpenter takes advantage of the increased depth of the shots to create deep-field dramatisation with action occurring on two planes. This doubles the threat of danger which heightens the viewer’s anxiety and demands a raised level of vigilance from them. The dual planes of action also enable the viewer at times to see the danger the characters are in whilst the characters themselves remain unaware, creating a very
Hitchcockian level of suspense. The width of the anamorphic frame allows for the frequent appearance of Myers at the edge of the shot whilst the oblivious victim is in the foreground or background. On occasions, we would miss his presence if not for his leitmotif announcing it, this causes us to constantly examine the shots for signs of him, creating suspense as we wait for his reappearance and shock when it happens.\(^2^4\)

Now that the techniques have been identified the analysis will demonstrate how simple, repetitive and ultimately effective they are at generating fear. Through the analysis the methods in which *Halloween* utilises the subjective camera in a similar manner to *Psycho* will become apparent.

**ANALYSIS**

**Halloween Night 1963**

On the left of the screen a jack-o-lantern grows menacing in size as the camera tracks into an extreme close-up of the flaming eye, setting up the theme of voyeurism that runs through the film. The titles 5/4 time signature is disturbing and the incorporation of unpredictable and uneven three and four bar phrases generate an anxiety producing nervousness.

The first scene commences with what appears to be an unidentified moving POV that approaches a suburban house from across the street and stops to watch, through the glass of the front door, two adolescent lovers kissing. It then moves to the side of the house and continues watching them through the window, making us cognisant that the vision we share is voyeuristic. We hear the male ask the female ‘if they are alone’ and she responds by telling him that ‘Michael is around somewhere’. Already, this scene has spiked our curiosity and put us slightly on edge as we are not sure who the voyeuristic subjective shot belongs to or who Michael is. As the young lovers make their way upstairs the camera moves to the front of the house and pans up at the bedroom window—the shriek of a synthesiser as the lights go out has a startling effect but it is the irritatingly high G note which persists afterwards that creates distress and places the viewer on high alert. The camera proceeds to the back of the house and enters via the

\(^2^4\) Using leitmotif music to announce danger connected to a specific ‘presence’ is a technique that had been successfully and influentially employed in the movie *Jaws* (1975)
kitchen door. Descending piano figurations play over the G natural as a hand takes a knife from the drawer—from its position we ascertain that we are seeing a character’s POV of their hand—this places us in the position of the character. We make our way up the stairs, stopping briefly to place on a clown’s mask. A synthesiser shrieks again as we see, through the eyeholes of the mask, the naked teenage girl seated at the dressing table. Our breathing is audible as we approach her, she sees us and yells ‘Michael’ before a single piano note emphasises the first knife blow. The gruesome sound of the knife piercing flesh is more dominant than her cries as we stab her repeatedly. Breathing heavily, we make our way down the stairs and outside. A car pulls up and a couple get out; the man calls us ‘Michael’, the reverse angle is cut to as he pulls the clown’s mask off and we realise to our great shock that we, as the murderer, are a small child. The camera, sensing our horror, retreats upwards from the stunned child and continues retreating until it is in an extreme longshot.

The fear in this scene is created through several different techniques. Tension and suspense come initially from the uncertainty of not knowing whose POV it is. Conventional POV shots show the character first then what they see, followed by their reaction. Subjective shots also tend to be short in duration, however this unidentified POV shot takes approximately four minutes before it is assigned to a character. In the interim we are placed in the position of the character and the anxiety builds as we wonder what we will do with the knife in our hand. The mobile camera work injects nervous energy into the scene and the deliberate wavering or slight swaying from side-to-side of the camera has an unsettling effect. The sound of footsteps as the camera moves, as well as the breathing, intensify our position as the character and immerse us further into the scene until the unfathomable happens and, for no apparent reason, we stab someone to death. Carpenter, like Hitchcock in the shower scene in Psycho has, through the use of the subjective camera, forced us to experience a murder from the viewpoint of the perpetrator; this is what makes this scene so terrifying. The reveal that Michael is a small child has the effect of shocking and repulsing us.

Smith’s Grove, Illinois fifteen years later
Carpenter again uses the subjective camera, albeit far more subtly, to inject fear into the scene as Dr Loomis and a nurse drive to the asylum. In amongst the conventional horror movie tropes of heavy rain, thunder claps and lightning strikes it becomes apparent that
the subjective shots seen through the windscreen from inside the car are not attached to either character which effectively places us, the viewer, inside the vehicle. They stop outside the asylum and after Loomis gets out we, not the nurse, see Michael jump onto the roof of the car; the shot is tinged red and punctuated by an unusual synthesiser chord. The momentary disjunction in knowledge between the viewer and nurse creates tension as we fear for her safety but this fear quickly becomes more self-focused as we lose our omniscient gaze and like the nurse, can no longer see the source of danger. Michael’s hand comes through the window and grabs her by the hair; her foot hits the accelerator and again, the subjective shots seen from inside the vehicle as it spins out of control are not the character’s but ours. The car stops and the nurse scurries over to the passenger side and for a moment we do not know the positioning of Michael until we see his hand come down behind her head—again we fear for her and this not alleviated until she escapes from the car and Michael drives away in it.

A combination of components work together to generate tension and anxiety, these being: the lack of vision created by the storm, the disjunction in knowledge between the nurse and ourselves, our lack of knowledge of Michael’s position and when he will attack, the use of subjective shots that place us firmly in the car with the nurse and the use of the colour red (note the red of the nurse’s cape and matchbox as well as the tinge of red as Michael pounces and as the car drives off).

Haddonfield on Halloween Day
Certain elements connected to Michael in the initial killing are used to create fear throughout this section. Like the opening scene this one starts with a slow mobile shot that crosses the street and approaches a suburban house. Although the camera does not have the deliberate wavering motion of the opening scene (which signified Michael’s POV), it does have the same protracted, peering movement and repetition of action that suggests his presence and immediately makes us fear the worst. Laurie, the film’s teenage protagonist, exits the house; the nervous 5/4 signature titles music plays as she walks to school and is joined by young Tommy. At times the camera holds a fixed position from a distance and allows Laurie to approach it and other times it tracks along in front of or behind, but it always remains at a significant distance and there are no cut-away shots, which gives the impression they are being stalked. There is a moving POV as they approach the Myers’ house which is not assigned to either character, the
wavering motion of the shot combined with the ambiguity of the source is reminiscent of the opening scene and therefore suggests, but does not confirm Michael’s presence. When Laurie walks up to the front door of the house, the shot is taken from inside and again the camera wavers, making us fear the worst. Laurie places the key under the mat and leaves and it is not until we hear Michael’s breathing and see his head come into the edge of the shot do we precisely know his location (fig. 14). The next shot, taken from outside the house, is of Laurie walking down the street and again Michael steps into the edge of the shot, this time the back of his head and shoulders are visible (fig. 15). It is the reintroduction of certain camera movements that were established in the opening scene which were representative of Michael that creates fear in this scene—those being the way the Panaglide approaches a suburban house from across the street, the unassigned POV that has a wavering motion to it and the heavy breathing. These movements and sounds become fear producing motifs that embody Michael, even when he is not physically on screen. Through camera work this scene establishes a stalking motion which will recur throughout the film. It also established the motif shot composition of Michael suddenly stepping into the corner of the frame.

Figs. 14-15 Michael in the corner of the frame

School
Laurie looks out the classroom window and we see her POV of Michael across the street standing behind the stolen car; he is staring at her but the distance between them makes him difficult to see. The titles music returns, establishing it as his leitmotif. We see Laurie’s reaction and then her POV again, this time a little closer; the stillness of Michael and the white mask he is wearing creates a brief but disturbing image. The teacher asks Laurie a question, pulling her focus back into the room. Seeing what Laurie sees and then seeing her reaction to it helps us identify with her, as does her ability to answer the teacher’s question perfectly although distracted—she is already showing
signs of what Clover (1992 p. 39) calls the ‘Final Girl’. When she looks out the window again, the car and Michael have gone; this sets up the motif of his appearance then disappearance in relation to point-of-view shots.

The action moves out to the schoolyard where Tommy is being taunted by three boys who trip him and run away. Michael suddenly steps into the left corner of the shot and grabs one of the boys—this action is punctuated by a synthesiser outburst, the 5/4 leitmotif and Michael’s signature breathing. This is the third time since his return to Haddonfield that he has stepped into the perimeter of the shot and each time his physical presence on screen has increased, the threat he poses thereby growing (fig. 16). The boy looks up at Michael and is horrified by what he sees, we however are not shown his POV. This builds suspense as the previous shots of Myers have been too brief to establish what he looks like. The colours red and orange dominate bringing intensity to the shot of Michael following Tommy as he walks across the school yard. Michael gets into the stolen car and the footage taken from inside initially appears to be from his perspective but disconcertingly you soon realise you are watching Tommy from the backseat of the car as Michael drives (fig. 17). The fear here is not created from the threat Michael poses but rather the shock of realising you misinterpreted the visual information followed by the angst you feel at being his accomplice.

In this next scene Dr Loomis discovers an abandoned Garage truck and then the Nurse’s box of matches next to it yet he fails to see the dead body in the bushes a metre away, although it is broad daylight. When he is gone the camera wanders to the right and

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25 On the surface level, clover girls share a number of features. They are boyish, often marked by their male names, and never sexually active. The Final Girl is watchful to the point of paranoia; small signs of danger that her friends ignore, she registers. Above all she is intelligent and resource full in a pinch. (p. 39)
shows us the murdered body of the mechanic. Johnson (1993 p. 54) suggests that when a camera wanders ‘there is something sinister in the way the apparatus informs us from its structurally authoritative position that it alone has the power of the gaze.’ Along with the uncomfortable feeling this produces, it also sets up the theme of the character’s inability to see what is in front of them. Sound has been used effectively to create anxiety by combining the blaring train horn with the high-pitched G and descending piano notes that were present in the opening scene.

Carpenter again undermines our ability to trust our visual perception as Laurie walks home from school with her friends Lynda and Annie (both of whom appear to be far more liberal in their dress sense and attitude towards sex than she is). As they walk we hear Michael’s leitmotif and we see him drive by. Moments later the camera crosses the street and positions itself just in front of the girls—this is not a tracking shot but has the definite movement of the Panaglide, which by now the audience has been trained to expect to be Michael. Laurie looks up and we see her POV of him but spatially he is much further back than expected, so again what we thought was Michael’s POV turns out not to be. This draws a parallel with the character Laurie who is doubting her own perception as Michael steps behind a hedge and seems to vanish, perplexing her and leaving Annie in doubt that he was ever there. This is the first time we and Laurie have got a proper look at the adult Michael Myers. We see all of him rather than just a section of his body, albeit only fleetingly and from a distance. The next time Laurie sees Michael is from her bedroom window. Again, he is at a distance and disappears as quickly and mysteriously as he did before. In this sighting, as well as the previous two, the distance between Laurie and Michael creates suspense as she cannot clearly identify him or ascertain the level of threat he poses. On all three occasions, we see Laurie’s POV of Michael followed by her reaction, by contrast, the shots that have framed the adult Michael’s vision have not turned out to be POV in the purest sense and they have not cut to a reverse angle, thereby severing any empathy or identification we have with him.²⁶

²⁶ Reaction shots are extremely important because they allow an audience to see how a character is responding to a person, situation or event. Without being able to see the character’s reaction the audience has no way of getting to know, relate to, or identify with him or her.
In the final section of the daytime scenes in Haddonfield it is the subjective camera along with the disparity between the spectator’s view and the character’s view that creates suspense and tension. This is made possible by Carpenter’s use of wide-angle lenses and deep-field staging that enables action to occur on two planes. Whilst Annie drives Laurie to their babysitting jobs we see the stolen car turn the corner behind her and follow at a close distance. We are aware of the threat but the girls are oblivious; our privileged knowledge along with the proximity of the threat builds tension. As they approach the hardware store Michael pulls over to the curb and stops his pursuit. Moments later, whilst Dr Loomis talks with the detective outside the store, we see Michael’s car across the street in the far left-hand corner of the frame. Even though Loomis is being vigilant Michael manages to evade his watchful eye and drive right past as he looks in the other direction (fig. 18). Jay Telotee (1982 p. 145) notes:

This broader view with which we are gifted reinforces a sense of anxiety by importing feelings of inevitability to all that we witness; it is as if a force which we see which remains beyond the comprehension of these characters is bearing down on them, a force as inexorable as that ‘fate’ which Laurie learns about in class that very day.

