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Title Of Monsters and Men: Finding Humans' Place in the Horror Film

Abstract: Defining horror is a difficult thing. One of the most prevalent scholars on the matter, Noel Carroll, defines horror by the presence of a monster. He says a monster must be an unnatural, inhuman creature that scares the audience and the protagonist. However, this definition is reductive, especially in the world of film. When watching a movie, filming techniques and scene composition can throw off the audience's perception of whether or not a given character is human, making it impossible to determine if they are a monster, or a person. This thesis analyzes four films—Kim Jee-Woon's *A Tale of Two Sisters*, Satoshi Kon's *Perfect Blue*, Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, and finally Ari Aster's *Midsommar*—to understand how human beings are able to become monstrous in film. Each of these films feature humans, warped by lighting, hallucination, or simply appearance, who are generally the only monsters present in their respective stories. By looking at these people, this thesis argues that it is entirely possible for a human character to fulfill Carroll's definition of monstrosity, breaking down the line between the human and the monstrous.