



Maternal Horror Film: Melodrama and Motherhood

Sarah Arnold

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Horror film is particularly prone to articulating fears and tensions about maternal figures, and reflects cultural apprehensions concerning the changing nature of motherhood. Via predominantly US and European case studies, *Maternal Horror Film: Melodrama and Motherhood* establishes a framework for understanding two dominant representations of motherhood: self-sacrificing and demonic. Building on this, Arnold investigates how discourses of motherhood exist within East Asian horror texts using popular recent horror films to illustrate. Historical and contemporary case studies include *Psycho* (1960), *Poltergeist* (1985), *Invasion* (2007), *Ringu* (1998), *The Others* (2001), *Dark Water* (2003), and *The Seventh Sign* (1988). Ultimately, Arnold suggests that, while such films might have some cultural and historical specificity, there is nonetheless a dialogue between genres, eras, and national cinemas and cultures, which is only evident through close textual analysis.

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