As the sun sets on Haddonfield, Michael’s leitmotif returns and we see his car once again trailing Annie’s. It cuts to the inside of his car; we can hear his signature breathing and through the windscreen see a subjective shot of Annie pulling over to let Laurie out. She then drives across the street and into the Wallace’s driveway and it is at this point that we realise we are not sharing Michael’s POV but are seated next to him in the car and, like the earlier disconcerting shot outside the schoolyard, we ride along as his accomplice. Yet again Carpenter has tricked our visual perception which
destabilises and further impacts our mistrust (and therefore fear) of POV shots. Michael gets out of the car and approaches the Wallace’s house; this action of approaching a suburban house from across the street is a repetition of the opening scene and foreshadows the danger of what is about to occur.

Night-Time Haddonfield

Carpenter deploys the wide anamorphic frame to considerable effect in the night-time scenes. The borders of most of the shots are underlit, triggering us to scan the darkness and shadows for any sign of Michael. On several occasions, you could actually miss his brief appearance at the edge of the frame if it were not for the motif sounds and music that announce his presence. Most of the fear producing techniques that were established in the daylight scenes are repeated in this last segment of the film. These being:

- Michael’s sudden and fleeting appearance at the edge of the frame or in the distance
- the repetitive use of high-pitched sounds, Michael’s leitmotif, heavy breathing and synthesiser chord announcing his presence
- The characters’ inability to see what is around them
- the uncertainty concerning point-of-view shots which continuously undermine our ability to trust our judgement
- The use of wide-angle lenses and deep staging that produce dual planes of action creating a threatening aspect to the background and boundary of the shots
- Repetitive action and camera movements that signify Michael

When examining how these elements work together to create fear in the night-time scenes at the Wallace’s House it is easy to see how they conform to the patterns already established in the film. Annie is in the kitchen talking to Laurie on the phone; a high-pitched music note commences. It cuts to an exterior shot of the house—out of the darkness of the lower corner of the frame Michael’s head appears. Across the street Tommy looks out the window, the leitmotif begins and we see his POV of Michael standing in the shadows outside the Wallace’s house. Tommy tells Laurie that the bogeyman is outside but when she looks he has disappeared causing Laurie to disbelieve him. It cuts back to a shot of Annie through the glass of the kitchen doors accompanied by Michael’s breathing so we assume we are sharing his POV but
approximately six seconds later he steps into the corner of the frame (fig. 19). Annie spills butter on herself and as Michael watches her undress he knocks a hanging pot plant which smashes to the ground, she hears the noise but ignores it, causing suspense and frustration as we know how close she is to the murderer. She then hears the Wallace’s dog whimpering and again disregards it but we watch on in horror as Michael strangles the animal.

![Fig. 19 Michael watches Annie](image)

By this stage we have been conditioned to expect Michael’s sudden appearance at the edge of or in the far distance of shots so fear is created by the deep focus and shadowy edges that frame Annie as she walks down the yard to the laundry. This fear is heightened by the addition of Michael’s leitmotif and the lack of light once inside the laundry. A synthesiser screech startles and alerts us of Michael’s presence behind the door, then a gratingly high G note rings on as Annie opens the door to check but sees nothing. A few seconds later the door closes and locks; as she bangs on it, calling for Lindsey to help her, Michael can be seen through the window behind her.

It cuts to Lindsey who sits in the darkened living room watching television. The width of the frame and the amount of darkness around her give ample space for someone to hide and so we fear for her. The shot is held for four seconds before it begins slowly moving around her, the slight wavering of the camera gives the impression that it is Michael watching before making his move, implying he is omnipresent. The phone rings causing an effective jump scare, it then cuts back to Annie still banging on the laundry door and Michael can be seen through the window behind her, further demonstrating his ubiquity. The irony of Annie stressing at not being able to answer her boyfriend’s phone call whilst her murderer is a few feet away, then getting stuck in the window adds a certain amount of humour to the scene that cuts through the tension and
gives it a place to start building from again. Once Annie is back in the house we think for a moment that she may have averted danger until a synthesiser outburst alerts us that Michael is standing in the open doorway behind her (fig. 20). This is the sixth time we have been aware of his presence but Annie has not—this slow deliberate set-up is designed to really maximise the suspense.

![Fig. 20 Michael in the background](image)

The uncertainty surrounding Michael’s location and his subjective vision are again used to create fear as Annie walks Lindsey across the street to the Doyle’s house. Due to the wavering movement of the camera we believe we are seeing Michael’s POV as the girls, eyes averted, walk directly towards him until a collision seems inevitable but at the moment of impact the camera turns to reveal Michael standing behind a car. Once again, he is on the edge of the screen and his appearance is punctuated by a synthesiser outburst and again, what we believed was his POV has turned out not to be.

The pace is very measured and deliberate in this following sequence where Annie crosses the backyard to the garage only to find her car locked so returns to the house for the keys. Carpenter said that he intentionally planned it to be as slow and agonising as possible to put the audience on edge and he builds the suspense for over 70 seconds before she finally returns to the garage. She pulls the handle of the car door; it is now unlocked but she does not register the danger until inside the vehicle. Michael grabs her from behind and the jump scare works particularly well because we have been conditioned up until this point not to expect it. No music is played as he strangles her creating a very realistic and terrifying soundscape of her gasping for air over his heavy breathing. He then slices her throat and it is interesting that although the colour red has

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27 Carpenter added, ‘You know this guy is going to spring upon someone, the question is when.’ Audio commentary, *John Carpenter’s Halloween* (2011) Umbrella Entertainment
been so prevalent in every scene, we do not see any blood. We are 52 minutes into the film and this is only the second murder we have witnessed. Carpenter has managed to generate a high level of suspense and tension for the 45 minutes between murders purely through his handling of image and sound.

In this next section of the film, repetition of action along with POV shots are being used as visual motifs to evoke the fear the viewer experienced in the opening murder scene. In a very conscious recreation of the first shot Lynda and Bob enter the Wallace’s house to find no one home and start making out on the couch. The leitmotif plays as the camera tracks back through the living room and ends with Michael’s shoulder in the frame. After Laurie hears the sounds of Michael strangling Lynda over the phone she grows concerned and crosses the street to the Wallace’s house. This sequence is a drawn-out version of the opening moments of the film. Through the use of Panaglide shots we see Laurie’s moving POV several times but unlike the opening scene, we see the reverse shots of Laurie. This sequence is very similar to Lila’s approach to the house in the final scenes of *Psycho* where we see her POV nine times. There is a disconcerting eeriness to the length and number of shots it takes for Laurie to cross the street—in the 86 seconds there are 16 shots, half of which are POV.

Laurie then repeats the same action Michael took in the opening scene of approaching a suburban house, stopping at the front door before moving around the back and entering through the kitchen. The POV shots as Laurie walks up the stairs are again reminiscent of the opening scene and the descending piano notes are the same. She enters the bedroom, a synthesiser screeches as she sees Annie laid out on the bed in front of Judith Myers’ headstone—it is the same screeching note used when the young Michael saw his naked sister before killing her. Moments later when Michael strikes Laurie with the knife, causing her to fall over the balustrade we share her falling POV. Laurie lands hard and is injured but being the Final Girl that she is manages to flee the house as the camera keeps in close proximity to her.

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28 Hill talks about the difficulties of attempting to replicate the opening shot in the audio commentary, *John Carpenter’s Halloween* (2011) Umbrella Entertainment
29 Carpenter revealed in the audio commentary that he extended the sequence as long as possible to build up the maximum dread because he believes that anyone who is watching the movie knows it is a horror film and they know something is going to happen, that Laurie is going to be ‘menaced’ by this killer, it is just a question of when.
What is really interesting about the next shot is Carpenter’s decision to use the Panaglide camera. The action of Laurie running from the house, falling, getting up, banging on the neighbour’s door then limping out of the frame is a continuous shot taken from one position, therefore it could have been easily shot with a mounted camera. We are aware of Michael’s positioning as we just saw him in the house so the use of the Panaglide and its signature wavering movement is purely meant to represent Michael’s presence/POV and his ubiquity and heighten our fear for Laurie as she seemingly falls at his feet.

The camera then follows Laurie as she runs across the street to the Doyle’s house. This is the fourth time in the film a moving Panaglide shot has crossed the street to approach a suburban house. Carpenter returns to the deep field staging to show Michael advancing from the Wallace’s house in a deliberate gait. Laurie uses her Final Girl quality of resourcefulness to get into the house even though she has no keys. Once inside, we and Laurie become aware that Michael is in the house as his breathing is audible. When he springs from behind the couch and makes his attack on her she stabs him in the neck with the knitting needle. The camera cuts to an unusually high angle of her on the couch as she throws the butcher knife to the floor (fig. 21). Thrown out of identification with both Laurie and the film by the cut, actress Jamie-Lee Curtis said the audience ‘groaned at the stupidity of her actions’. She makes a very valid point that in a close-up you would have seen that there is revulsion in her face about holding the knife which was the motivation for her discarding it.

Fig. 21 Thrown out of identification

Carpenter and cinematographer Cundey employ shallow focus on the close-up of Laurie

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30 Audio Commentary, John Carpenter’s Halloween (2011) Umbrella Entertainment
telling Tommy and Lindsey that she killed the bogeyman in order to conceal the fact that Michael is approaching behind her, thereby increasing the shock the audience experience when they see him. When Laurie hides inside the cupboard there are a series of shots that show her POV followed by her reaction (fig. 22). There are no shots of the attack taken from outside the cupboard or Michael’s perspective so unlike the opening scene of the movie, we are experiencing the events as the victim and not the murderer. During the attack the sound of banging doors, wood smashing, Michael breathing, Laurie screaming, high-pitched sound effects, low piano notes, and the use of a swinging light all crescendo to overload the senses, climaxing and stopping once she stabs him.

