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Alvaro Lopez Navarro

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ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. ir. P.P.C.C. Verbeek
ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie,
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel
op maandag 4 november 2024, te 10.00 uur

door Antonio Alvaro Lopez Navarro
geboren te Madrid

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Abstract

Am I a monster? With this allegorical question in mind, this dissertation presents an analysis of contemporary cultural anxieties relating desire, monstrosity, and horror cinema on the global landscape. From a (post)Bionian psychoanalytic perspective and drawing from disciplines that range from film, literary, and postcolonial studies to Latin American and decolonial stances, this dissertation examines a number of horror films, as well as other forms of media, to address the commonalities and differences connecting cinematic monstrosity across Europe, the US, and Latin America. In doing so, this work argues that, against the backdrop of the contemporary global landscape, monstrosity has abandoned the cinematic monster. As such, monstrosity, understood as a source of sociocultural anxieties and nameless desires, has become formless, permeating the relationship between film and audience position, between screen and gazing subject, in a cinematic renegotiation of the (global) self. By examining narratives and aesthetics, intertextual and paratextual allusions, and contextual particularities and constraints characterizing cinematic horrors from such heterogeneous locations, the analyses in this work reveal a set of global fantasies and tensions with profound libidinal reach. From a renegotiation of centric and ex-centric subject positions and contexts to crumbling gender, sexual, and racial categories and expectations, contemporary cinematic horror reveals tensions opposing monstrosity and global fantasies of visibility that libidinally charge contemporary transformations in the relationship between the self and the world—a change in which the very notion of the human is put into question. Trapped in a cinematic nightmare and pervaded by formless monstrosity, the gazing subject is confronted with a libidinal rerouting and (un)doing of its own contextual self *vis-à-vis* a fantasized, all-visible, and globalized world. Stripped of its own humanity and faced with its own libidinal horrors, contemporary horror's audience now asks *am I a monster?*

Keywords:

Psychoanalysis; global fantasies; horror cinema; monstrosity; libidinal reroutings; Latin American, European, and US cinematic relations; the global self