Fig. 22 Laurie’s POV

After sending the children to get help, Laurie slumps down in the bedroom doorway and Carpenter returns to the dual planes of action to create a significant climatic scare. In the background behind her we see Michael sit bolt upright and turn his head to face her. Privileged with the knowledge that Laurie does not have, we watch for 20 anxiety filled seconds as Michael rises and walks towards her before making his attack. During the struggle, she pulls off his mask and we get a glimpse at the monster but still cannot see his eyes properly as he is in profile and the eye closest to the camera is swollen shut from the gouging Laurie gave it with the coat hanger. She may not have been able to kill him but she did destroy his lethal gaze.

Loomis who has been searching the neighbourhood looking for Michael sees Tommy and Lindsey running out of the front door screaming. He enters the house and opens fire on Michael, shooting him six times, causing him to fall over the balcony. We see his seemingly lifeless body on the ground but when Loomis looks, Michael is gone, perpetuating the motif of his appearance then disappearance in relation to POV.
Michael’s leitmotif plays as his signature breathing is heard over a montage of locations around Haddonfield causing us to believe he is both indestructible and pervasive, powers that make him a truly uncanny character.

_Halloween_ is a film built around repetition; along with _Texas Chainsaw Massacre_ it pioneered the idea of the unknown, indestructible antagonist and is largely considered responsible for popularising the slasher film which went on to become a significant genre in the 80s. _Psycho_’s influence on _Halloween_ is considerable as demonstrated throughout this chapter but Carpenter utilises the available technology and creates many techniques of his own to elicit fear. The choice to shoot in anamorphic, with its wider field of view, encourages the eye to scan the shots for possible signs of peril; and the use of wide–angle lenses increases the depth of field, allowing action to occur on two planes—this doubles the potential for danger and produces a threatening aspect to the background and boundary of the shots. The film’s opening scene culminates in the audience experiencing, through first-person perspective, the perpetration of a violent stabbing. The reverse angle to a six-year-old Myers is both terrifying and shocking; it is also unforgettable and certain elements established in this scene such as the swaying of the Panaglide camera to represent Michael’s POV and his heavy breathing are repeated throughout the film to trigger fear, even when he is not on screen. Carpenter also creates an ambiguity around Michael that is associated with his subjective vision and repeatedly what we believe is his POV turns out not to be, which undermines our ability to trust our visual perception and to trust POV shots. This has a very destabilising effect and the fact that we can never truly pinpoint Michael’s location imbues him with a pervasiveness that terrifies. The film starts out firmly implanted in young Myers’ perspective, one we do not share again when he, as an adult, returns to Haddonfield, intimating that he is in fact impenetrable. It is Laurie’s subjective view that dominates the final section of the film as she retraces the steps Michael took in the opening scene but unlike the opening we are experiencing the events as the victim and not the murderer. Carpenter has managed, through the use of the subjective camera, to put us in the position of murderer, accomplice, and victim.
Chapter Four

THE SHINING

*The Shining* (1980) differs radically from the commercially successful formulaic slasher films that dominated its era, the ones for which *Halloween* (1978) provided the template and *Psycho* (1960) the inspiration. *The Shining* is a far more complex film, not only thematically but in the use of the techniques it employs to elicit fear. The film is an extremely interesting case study on how to build fear as for the first hour there is no evidence of any real threat or violence, yet it still manages to terrify the audience. This chapter will consider this and begins by focusing on the extensive way *The Shining* makes use of the uncanny as a tool to generate fear. It then examines the various techniques employed in the formal elements of the film; each will be considered both on their own merit as well as in relation to *Psycho* and *Halloween*. The use of a more subliminal technique, which I shall refer to as ‘anomalies’, will be explored before moving onto the detailed analysis which will demonstrate in detail how the techniques are combined to create a film that is frightening on many levels. It will be argued that of all the techniques used, the subjective camera has the greatest ability to elicit the emotional response of fear in the viewer.

Kubrick and screenwriter Diane Johnson were heavily influenced by two texts in the course of their research: Freud’s essay *The Uncanny* (1919) and Bruno Bettelheim’s *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976). Whilst the Fairy tale elements of Bettleheim’s text are obvious throughout the film, especially in the dialogue, it was Freud’s work that had the biggest impact on both the thematic and stylistic elements of the film. The essay talks about how manifestations of insanity arouse the uncanny and how ‘a particularly favourable condition for awakening uncanny feelings is created when there is

31 Whilst there is extensive theorising of the meaning and subtext of the film, less has been written about these techniques. Some theories of the subtext of *The Shining* include: it about the native American genocide; the faked moon landing; the Holocaust; the Illuminati. See the documentary *Room 237* for further information.
32 Both *Psycho* and *Halloween* have elements of the uncanny but they are nowhere near comparable in number to *The Shining*.
intellectual uncertainty whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one’ (p. 232). In the film Jack as well as Grady before him succumb to madness; whilst this could be a result of ‘cabin fever’ the text suggests that it is in fact the Overlook Hotel itself that is responsible and has consciously driven them to insanity. To the category of what arouses the uncanny Freud adds the phenomenon of the ‘double,’ he states that the experience is heightened when the characters share mental processes such as telepathy or have ‘knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other’; or when the character substitutes the ‘extraneous self for his own’ (p. 234). Such doubling is seen most literally in the ghosts of the murdered twin girls who haunt the Overlook; in Tony who signifies Danny’s division and interchanging of self; in Charles and Delbert Grady who represent Jack in a previous life; and in the shared telepathic experiences between the characters. Doubling is also prevalent in the mise-en-scène from the set design to the placement of props, examples being: the double elevator doors with matching chairs; the identical hallways; the Gold Room’s red bathroom; the double set of lamps and matching paintings in Hallorann’s bedroom; and in the many uses of mirrors and reflective surfaces (figs. 23-25). Probably the most powerful form of doubling in the film is the visual symmetry existing within the shots with each side of the frame being a mirror image of the other. This symmetry is achieved through design, camera position and the meticulous placement of each character centrally within the frame and is present in practically every shot.

Fig 23. Doubling: Elevator

Fig 24. Doubling: Red Bathroom
Freud lists repetition or the constant recurrence of the same thing as a criterion for evoking the uncanny with ‘the repetition of the same features or character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations’ (p. 234). Repetition is a central theme in the film with Jack returning to his role as caretaker of the Overlook with the destiny of carrying out the same crime, the slaughter of his family. Repetition occurs not only in large narrative structures, but also in the cinematography, particularly in the moving camera shots and the recurrence of both slow and crash-zooms. Repetition also occurs in the dialogue, especially towards the end of the film; and in the music with each of the three Legeti and Bartok pieces and the four Penderecki pieces being used three times each throughout the course of the film.\textsuperscript{34} Freud also lists involuntary repetition in the criterion as he believes it ‘surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere, and forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable when otherwise we should have spoken only of chance’ (pp. 237-238). In the film this involuntary repetition is achieved through mathematical incarnations (addition and multiplication) of the room number 237.\textsuperscript{35} Employing the same visual mirroring and doubling motif throughout the film, there are several repetitions of the numbers 42, 24, 12, and 21. (Also, the number 8 (4x2) when turned sideways is the symbol of infinity which reflects the film’s theme of eternal recurrence).

Freud does not consider stories of ghosts and the supernatural to be uncanny unless the writer pretends to move in the world of common reality (which \textit{The Shining} does); in this case everything that would have an uncanny effect in reality has it in his story. He

\textsuperscript{34} See music section for breakdown
\textsuperscript{35} It appears that Kubrick chose the room number based on the page number of Freud’s essay
goes on to say that the writer can increase the uncanny effect and ‘multiply it far beyond what could happen in reality, by bringing about events which never or rarely happen … by promising to give us the sober truth, and then overstepping it’ (p. 250). He also suggests that the uncanny sensation can be achieved if the story ‘keeps us in the dark for a long time about the precise nature of the presuppositions on which the world is based’, or it avoids ‘any definite information on the point to the last’ (p. 251). This is exactly what *The Shining* does by offering us a story about a man that seems to have gone insane as a result of cabin fever. The majority of the film is shrouded in obscurity as to whether the hotel is actually haunted, it then bombards us with events that could not happen in reality such as the objectively presented room full of well-dressed skeletons and elevator overflowing with blood that Wendy sees. The ending of the film does not shed any light on these events but rather, it raises more questions.

In an interview with Ciment (1980) Kubrick explains why he was attracted to Stephen King’s novel:

> It seemed to strike an extraordinary balance between the psychological and the supernatural in such a way as to lead you to think that the supernatural would eventually be explained by the psychological: ‘Jack must be imagining these things because he’s crazy’. This allowed you to suspend your doubt of the supernatural until you were so thoroughly into the story that you could accept it almost without noticing.36

In the same interview, Kubrick admits that the film uses psychological misdirection to forestall the realisation that the supernatural events are actually happening. One way he achieves this is by placing mirrors behind the ghosts Jack encounters so the audience are left to wonder if he is actually looking at himself and hallucinating.

On the other hand, Kubrick creates the impression of the supernatural through the use of the subjective camera, one that is independent, kinetic, reactive and adaptive. This he initiates in the opening scene when the camera swerves to avoid the trees, immediately

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establishing the shot in the realm of the subjective rather than objective. When the camera stops following Jack’s car and wanders over the cliffs we are unsure whose point-of-view we are seeing from and what supernatural powers it has that affords us this perspective. We have witnessed wandering camera movements in both *Psycho* and *Halloween*, it is when the camera as a narrating entity wanders on its own, rather than supporting the story through a character’s point-of-view. Johnson (1993 p. 54) suggests filmmakers of horror and the supernatural have found the wandering camera a useful way to establish a ‘presence’, usually some voyeuristic, vague, and sinister one, and that this presence is always marked out when the sense of a haunting entity is required.

Similarly, Paul Sunderland (2013 p. 81) points out that throughout *The Shining* ‘the camera consistently and overtly demonstrates autonomy from the diegesis with which it is concerned’. The best example of this is seen just before Danny encounters the hacked-up bodies of the twins in the hallway. As he rides his Big Wheel through the kitchen the camera stops following him and lingers as he turns the corner into the hall, almost as if it knows what awaits him. The camera’s formal role would be to follow the action, so this autonomous movement indicates a kind of liberated presence.

The camera at times marks itself as spatially separate from the characters as it tracks alongside them by allowing columns and furniture to pass in between. This technique was used in *Halloween* to create a sense of ‘stalking’ and here it achieves a similar effect. The camera also largely adheres to the straight architectural lines of the hotel as it follows the characters, creating the impression that it is the Overlook that is watching them. *Halloween* made remarkably innovative use of the subjective camera to create the first-person point-of-view of young Myers in the opening scene, but *The Shining* goes a step further by actually creating a character—the presence that is the Overlook Hotel. The ambiguity surrounding the intentions of the hotel and the question of whether it is fact responsible for driving Jack insane creates a pervasive sense of fear.

The stylistic technique of one-point perspective is used repeatedly throughout *The Shining* to the extent that it becomes a major driving force in the aesthetic of the film. The use of one-point perspective creates images with depth, dimension and near-perfect symmetry that draw the viewers into the frame and directs their eyes to a single vanishing point on the horizon line. In the frequent shots of Danny riding through the hotel the camera is positioned behind him, inches above the ground causing the line
between third and first-person perspective to gradually dissolve as we follow him toward the distant focal spot in the centre of the frame. As our eyes move through the various shots of the corridors (in both the hotel and maze) the walls appear to grow ever narrower as they converge on the vanishing point, creating a sense of claustrophobia. We are not accustomed to looking at one position on the screen and are more familiar with two or three-point perspective so its repeated use throughout the film creates a certain amount of unease. Even when nothing is happening, by putting our focus on a particular point, Kubrick makes us wonder when something will, creating an environment of tension and anticipation (fig. 26).

![Image of one-point perspective](image)

Fig. 26 One-point perspective

Kubrick employs wide-angle lenses and his profuse use of them throughout *The Shining* helps to create, as Naremore (2006 p. 4) said, ‘an eerie, dynamic, sometimes caricatured sense of space’. Garrett Brown, who invented and operated the Steadicam on the film, believes the wide-angle lenses augmented the sense of motion that is so inherent in the film. 37 Kubrick and cinematographer John Alcott shot in an aspect ratio of 1.37:1 and framed the film to the full expanse of the negative creating an almost square frame. This frame combined with the broad field of view from the wide-angle lens and the converging lines of the one-point perspective creates a boxed-in or claustrophobic sensation despite the expansiveness of the sets.

Along with wide-angle lenses Kubrick also chose to shoot with the Steadicam and ended up filming over 70% of *The Shining* with it. 38 The spatial dimensions the new

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38 After seeing a reel of test footage shot by an early prototype in 1974, Kubrick wrote to Garrett Brown, the Steadicam’s inventor, to tell him that the footage shot by the ‘hand-held mystery stabilizer was spectacular’ and that it ‘should revolutionize the way films are shot.’ (In Ferrara,
technology created and the kind of character movement within the frame it could enable were extremely different from what was possible with either the zoom lens or traditional camera. Kubrick exploited the Steadicam’s ability to move freely through space and the fluid, gliding image-in-motion it created to establish a haunting a presence. Ferrara (2001 p. 81) points out that the Steadicam actively conducts the narration in the film; ‘its narrative gaze presents itself as independent, superior and capable of tying together events, anticipating them and abandoning them exactly because it knows the story and chooses how to tell it to us’. The film has a sense of perpetual motion created by an excessive amount of camera movement as well as extensive choreographed character movement within the frame, both made possible by the Steadicam. This set a new precedent for how films were shot, one that is more akin to the style that has become prevalent from the early 90s on.  

In the interview with Ciment (1980) the director said he believed the hotel’s labyrinthine layout and huge rooms would alone provide an eerie atmosphere and he commented on the Steadicam’s ability to achieve the desired visual aesthetic:  

Most of the hotel set was built as a composite, so that you could go up a flight of stairs, turn down a corridor, travel its length and find your way to still another part of the hotel. It mirrored the kind of camera movements which took place in the maze. In order to fully exploit this layout, it was necessary to have moving camera shots without cuts, and of course the Steadicam made that much easier to do.  

We get a real sense of the vastness of the hotel as a result of the camera’s ability to glide through rooms and corridors, and this is enhanced by the constant use of wide-angle lenses. Unease is created as a result of the disproportion between the character’s action and the immensity of the surroundings that contain it. This unease is intensified when the characters inhabit separate areas of the hotel as they are left exposed and vulnerable. Romney (1999 p. 10) notes, ‘When Jack attempts to write in the huge Colorado Lounge we wonder what’s getting to him more—being imprisoned in his own head or being

Serena, ‘Steadicam: Techniques and Aesthetics’ p. 30)  
39 Movies such as Goodfellas (1990), Carlito’s Way (1993), Boogie Nights (1997) and Magnolia (1999)  
adrift at his desk as though at sea’. Conversely, the viewer is made to feel a sense of claustrophobia in the narrow corridors of both the maze and hotel as a result of the square frame and converging lines of the one-point perspective (figs. 27-28). The pacing of the film similarly induces this sense of things closing in—the dissolves that feature heavily early in the film turn into abrupt cuts as the scenes get shorter and the frequency of the intertitles increase while the passage of time they denote decreases.

Nicholas Godfrey (2015 p. 127) points out that ‘Kubrick employs a variety of cinematic techniques to emphasise the sense of horror, betraying the influence of the Italian giallo film. This legacy is visible in the film’s bold colour palette, the sudden inserts of shocking images, and his contrasting use of zooms, which slowly, inexorably draw closer to a subject, heightening the sense of psychological tension, or crash suddenly into images of violence and gore’. The slow zooms in the film are most often associated with ‘shining’ moments and are more frequently used in the first half of the film, whereas the crash-zooms appear more often at the end of the film, the majority of which are connected to Wendy’s point-of-view and are used to emphasise her horror.

Just as Halloween had the distinct colour scheme of orange and red, The Shining has a distinct palette of red, white and blue. These colours are used profusely in the clothing, sets, props, and even in the lighting. These are the colours of the American flag and symbolise the colonising nation. We learn early in the film that the hotel was built on an Indian burial ground and that the local Indians fought hard against the violation of their sacred site. The Overlook is adorned with native American artefacts which is a constant reminder of the dead that lay beneath it, the collective spirit of which may now be haunting the halls seeking revenge for the atrocity endured. The persistent used of red,
white and blue is a reminder of who committed the atrocity and this interaction builds anxiety as we wait in anticipation for the moment the revenge is carried out.

Kubrick uses the device of foreshadowing to elicit fear in the viewer; he also exploits the disturbing effects created by going against the basic rules of continuity editing. Like *Psycho* which made abundant use of foreshadowing, particularly in the parlour room, the mise-en-scène in *The Shining* is filled with details that indirectly carry meaning. The *Road Runner* cartoon that often plays in the movie foreshadows the chase through the maze where Jack, howling like a coyote, tries to kill his son and where Danny, like the *Road Runner*, outsmarts him. Just as the 180-degree rule is broken to cause a psychological effect in the scene that takes place in the Deputy Sheriff’s home in *Psycho*, the rule is broken in the encounter between Jack and Grady in the ballroom’s red bathroom, the effects of which shall be explained in the analysis.

Like the previous two films *The Shining* exploits the disturbing effects of high-pitched frequencies in both the sound design and music. With the exception of Wendy Carlos and Rachel Elkind’s synth adaptation of *Dies Irae* for the opening credits Kubrick predominantly uses pre-existing concert music from three 20th century composers, Bartók, Ligeti and Penderecki. Bartók’s *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936) has horror score elements such as the glissando in the harp and tremolo in the timpani and is heard when Wendy and Danny walk through the maze; when Danny, on his tricycle, first discovers room 237; and when Jack talks to Danny on the bed. The use of the score draws a parallel between the maze and hotel and it exemplifies the menacing aspect of the Overlook. Ligeti’s *Lontano* (1967) is first heard when Danny encounters the twins in the Games Room; a screeching, high-pitched note precedes the low rumbling undertones of the tuba and violin harmonics and the piece ends with high unnerving strings played in vibrato. The second time *Lontano* is heard is in the storeroom when Hallorann ‘shines’ with Danny and the last occurrence of the piece is when Jack stares out from the Colorado Room—the connection with the last two shining moments suggests Jack too has psychic powers. Six of the nine concert pieces used in the film were Penderecki’s and his work preponderates the latter part of the
According to sound editor Gordon Stainforth (2018), Kubrick wanted the score to be ‘disturbingly freakish and manic’ and suggested he ‘beef’ it up by layering two or more pieces on top of each other. As Jack’s madness peaks, the music becomes frantic and during the maze sequence up to four different Penderecki pieces are layered, creating a highly textured composition where the identity of each individual piece becomes indiscernible. To this is added a panoply of shrieks and wails such as Jack’s wild screaming calls to Danny, loud wind noises and what sounds like screeching bats.

Lionnet (2003) points out that for the first half of the movie Kubrick chose structural points of change in the music and committed them to moments in the film, yet at the same time those moments are not consistently associated with anything so the score remains highly autonomous. As Jack becomes more psychologically deranged, the synchronisation points become more frequent and gradually take over and therefore are congruent to Jack’s transformation. Later in the film these musical markers characterise some violent physical action or interact with violent dialogue. Lionnet believes the synchronisation of shock chords and onscreen action suggests that the violent acts themselves are musically driven. He also posits that Kubrick created a contrapuntal relationship between music and picture, one that was mutually reciprocal and where the music did not function as an underscore.

The final technique I would like to discuss before moving onto the analysis is the use of subtle and deliberate incongruities or anomalies to induce a state of what I will refer to as ‘subliminal dissonance’. Throughout the film there are inconsistencies in set-design, prop-placement and temporal narrative details: rooms have impossible windows or are too large or narrow to actually exist within the hotel; furniture moves between cuts; props change colour or appear and disappear; character’s recall facts inaccurately, such as when Ullman describes the twins as aged eight and 10. These are just some of the many inconsistencies which are so subtle they are almost imperceptible, however they

41 Penderecki’s: *Awakening of Jacob* (1974) is used when Danny first has his vision in the bathroom in Boulder; when Jack has his nightmare; when Hallorann and Danny shine as Jack moves through room 237. *De Natura Sonoris No. 1* (1966) is used when the Danny encounters the hacked-up bodies of the twins; when Wendy discovers the snowcat has been damaged by Jack; when Jack is frozen in the snow. *Polymorphia* (1961) is used when Wendy reads Jack’s ‘All work and no play’ manuscript; when Wendy drags Jack into the storeroom and when she runs to the snowcat.
do register on a subconscious level creating unease and dissonance. With Kubrick’s reputation as a perfectionist and as one of the most meticulous directors in history there is no way these could be continuity errors. In an interview with Brooks (2012) Jan Harlan, Kubrick’s brother-in-law and executive producer on *The Shining* commented that Kubrick ‘wasn’t interested in making a straightforward horror film, he wanted more ambiguity. If he was going to make a film about ghosts, he wanted it to be ghostly from the very first to the very last. The set was very deliberately built to be offbeat and off the track, so that the huge ballroom would never actually fit inside. The audience is deliberately made to not know where they’re going.’

ANALYSIS

This research analyses the American (144 minute) version of the film; it shows how Kubrick sets up the supernatural element in the initial few scenes, then the uncanny aspect in the apartment in Boulder and when the family arrive at the Overlook the anomalies are introduced right away as they take a tour of the hotel. As the film progresses, it is the supernatural element created by the use of the subjective camera that predominates and is responsible for generating fear. Similar to the previous two films, ambiguity surrounding certain point-of-view shots also creates unease in the viewer—at times there is confusion as to the source of the shot and other times when you expect to see a subjective shot you are presented with an objective one.

*The Shining* opens with a moving aerial shot over a lake flanked by mountains; the image the camera creates as it penetrates through space towards an island in the centre is both symmetrical and mirrored by the reflection of the mountains in the water. The camera then veers to the right to avoid hitting trees, an action that establishes its autonomy and moves the shot from the realm of the objective to the subjective. The accompanying notes from a single horn instrument create a sombre atmosphere. A dissolve takes us to a bird’s-eye view of a VW beetle driving along a solitary road in the forest; similar to the preceding shot, the road is kept in the centre of the frame creating symmetry. The camera follows the car as it winds up into the mountains while the haunting shrill effects of Carlos and Elkind’s score plays; it is an adaption of the 13th century Gregorian chant *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath) which aptly foreshadows what is to come. In the fourth shot of this sequence the camera sweeps in low behind the VW as the credits roll then swerves past it and over the cliffs where it rests for a moment above
the water. Kenneth Johnson (1993) suggests that when a camera wanders such as it does here, the viewers’ classical expectations are disrupted and they become aware of a ‘foreign presence’ (p. 56). The voiced ululation throughout the opening track contributes to this sense of haunting. Rolling credits are normally reserved for the end of a movie so their placement here provokes a sense of the uncanny by having the familiar become unfamiliar. Thematically they are fitting for a film that negates linear time, looping it across generations of character’s who appear to be trapped in an eternal return.

In the following series of shots, the camera resumes its watchful eye over the ascending car, pursuing it from behind (a visual motif that will recur throughout the film) and capturing the vast isolation and unnerving grandeur of the high mountains. An ominous ambiance is created by the accumulation of low pedal tones in the score, along with a Native American tribal chant, the wail of sirens and what sounds like screams. The camera reaches the glacier of the mountain and its destination, the Overlook Hotel. For over three minutes our anticipation and curiosity has built as we wonder who is driving the car, whose view we are engaged in (it is not an authorial view, rather a haunting presence), why it is following the car and, due to the ominous score, what peril awaits. An important point to note is that it is clear to see from the aerial footage that there is no maze next to the hotel.

Title card: Interview
From the entrance of the hotel Jack Torrance approaches the reception desk where we learn he is there for a job interview. A Steadicam follows him as he crosses the foyer to the manager Stuart Ullman’s office. Sunderland (2013 p. 76) suggests that the use of the relatively new technology in this scene not only establishes the camera’s ability to go everywhere and see everything but it ‘superimposes over the conventional action a panoptic demonstration of pure visual presence … it is announcing a vast and precarious cinematic space of which it is unmistakably the centre’. The camera follows Jack into Ullman’s office and then stops just inside the doorway. The slight wavering of the camera gives the subjective impression that we are a silent witness in the room. The position of the characters in the room and the meticulous placement of each of them

42 This effect was used extensively in Halloween to represent the point-of-view of Michael Myers.
centrally within the frame during the interview gives the viewer a feel for the one-point perspective and symmetry that is employed extensively throughout the film.\(^{43}\) Ullman is dressed in red, white and blue and there is an American flag on his desk. He explains to Jack that a previous caretaker, Charles Grady, chopped up his wife and two daughters aged eight and 10 with an axe and then shot himself.\(^{44}\)

In the following scenes in the Torrance’s apartment in Boulder we are introduced to Jack’s wife Wendy and their son Danny. Kubrick goes to considerable lengths to provoke a sense of the uncanny; he also uses structural points in the music to add emphasis to the images. The characters are dressed in red, white and blue and these are the predominant colours throughout the apartment. Two cartoon rainbow stickers are prominent amongst others on a door as the camera moves past it and into the bathroom where Danny stands at the sink talking to his imaginary friend, Tony, in the mirror. The sleeve of his top has the number 42 on it and behind him we see a yellow rubber duck on the bathtub. The camera slowly zooms into Danny’s mirror image as he pleads with Tony to tell him why he does not want to go to the hotel. The glissando and the kettledrums of Penderecki’s *Awakening of Jacob* (1974) accompany Danny’s final dialogue, ‘Tony, tell me!’. Danny freezes in terror, his ‘shining’ begins and we see his internal vision of double red elevator doors—the shot is both symmetric and mirrored as the furnishings are the same on each side. The growing crescendos of the first two brass chords accompany and symbolise the emergence of blood from the elevators yet all diegetic sound has been suppressed. This is followed by a flash cut of a set of twin girls in blue dresses then a close-up of Danny screaming, his face lit from one side. The sound of the scream is suppressed and replaced by the third brass chord of the score. Blood washes over the camera and it cuts to black. The repetition of harmonies coupled with the flash cuts creates a haunting dreamlike state. The sequence makes clear that these images originate in Danny’s mind and are occurring on a different date as he is wearing different clothes. It has gone from a relatively slow start to the movie to suddenly being bombarded with horrific images. The suppression of certain elements such as the noise of the gushing blood and the sound of the scream are disquieting.

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\(^{43}\) Kubrick insisted on having the crosshair of the camera placed over the actor’s left nostril in every scene to keep them in the centre of the frame.

\(^{44}\) We learn later in the film that the caretaker whom Jack converses with is named Delbert Grady and the two little girls dressed in blue dresses, who we assume are the Grady girls, are identical twins.
adding mystery to the horror, and the low-key lighting on Danny’s face produces a high contrast between light and shade which creates a sense of drama.

Later as a doctor examines Danny on his bed whilst his mother watches on, we see a folding canvas chair against the wall which has the same pattern as the two rainbow stickers seen earlier on the door. A rubber duck, identical to the one in the bathroom, sits on the shelf. The curtains and bedspread have the same chequered pattern as Wendy’s dress and are the same colours as she and Danny wear. A Goofy puppet hanging from the window shelf is dressed in a red top, blue overalls and tan shoes which is effectively what Wendy is wearing—a coincidence you may think but you have to take into account Goofy’s regular attire is a mustard coloured top with a black waistband—also, the physical resemblance to Wendy, with dark hair, large eyes and big teeth, is undeniable (figs. 29-30). The bear head that Danny is lying on has exactly the same shaped eyes as the dial floor indicators above the elevator doors seen in his vision. In this sequence, we learn that Jack, in a drunken rage, had dislocated Danny’s arm five months before and had, as a result, stopped drinking.

Danny’s next shining episode occurs on the closing day of the hotel when he is by himself playing darts in the games room; an unidentifiable high-pitched noise is present and increases in volume as he crosses to the board to retrieve the darts. He suddenly turns around and there is a crash-zoom into his face—the shot is held for four suspense-ridden seconds as we wonder what Danny is seeing that has filled him with fear. Low rumbling undertones of the tuba from Ligeti’s Lontano develop; it cuts to a shot of the twin girls standing across the room and although this is a POV shot it is objectively presented, making it appear that what was once a highly subjective vision in a horrifying sequence in Danny’s mind has now materialised. We see Danny’s reaction
then his POV as the twins smile then leave. The high-pitched noise ceases and we are left with a shot of Danny and the sound of violin vibrato. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, seeing what the characters sees and then their reaction aids identification; and high-pitched sounds and low rumbling undertones have the greatest capacity within the sound spectrum to create fear in the viewer.

Tour of Dissolves and Anomalies
The anomalies commence with the enormous amount of luggage the Torrance’s have that could not have fit in their small car. As Ullman shows Jack and Wendy into their apartment in the staff wing the interior does not follow a linear direction from the hallway but is on 90-degree angle which spatially does not make sense. Also, there are windows in both the living room and bathroom which are at right angles to each other, therefore the apartment must be in a corner of the hotel yet we discover later that it is not. It dissolves to the exterior of the Overlook and Ullman continues the tour past a now very large and visible maze that is situated opposite the entrance of the hotel. Dissolve to Ullman showing the Torrance’s through the Gold Room; when they first enter several of the actors stand by the bar with their hands in their pockets, behind them the barstools are evenly lined up but after a very quick cut to Danny entering the room the camera pans back and the stools have moved position. Dissolve to Hallorann showing Wendy and Danny through the kitchen; they enter a walk-in freezer which has a handle on the right side of the door but when they exit it is on the left. These anomalies are subliminally picked up and create dissonance in the viewer which leaves them unsettled without understanding why.

A short time later when Hallorann the chef, Wendy and Danny enter the storeroom the high-pitched noise heard in the Games Room returns, immediately putting the viewer on edge. Danny stands with his hands in his pockets and Legeti’s Lontano begins as the camera slowly zooms into his face. This is followed by a slow zoom into Hallorann’s profile as he lists the contents of the storeroom to Wendy, who also has her hands in her pockets. The chef’s voice fades down as he turns his head to look at Danny, his mouth continues listing the contents of the storeroom but a voice-over with the reverb adjusted so it sounds like the voice in Hallorann’s head asks, ‘How’d you like some ice-cream Doc?’ This image is both eerie and perplexing. The high-pitched noise stops and Hallorann continues his conversation with Wendy, leaving the audience as perturbed as
Danny. This is the second time both a slow zoom and Lontano have accompanied an explicit ‘shining’ moment. It is also the third time we have witnessed the characters with their hands in their pockets. This mirroring and repetition of body language provokes a sense of the uncanny.

Afterwards, Halloran and Danny sit at the table in the kitchen having a conversation about shining. They both have their hands clasped together and placed in front of them on the table. At one point Danny asks Halloran if he is scared of the hotel and the closeness of the shots is broken by a cut to a wide-angle in which we see a set of knives on the wall behind the young boy pointing directly at his head, foreshadowing the danger to come (fig. 31)

Fig. 31 Foreshadowing

Title card: One Month Later
A shot of the Torrance’s VW in the empty carpark, dwarfed by the enormous hotel behind it, reflects their isolation. Inside the hotel Wendy is wheeling a breakfast trolley; the camera tracks her, keeping a consistent distant whilst allowing pillars and posts to pass between it and her. By doing so the shot takes on a subjective slant, almost like we are seeing from someone or something’s POV. It creates the feeling of a presence in the room watching her. As Danny rides his red, white and blue coloured tricycle through the hotel in the next shot, the Steadicam stays low to the ground and follows closely behind. The ability of the Steadicam to get the lens so low and record the action with 45 Gareth Brown who invented and operated the Steadicam on the movie mentioned in the film’s commentary that you get a real feel for the characters and for this exchange because Kubrick works so closely and symmetrically. I would add that the shallow depth of field created by the telephoto lens and lack of movement in the shot aids this ‘feel’ or identification process as the audience’s total focus is on the characters through this exchange. This is one of only a few shots that were filmed with the telephoto lens.
such fluidity and proximity produced an image that would have been, at the time of release, unfamiliar and unsettling to the audience. Mario Falsetto (1990 p. 232) believes that this ‘remarkably inventive view of Danny’s movement is an instance of spatial oppressiveness and that the closeness of the camera indicates that he is under observation and will have difficulty escaping this environment’. The abrasive noise of Danny’s tricycle wheels is elevated as he crosses the solid surfaces; the sound of which is routinely muffled as he rides over the rugs. The abundant number of materialising sound indices of the hard surfaces pull the scene toward the concrete and immerse us within the walls of the hotel, whereas the scarcity of number of indices in the carpet leads to an awareness of the ethereal. One-point perspective draws us into the shot as we follow Danny toward the distant vanishing point in the centre of the frame. Gaïd Girard (1996) notes:

In the tricycle sequence, the extremely low position of the camera and the amplified sound of the bikes wheels awaken in the spectator a feeling of malaise and of the unknown, of Unheimlichkeit. Here, the image is read as coming from a subjective camera, but there is no imaginable subject. The camera’s point-of-view thus becomes monstrous, dogging the little boy in an irreprezentable, menacing fashion. Who can see from that angle? The hotel? If so, does the Overlook then become a character?

Making the Overlook a character, I believe, was precisely Kubrick’s intention and he achieves this through the use of the subjective camera. This is demonstrated in the following outdoor scene when Wendy and Danny enter the maze (again they are dressed in red, white and blue). A wooden hutch containing the map of the maze, which was

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46 As termed by Chion (1994): A sound of a voice, noise, or music has a particular number of materialising sound indices, from zero to infinity, whose relative abundance or scarcity always influences the perception of the scene and its meaning. The materialising indices are the sound’s details that cause us to feel the material conditions of the sound source, and refer to the concrete process of the sound’s production. Materialising indices can pull the scene toward the material and concrete, or their scarcity can lead to a perception of the characters and story as ethereal, abstract and fluid.

clearly visible against the side of the hedge when Ullman gave a tour of the grounds earlier, has been replaced by a bench seat. As mother and son run through the entrance of the maze the camera continues on its own path and comes to rest on the missing hutch and map, now situated several metres away. Conventional narrative cinema demands that the camera follow the character, telling the story from their subjectivity, so this independent move by the camera (it chooses to not follow the characters but to show the map) directs us to believe we are seeing from the POV of the haunting entity that is the Overlook (we could take it as an authorial slant but we have been primed to think of it as ghostly from the way it has moved so far and this is largely due to the gliding motion of the aerial shots and the Steadicam). The tension created is twofold as we speculate whether the entity’s motives are pure or evil and why it has chosen to show us the map. The shot cuts to the inside of the maze and Bartók’s unnerving score increases in volume while the camera tracks Wendy and Danny as they become disoriented down the narrow aisles.

A dissolve brings us back inside the hotel to show Jack looking over the model of the maze, the layout of which appears to be identical to the map we just saw. A low-angle of Jack is followed by a descending overhead shot of the maze. Understood as a conventional subjective shot we deem this to be Jack’s point-of-view, however, closer inspection shows that it is filmed from the adjacent side of the maze therefore it cannot be (figs. 32-33). Again, we have been shown a subjective shot that has no subject, further reinforcing (this time on a subconscious level) that we are seeing from the POV of the haunting presence that is the Overlook. As the overhead shot slowly zooms in we notice that the maze layout looks larger and its paths are symmetrically mirrored on the X and Y axis. We also notice two tiny figures moving in the central aisle; it becomes apparent that it is Wendy and Danny. The obscurity of this shot is startling; this ‘supernaturally’ high bird’s-eye view appears to be of the actual maze and not the model. There is a sudden cut to Wendy and Danny in one of the aisles and the scene ends abruptly with a crash of cymbals.

48 *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*
Title Card: Tuesday

An exterior shot shows only three lights on, all in separate rooms of the enormous hotel. This reflects the Torrance’s seclusion from society and one another. Wendy is in the kitchen preparing food and Danny rides his Big Wheel in a different part of the hotel—both he and his mother are dressed in red, white and blue. The camera is low to the ground and closely follows Danny in the same menacing manner as before. The 1970s-hexagon carpet creates a mesmerizing and vivid presence that works well in the symmetrical framing by adding a heightened sense of perspective that appears to lengthen the corridors. As Danny rides down the hallways we begin to observe structural abnormalities in the hotel such as rooms that could be no more than a meter in depth. Bartók’s high-pitched score heard earlier in the maze returns, drawing parallels between the layout of the hotel and the maze. Danny slows down after noticing room 237 and stops just past it; he looks back at the room and we see from his low perspective, which causes the door to appear intimidating. He attempts to enter the room but it is locked; as he looks up at the room number an image of the twins is flashed on screen. This is Danny’s POV we are seeing but it originates in the boy’s mind, it is subjectively presented unlike the objective presentation of the twins in the Games Room.

In this next scene, a sense of the hotel’s haunting and ever-watchful presence is reflected in the long, slow camera movement into the back of Jack typing in the Colorado Room. The camera holds its position at a fixed distance and watches as Wendy enters and makes the lengthy walk across the room. The strange yet beautiful wash of sound from the harp, piano and celesta of Bartók’s score\(^{49}\) swells as she reaches him; he suddenly

\(^{49}\) *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*
rips the paper out of the typewriter with a loud slicing sound that coincides with a climatic cymbal crash. Next to him is an open scrapbook containing newspaper clippings. This exchange between them, in which Jack overreacts aggressively to her interruption, is shot in a series of medium-close and close-ups and at one point a chair positioned on the wall behind Jack disappears, only to reappear in the next shot, unsettling the viewer. The manic behaviour Jack displays gives us an insight to his impending insanity and makes the violence that is to come seem plausible. Once their exchange is over, the camera cuts back to its earlier fixed position behind Jack and slowly tracks backwards, giving the impression that the hotel’s watchful presence is leaving as there is nothing more to see. A cut back to Jack as he types seems unwarranted but on closer inspection it reveals that there is now paper in the typewriter and the layout of the clippings in the scrapbook has completely changed, yet no one has turned the page. These subtle inconsistencies that are picked up on a subconscious level add up to destabilise and cause fear in the viewer.

Title Card: Thursday
Wendy and Danny are playing outside in the snow; the high-pitched noise and the screeching pedal tones of Lontano which were heard in two earlier shining scenes commences. It cuts to Jack standing motionless, staring out from the Colorado Room. A slow 38 seconds zoom in to his unshaven and unhinged face shows him rapt in some inner vision. It looks like he has descended into madness but the connection with the high-pitched noise, the score, and slow zoom that were present when Danny had his visions indicate that Jack is also having a shining moment. He has his hand in his pocket, mirroring Danny’s stance in the storeroom. Unlike Danny’s shining episodes, we do not see Jack’s subjective visions so, despite the close-up being so privileged, we do not identify with him. The shot is set up to be subjective but does not follow through and we are left in the dark as to what he is experiencing, this serves to distance us from, and to fear him as we do not understand him.

Title Card: Saturday
The Overlook Hotel is almost buried in snow confirming the Torrance’s complete isolation from society. Danny rides through the kitchen but, unlike the previous times on his big wheel, the camera is not low to the ground and closely aligned with him but follows from up high and at a distance. The shrill strings of Penderecki’s De Natura
Sonoris (1966) grates on the ear and the sound of the wheels on the concrete is elevated, its abundant materialising indices immersing us deep in the scene. As Danny accelerates down the corridor the gap between him and the Steadicam increases until he reaches the end, turns the corner and disappears from the frame. The camera then lingers in the empty hall defying its conventional narrative role of following the subject. As this hesitation occurs moments before Danny’s second encounter with the slaughtered twins it really cements the idea that not only are we seeing from the presence that is the Overlook Hotel but it too has the ability to ‘shine’ and in fact knows what horror awaits Danny.

It cuts to Danny riding down a corridor which has the same floral wallpaper as the one we saw in his initial vision of the twins; as that shot was followed by the elevator of blood sequence we immediately fear what is to come. The Steadicam is now so close it is almost on top of Danny, adding to the fear through its oppressive proximity. Loud percussion is followed by a crash of cymbals as he rounds the corner and sees the twins at the end of the hall. Danny is framed in the shot as well, so it is an objective representation of the girls indicating their physical presence. The hall lights are reflected in Danny’s eyes, making his pupils shine white as he stares in horror. This image is intercut with stills of the hacked and bloodied bodies of the girls and ever closer shots of them asking Danny to ‘Come and play with them forever and ever’. The sequence is disturbing not only for its content but also because it is visually deceptive and confuses perspective. The girls appear to be moving up the hall towards Danny on each jump cut so you would expect the distance behind them to lengthen but it is in fact the camera that moves down the hall closer to the girls, thereby compressing the background. Each still shot of the bloodstained walls and lifeless bodies is made more frightening by the sudden crash of cymbals. As the words ‘forever and ever’ are repeated, the music climaxes but the tone of the twins remains the same creating counterpoint. Danny quickly covers his face to avoid the horror he sees and this action is marked by an orchestral glissando. He peeks between his fingers and we see his POV of the empty corridor, he releases his hands from his face and the orchestral forces cease. These prominent meeting points or hits between picture and music which are synchronised with either drastic picture change or sudden physical movement, produce a combination of sudden shock followed by enduring terror. Throughout this scene Kubrick has used symmetry and one-point perspective to focus our attention, intensify the shot and to
create a sense of claustrophobia. The flowered wallpaper and pretty blue dresses become an ironic counterpoint to the grisly image of the hacked-up girls and bloodstained walls and carpet.

Title card: Monday.
The frequency of the appearance of titles cards reflects how nervous the film is getting. The camera pulls back from a close up of a TV (showing the movie *A Summer of 42*) to a very symmetrical shot of Danny and Wendy in which we see a storm raging outside. It is glaringly obvious from the wide-angle that the TV has no cord and is not plugged into an electrical socket. Danny asks if he can get his firetruck from the bedroom where Jack is sleeping. High-pitched piano notes alert us as Danny turns the door knob and enters the apartment. The uncanny in this scene is evoked by a reflection in the mirror of Jack as he sits on the bed and the repetition in the conversation that proceeds between the father and son, as well as Jack saying the words ‘forever and ever and ever’ which were uttered during the previous sequence by the twin girls. Although Jack professes his love for his son the eerie harp, piano and celesta swirls from Bartók’s *Music for String Percussion and Celesta*, which build to a crescendo, totally subverts the sentiment. This is a classic example of Chion’s (1994) ‘anempathetic’ effect as the music displays a conspicuous indifference to what is going on in the plot, which has the effect of intensifying the emotion by creating a sense of the tragic. In this scene both Jack and Danny are absent of any affect and it is the music that sustains the affect and leads the performance.

Title card: Wednesday.
An exterior shot of the hotel shows it almost buried in snow. In the scenes that follow fear is generated by the ambiguity encompassing POV shots; at times, there is confusion as to the source of the shot and other times when you expect to see a subjective shot you are presented with an objective one. Danny is playing with toy trucks on the hexagon patterned carpet when a tennis ball rolls into frame and stops in front of him. It cuts to a reverse shot and it is clear that no one else is present. (Danny does not move yet when the shot returns to the front view he is sitting in a different hexagon closer to the wall). He walks down the corridor and we see his POV as he enters room 237. The next time we see Danny he has ripped clothes and scratches on his neck. After Wendy accuses Jack of harming their son he sits at the empty bar in the
Gold Room, covers his face with his hands and professes he would give his soul for a beer. He then looks directly into the camera and addresses ‘Lloyd’, leaving the viewer unsure if he is speaking to himself in the bar’s mirror or hallucinating. Having Jack look directly into the camera creates the expectation that his POV will follow, however, we are presented with an objective shot of Lloyd (the barman) who then steps forward so both characters are in frame. This sequence starts out as a subjective encounter in which we momentarily question Jack’s sanity but it quickly becomes objective, attesting the idea that the Overlook is haunted by past occupants and Jack, like Danny, has the ability to see them. Jack then gives an obscure confession to Lloyd that he hurt Danny three years ago when Wendy had said it was five months.

When Jack asks Wendy which room Danny was harmed in there is a jarring cut to a close-up of a television screen presenting the Miami news. A slow zoom out reveals we are sharing Hallorann’s POV from his bedroom (it also reveals how symmetrical the room is). A high-pitched noise is accompanied by a slow zoom into his face as he is overcome by fear; the sound of a heartbeat is audible. A POV shot of the open door of room 237 follows, this is exactly the same shot as when Danny entered the room earlier, so whilst we were expecting to be sharing Hallorann’s subjectivity we are presented with Danny’s. It cuts to a close-up of the child’s face convulsing in fear but he is not in room 237, he is in a different section of the hotel. The subjective shot then moves through room 237 and a hand pushes a door open to expose a green, symmetrical bathroom and someone behind the curtain of the bathtub. The reverse shot reveals we are seeing through Jack’s eyes—this comes as a shock as there was no establishing shot of him and because, up until now, we have largely been denied access to his subjectivity. The horror that plays out as the young woman’s naked body ages and rots is intercut with shots of Danny seizing on the bed. The sequence is disorienting and tension is built by the length of time it takes to reveal what is causing such an extreme reaction in Danny and Hallorann and to understand whose POV it is. The heartbeat sound effect and Penderecki’s score$^{50}$ unite the shared subjective experience of the three characters.

The heartbeat sound effect is heard again in the next scene when Danny has a flash

$^{50}$ *The Awakening of Jacob* 1975
vision of the word Redrum written on the door as Jack informs Wendy that there was no one in room 237. Jack returns to the Gold Room where he has his encounter with Grady in the red bathroom (which is made symmetrical by the matching rows of latrines and washbasins). As they speak the 180-degree rule is broken and the line is crossed a total of three times. These abrupt cuts occur on the moments of impact when Grady tells Jack his name, when Jack tells Grady that he blew his brains out, and that he was the caretaker. Crossing the line creates unease and disorients the viewer as it looks like the characters are switching positions, which in this scene, reinforces the shift in identity between Grady and Jack. Grady is presented objectively with both characters in the frame yet Jack often looks just past him and into the mirror leaving the viewer to speculate if the encounter is supernatural or psychological.

When Wendy discovers Jack’s manuscript a confrontation between the pair ensues. As Jack utters the line ‘Maybe it was about Danny’, it cuts to the fear-stricken child in the apartment. It appears he is reacting to the argument between his parents but a slow zoom into his face reveals his subjective vision of the elevator of blood, intercut with the word Redrum scrawled on the door. The sounds that should correspond to the image have been suppressed and instead the shots are overlaid with Jack’s dialogue that is occurring in the Colorado room. The acoustics on Jack’s voiceover have been altered so it sounds ethereal and it increases in volume as the camera is covered in blood. The inclusion of Jack’s voice in the vision adds a level of ambiguity which heightens the anxiety cause by the images. This technique is used again when Hallorann is axed in the heart by Jack; the images are intercut with Danny’s screaming face and his vocal cry is included at the same volume as Hallorann’s and Jack’s even though he is not present in the room.

The culmination of the movie is experienced through several points-of-view, starting with Wendy’s as she encounters the inexplicable sight of a man in a bear suit fellating a well-dressed gentleman. Her shock is emphasised by a crash-zoom into the image and loud percussion and cymbal clashes from Pendereki’s Utrenja. We then share Jack’s POV as he looks outside before turning the outdoor lights on. Danny runs into the maze

51 This image has no context in the film but in the book Horace Derwent, the bisexual owner of the Overlook, is fellated by Roger who is dressed in a dog costume. ‘Great party isn’t it’ is a line Derwent quotes in the book, just as the ghost in the tux with a bleeding forehead does in the film.
and through its narrow snow-covered aisles, he looks back several times then stumbles, his little body silhouetted in the cold blue light. The way the camera follows him, slowing down when he falls and anticipating his moves, is highly subjective; the fluid mobility of the shots including a low angle behind the boy’s feet as he runs, informs us of a third presence in the maze—that of the Overlook. Jack pursues him but they are never in the same frame together and Danny is not seen through Jack’s POV. We do see Jack subjective vision but only of the boy’s footsteps in the snow. The alternating images of Jack and Danny, both from behind and in front are intercut with Wendy running through the hotel. We see her POV of Hallorann dead on the floor and again the image is emphasised by a crash-zoom, percussion and cymbals. The camera spins around as she does to reveal her subjective vision of a ghost with a bleeding forehead who acknowledges her. Her spectral visions are then presented objectively with her in the frame as she encounters the skeletons in the blue room and the river of blood from the elevator, confirming these events are taking place and are not hallucinations. The music reaches manic levels in the final section of the chase within the maze. Danny outsmarts Jack by stepping backwards over his tracks and hiding behind a hedge. As Jack limps past him we see his POV of the boy’s footsteps that then come to a halt in the snow. Jack screams to Danny are incoherent as he staggers off and becomes lost down the aisles. As Danny runs out of the maze we share his POV of the footprints that are leading him back to the entrance where Wendy bundles him into the snowcat. Jack’s cries are heard as they drive away; he stumbles down onto the side of the hedge and it cuts to a close-up of him frozen in the snow.

The lights in the hotel are off and the furniture is covered. The camera makes a slow zoom across the lobby and into the hall of the Gold room where 21 photos hang on the wall. The middle photo reveals Jack front and centre of a large group of revellers; the inscription reads ‘The Overlook Hotel July 4th Ball 1921’. Whilst this suggests that Jack has always been the caretaker it raises more questions than it answers and by doing so renders it uncanny.\footnote{Freud states that the uncanny sensation can be achieved if the story ‘keeps us in the dark for a long time about the precise nature of the presuppositions on which the world is based’, or it avoids ‘any definite information on the point to the last’ (p. 251)}\footnote{2+3+7=12; 2x3x7=42; 42x12=504; (July 4th 1921) 7x4x1x9x2x1=504.} If you take particular note of date you will find it is a mathematical incarnation of the room number 237.\footnote{An uncanny coincidence? I doubt it.}
The Shining is a sophisticated and complex film with multiple techniques operating simultaneously to produce the fear effect. The use of the uncanny is a central technique and this chapter has demonstrated how much the film makes use of Freud’s text in order to arouse this emotion. Another significant technique is the deliberate use of incongruities to induce a state of subliminal dissonance. There is a profuse use of the wide-angle lens and one-point perspective which produce images with depth and symmetry that draw the eye into the frame and constantly place focus on a particular point, creating an environment of anticipation and tension. The square image created by framing the film to the full expanse of the negative combined with the broad field of view from the wide-angle lens and the converging lines of the one-point perspective creates a boxed-in or claustrophobic sensation despite the expansiveness of the sets. The pacing of the film similarly induces this sense of things closing in as the dissolves turn into abrupt cuts, the scenes get shorter and the frequency of the intertitles increase. The soundtrack exploits the disturbing effects of high-pitched frequencies and as Jack’s madness peaks the music becomes frantic due to the layering of several tracks on top of one another. The technique responsible for generating the greatest amount of fear in the film is the subjective camera and the way it creates, through its wandering, autonomous movements, a ghostly presence that appears to be always watching and tracking the characters. Fear is also created by the confusion surrounding the source and status of point-of-view shots. The culmination of the movie is experienced through several points-of-view but it is the one belonging to the Overlook itself that terrifies the most.
Chapter five

CONCLUSION

This research has identified the fear producing techniques that were employed in the influential films Psycho, Halloween and The Shining and has analysed which are the most effective. A common core of techniques shared by all three films has been established and consideration has been given to techniques that are unique to each film. Common techniques can be seen in the mise-en-scène, sound, and editing mainly in terms of creating ‘uncanny’ effects and in the cinematography, partly in terms of lighting and lens choice and primarily in terms of the subjective and wandering camera. All three films use dissonant music and high-pitched frequencies to create distress in the viewer—Psycho with the screeching attacks of the violin strings, Halloween with the electronic keyboard and The Shining with a combination of both. Psycho’s title music uses a minor chord with an added major seventh which instantly creates an unstable sound. The moment it commences the frenetic pulse, slashing dissonance and incessant rhythm sets a hysterical tone. The music used during Marion’s murder has become one of the most recognisable in cinema history as its fast tempo and screeching violins instantly strike fear into the audience. Ostinatos are the main material for the score and several musical motifs are used throughout the film; the most apparent are the ones connected to the murders, the stolen money and Norman’s madness. The opening scene’s slow, dreamy chords also recur several times and are often juxtaposed against harsher cues in order to create contrast.

Music constantly alerts the audience to imminent danger in Halloween. Ostinatos feature heavily in this film’s score and tension is built through the insistent rhythm, simplicity and repetition. The 5/4 time signature first heard over the titles is disturbing and the incorporation of unpredictable and uneven three and four bar phrases create a nervous rhythm. This unnerving music becomes the leitmotif for Michael, pre-empting or announcing his presence on screen. It is also used to signify his presence when he is not physically in the frame which works to establish his omnipresence. Synthesiser shrieks are used regularly to startling effect and the frequent use of a high G note and other high-pitched sounds create distress and place the viewers on high alert.
The Shining also exploits the disturbing effects of high-pitched frequencies in both the music and sound design, often including it in benign scenes to alert the viewer that something is not quite right. The opening music is a synth adaption of Dies Irae with tribal wailing that sets a hunting atmosphere. Subsequently, the film then predominantly uses pre-existing concert music from three 20th century composers, Bartók, Ligeti and Penderecki. Throughout the film prominent meeting points between picture and music are often synchronised with either drastic picture change or sudden physical movement to produce a combination of shock followed by enduring terror. Towards the climax of the film several pieces are layered on top of each other so the score becomes ‘disturbingly freakish and manic’.

Each film employs a range of techniques in order to produce ‘uncanny’ effects. According to Freud’s essay (1919), manifestations of insanity are capable of arousing the uncanny and all three films have a main character that is mentally deranged. Of the characters Michael Myers is the most uncanny; not only is he insane but his evil intentions are carried out with the help of ‘special powers’ of omnipresence and immortality, the latter fulfilling another criterion listed in the essay, that of the ‘apparent death and the re-animation of the dead’ (p. 246). The use of the ‘double’ and ‘doubling dividing and interchanging of self’ is another uncanny principle the films use (p. 234). In Psycho doubling is present throughout the mise-en-scène and is created through the frequent use of mirrors to reflect the characters, as well as in the physical resemblance between actors. Doubling is apparent in the duality and parallels between Norman and Marion’s nature and their circumstances but is most evident in the dividing and interchanging between Norman and his mother. In The Shining doubling is seen in the ghosts of the twin girls and in Tony who signifies Danny’s division and interchanging of self, as well as the shared telepathic experiences between the characters. Doubling is also shown via the multiple uses of mirrors and is prevalent in the mise-en-scène from the set design to the placement of props. The hotel itself is a double of the maze and it also contains within its foyer a prominent model of the maze. The most powerful form of doubling in this film is the visual symmetry existing within the shots with each side of the frame being a mirror image of the other.

All three films use repetition to arouse a sense of the uncanny. In Psycho repetition is present in the score through the use of ostinatos and via motifs. It is used extensively in
the shots that form sequences within the film and at one point during Marion’s drive the shots are repeated so often that they form a pattern similar to the music. There is also repetition in the use of POV shots so they become visual motifs to create fear. *Halloween’s* structure is built on repetition and it is present in the camera and actors’ movements with certain actions in the initial scene being recreated several times throughout the film; it is also present in the shot construction with Michael’s recurrent appearance in the corner of the frame. There is repetitive use of the subjective camera to create fear and often what we assume are POV shots turn out not to be so they have an additional uncanny effect on the viewer by having the familiar become unfamiliar.

Repetition presents in *Halloween’s* score through the use of ostinatos, motifs, high-pitched sound effects, synthesiser stings and Michael’s leitmotif. In *The Shining* repetition is a central theme in the film with Jack returning to his role as caretaker of the Overlook with the destiny of carrying out the same crime, the slaughter of his family. Repetition occurs in the cinematography, particularly in the moving camera shots and the recurrence of both slow and crash-zooms. It presents in the dialogue towards the end of the film and in the music; the three Legeti, three Bartok and the four Penderecki pieces are used three times each throughout the course of the film. Involuntary repetition is achieved through mathematical incarnations (addition and multiplication) of the room number 237.

The three films also differ in their methods, and develop their own specific techniques to elicit fear. *Psycho* and *Halloween* both give the audience more knowledge than the characters, or specifically the potential victims, to create tension and have long suspense scenes peppered with moments of sudden shock; whereas *The Shining* has protracted scenes full of anticipation for something bad to happen which builds anxiety. The films differ in the level of clarity and resolve they bring to the end of their narratives. *Psycho* provides absolute closure; the psychiatrist gives a clear explanation so the audience understands that Norman has a dissociative identity disorder and he, as Mother, committed the murders. *Halloween’s* and *The Shining’s* endings, by contrast, are ‘open’ and uncanny. As Freud suggests, this sensation can be achieved if the story ‘keeps us in the dark for a long time about the precise nature of the presuppositions on which the world is based’, or it avoids ‘any definite information on the point to the last’ (p. 251). *Halloween* leaves you wondering whether Michael is human or supernatural, and *The
Shining has so many unanswered questions that you are left in the maze and a part of the hotel ‘forever and ever’ trying to work it out.

Hitchcock and Kubrick filled their sets with portent and meaning whereas Carpenter took a more naturalistic approach. The mise-en-scène in Psycho has many visual metaphors and it makes extensive use of foreshadowing. It also makes use of contrast to illustrate the psychology of the characters such as the low-key lighting and curved lines used on Marion and the high-key and angular lines used on Norman in the parlour scene. Contrast in shot sizes and angles is employed to shock the viewer, as is the contrast from balanced to unbalanced compositions; and scenes that contrast radically in pace and style are juxtaposed against one another to intensify fear. In Halloween Carpenter employs high-key lighting in the night-time scenes to create numerous shadows in which Michael could be lurking. The colour palette of red, black and orange has the ability to elicit fear, as does Michael’s mask which is pale and emotionless. In The Shining unease is created as a result of the vastness of the sets and the disproportion between the character’s action and the immensity of the surroundings. The mise-en-scène is laden with signification and foreshadowing and it also employs colour to elicit fear with a distinct palette of red, white and blue. As Jack’s madness and violence escalates the warm tones of the lighting within the Overlook change to a cold, harsh blue similar to the outdoor blizzard/night lightning. The most significant technique Kubrick uses in the mise-en-scène is the use of subtle and deliberate anomalies to induce a state of subliminal dissonance. There are inconsistencies in prop-placement, temporal details and set-design with the Overlook intended to be as much of a maze as the one in the garden.

When we look at some of the choices in the cinematography that were designed to elicit fear we can see that Hitchcock shot most of Psycho with 50-millimetre lenses as they gave the closest approximation to human vision. This was done so the audience could view the action as if they were seeing it with their own eyes—to become voyeurs to the action. Carpenter shot Halloween in anamorphic and used wide-angle lenses and deep-field staging to enable action to occur on two planes creating a threatening aspect to the background and boundary of the shots. The width of the anamorphic frame proliferates the number of hiding spaces and allows for the frequent appearance of Myers at the edge of the shot whilst the character remains unaware. This causes the viewer to
constantly scan the shots for signs of him, creating suspense and then shock when it happens. The majority of *The Shining* was shot with wide-angle lenses which enlarged the look of the sets and amplified the sense of motion (as wide-angle lenses increase the speed at which things approach or move away from the camera). The use of one-point perspective creates an environment of anticipation and tension as it produces images with depth and symmetry that draw the eye into the frame and constantly place focus on a particular point. An aspect ratio of 1.37:1 was used and the film framed to the full expanse of the negative creating an almost square frame. This frame combined with the broad field of view from the wide-angle lens and the converging lines of the one-point perspective creates a boxed-in or claustrophobic sensation despite the expansiveness of the sets.

All three films exploit the disturbing effects created by the wandering camera but *Psycho* and *The Shining* incorporate this fear producing technique much more than *Halloween* does. In *Psycho*, it is used to establish a voyeuristic presence which creates an uneasy feeling in the viewer as they become a peeping Tom. This presence is first felt in the opening scene when the camera slips under the blinds of a hotel window and stops to watch Marion and Sam in bed and is felt several times again through the film, most notably after the shower murder when the camera retreats from the dead eye of Marion, slides along the bathroom floor into the next room and comes to rest on the newspaper containing the money. In *The Shining* the wandering camera is used to create a sense of a haunting entity. In the opening scene when the camera stops following Jack’s car and wanders over the cliffs we question whose point-of-view we are seeing from and how it can offer us this perspective. The camera wanders often throughout the film and overtly demonstrates autonomy from the diegesis with which it is concerned, always creating a sense of the supernatural. The best example of this is seen just before Danny encounters the hacked-up bodies of the twins in the hallway. As he rides his Big Wheel through the kitchen the camera stops following him and lingers as he turns the corner into the hall, almost as if it knows what awaits him.

*Halloween* and *The Shining* utilised the unusual gliding effect of the new technology of the Panaglide/Steadicam to help establish the supernatural element. The camera’s ability to move freely through space allowed it to be independent, reactive and adaptive and inject nervous energy into the scenes, creating a new aesthetic that was unsettling.
Hitchcock did not have the freedom of movement with the bulky cameras available to him at the time but he did use montage to create a similar frenetic energy throughout Marion’s murder. Through montage he was able to create a sense of agitation and perceptual overload by cutting in rapid succession different aspects of the same action, which heightens the fear of the attack. It also allowed him to create the ‘illusion’ of complete nudity and eight violent stabbings to get the film past the censors.

The most prolific and effective tool employed in all three films to create fear is the use of the subjective camera. In Psycho, the subjective camera is used in the first half of the film as a way of creating identification with Marion; seeing her point-of-view then her reaction allows us to experience her emotions; specifically fear. There is an unrelenting use of subjective shots as she drives to the motel and on the last leg of her journey all of the shots are either close-ups of her or her point-of-view. We share her subjectivity so intensely that we identify with her and her narrative completely. This is what makes our enforced identification with Norman as he spies on her undressing so disturbing and it is why we are so shocked and shattered when she is killed. Throughout Marion’s murder only two of the shots are objective, seven are seen through her eyes and 23 are from the killer’s POV. At the time this was unprecedented as no movie had made you experience a brutal murder as both the victim and more importantly the perpetrator, and this is what makes it, still to this day, so terrifying. The subjective camera then compounds the horror by making us see through Norman’s eyes as he disposes of Marion’s body in the swamp. As the film progresses, point-of-view shots are used as visual motifs to evoke emotion experienced in the murder scene. The shifting of subjectivity through the characters further destabilises as it undermines the certainty of knowing who to identify with and therefore trust.

Like Psycho, Halloween forces us to experience a brutal murder from the viewpoint of the perpetrator but this time through the eyes of a young child. This movie starts on such an advanced level of fear that it carries over to other scenes and each time elements established in the opening scene, such as the swaying of the Panaglide camera which represented Michael’s POV and his heavy breathing, are repeated they trigger fear. Every time a shot has this particular motion we believe we are seeing from Myers’ POV but it repeatedly turns out not to be the case which undermines our ability to trust our visual perception and to trust point-of-view shots. That we can never truly pinpoint
his location imbues him with a pervasiveness that terrifies. What terrifies more is the
method in which subjective shots are used to place us at the scene with Michael when
he returns to Haddonfield, forcing us into the disconcerting identification of being his
accomplice. Like Psycho this film unsettles the audience by creating a mistrust of point-
of-view shots as well as using them as visual motifs to evoke the fear affect experienced
in previous scenes. It is Laurie’s subjective view we share through the final section of
the film as she retraces the steps Michael took in the opening scene. Through the use of
the subjective camera, we have been placed in the position of murderer, accomplice,
and then victim.

The Shining creates the impression of a supernatural presence through the use of
subjective shots, or more specifically by relying on what the audience deem to be
subjective shots. This presence is established in the opening scene when the camera
swerves to avoid the trees and again when it stops following Jack’s car and wanders
over the cliffs. The sense of a haunting entity within the hotel is created by the way in
which the camera keeps itself spatially separate from the characters as it tracks
alongside them, allowing columns and furniture to pass in between. It is again created
by the gliding motion of the Steadicam as it pursues Danny on his Big Wheel and its
ability to get so close to him creates fear through its oppressive proximity. The camera
also largely adheres to the straight architectural lines of the hotel as it follows the
characters, creating the impression that the Overlook is always watching them. Similar
to the previous two films there is ambiguity surrounding point-of-view shots which
creates fear in the viewer. At times when you expect to see a subjective shot you are
presented with an objective one and vice versa. Other times there is confusion as to the
source of the shot or which character’s point-of-view we are sharing. The culmination
of the movie is experienced through all three of the characters’ points-of-view but the
way the camera follows Jack and Danny through the maze, slowing down when they do
and anticipating their moves is highly subjective, informing us of a third presence in the
maze, that of the Overlook and this is the POV that creates the most fear.

This research demonstrates that the subjective camera is the primary fear inducing
technique in all three films. The uncanny is also a significant tool and each film goes to
considerable measures to arouse this sensation. The wandering camera and its
disturbing effects are exploited by the films and their soundtracks use dissonance and
high-pitched frequencies to create distress in the viewer. This research shows that each
director also developed their own specific techniques and at times, they all combine
multiple techniques to create sensory overload in the viewer. Psycho’s considerable
influence on Halloween has been illustrated—the connection between ‘promiscuous’
sex and violent death, choice of weapon, seeing through the murderer’s eyes, and the
shifting point-of-view, are just a few of the many tropes Psycho established that
Halloween appropriated. Carpenter does, as demonstrated, utilise the available
technology and create numerous techniques of his own to elicit fear. Halloween largely
pioneered the idea of the unknown, indestructible antagonist, as well as the Final Girl
and it is responsible for popularising the slasher film which went on to become a
significant genre in the early 80s. The Shining introduced something new and very
different in that era, it presented a sophisticated and complex film with multiple
techniques operating simultaneously to induce fear. Kubrick created a perpetual sense
of motion through an excessive amount of camera movement (made possible by the
Steadicam), as well as extensive choreographed character movement within the frame
and this set a new precedent for how films were shot.
APPENDIX

Marion’s POV of the road—there is a sign visible ahead
MCU of her driving; the police car is visible over her shoulder
Her POV in the re-vision mirror—the police car is close behind
MCU of her reacting

Marion’s POV of the road—there is a sign at a fork in the road, she takes right exit
MCU of her driving; the police car is visible over her shoulder
Her POV in the re-vision mirror—the police car has taken the same exit
MCU of her reacting

Marion’s POV of road—there is a sign ahead ‘Right Lane for Gorman’
MCU of her driving; the police car is visible over her shoulder
Her POV in the re-vision mirror—the police car is close behind
MCU of her reacting with relief as the police car takes exit

A dissolve takes us forward in time to:
Marion’s POV of busy traffic on a palm tree lined road
MCU of her driving; she looks off to the right
Her POV of car turning off the main road
MCU of her reacting
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