

Resident Evil

Horror Film and the Construction of Religious Identity in
Contemporary Media Culture



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Paper presented for the Qualifying Examination of the Master of Theology
(Theol.M.)
Melbourne College of Divinity
August 2002

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Introduction

Cultures are meaning making organisms. Participation in a culture offers human life a construct that frames the incomprehensibility of the universe, and one's place in it, in a realm of understanding. Mythic stories point to the origins of life and offer a world-order that gives importance and function to human life. Ritual activity inserts meaning beyond the ordinary world into everyday life. Cultural beliefs and practices frame human relationships and order communal living, in an endeavour to make life mean something beyond the mere fact that it exists.

For centuries organised religion, in particular the Christian Church has been the dominant meaning making institution in Western culture. The big questions about why and how we should live have been explored and posited by teachers, philosophers and ministers, educated by theological schools and passed on to the rest of the world through Christian community life and the hierarchy of power therein.

Christendom has also been blessed with art and literature to add comfort and beauty to life. Film has for the past century become an increasingly large component of popular culture. Like other forms of art and media, film has been an alternative stream of meaning making, by presenting stories about life with aesthetic quality to an ever-growing audience.

In the past few decades, the growth of electronic media, such as television and film, along with the continual decline in Church membership, has given the structures of electronic media communication a new power as a meaning-making institution.

Within this context it is the argument of this paper that horror movies are an important component of meaning exploration in contemporary media culture and as such should have a place in our explorations of contemporary theology. This notion has been by-and-large ignored by established institutions of interpretation.

Why Horror Film?

Firstly, the genre of horror film places the deepest fears of our individual and collective lives in front of our eyes and ears. They endeavour to reveal the extremes of our collective imagination, as movies do, and to confront our sensibilities and assumptions about the world order. In doing so, horror exposes the vulnerability of our perceptions of "reality", "normality" and the way the world is meant to progress.

Secondly, an analysis of horror movies shows a number of important themes that are not foreign to formal theological discourse. Hence they posit an alternative centre for religious meaning making. The size of this paper does not allow me to explore every theme, so I will present only four.

These themes impact on the religious identity of participants in contemporary popular culture, including members of our established Christian communities, who draw on stories from popular culture in understanding what it means to be Christian. Popular culture is the theatre in which Christianity must and does address itself, and electronic media, including film, has become its major meeting point.

Implications exist in every area of today's Christian communal life. In particular, they offer us a challenge to reconsider our perceived spectrum of liberal-conservative theology, and the enlightened notions of evil as an absence of rationality or morality. Moreover, they challenge us to expand our conventional source selection in theological construction and reflection to include themselves.

I wish to offer the reader an expansion on all the arguments posited above, through the treatment of nine contemporary films belonging to the genre of horror, made in the years 1996 through 2002. These films represent the range of sub-themes labelled within the wider genre, from the traditional "scream-queen" type through science-fiction horror to supernatural/religious horror.

The Movies

Scream (1996)

When a series of murders breaks news in Woodsboro, all eyes turn to a high school student named Sidney Prescott, whose mother was killed a year ago under similar circumstances. She and her friends use knowledge acquired from years of watching horror films to determine the identity, motive and location of this serial killer. Also stalking Sidney is Gale Weathers, a reporter who has received fame and fortune from selling the story of the alleged murderer of Sidney's mother.

Alien Resurrection (1997)

In the previous *Alien* movies, Helen Ripley has battled a vicious carnivorous alien species. In the third of the trilogy, she takes the last alien with her to death inside her body. Over two hundred years later, a team of government scientists on the UMS Auriga clones her and the alien from DNA material found at the scene of her death. As in all previous movies, these scientists wish to breed and control the alien species for warfare and medical use.

Though top secret, one other woman is aware of the government project. Named Call, she is a descendant of androids in use by the government before a total recall, where she and others like her had gone into hiding. Call had joined a crew of the smuggling vessel, Betty, who brought to the government operation live human bodies necessary for the incubation of alien pupae. As in all other of the *Alien* series, the aliens escape the control of the scientific and military operatives, so Call, Ripley and the remaining members of both ships' crews must get back to the Betty to escape the alien threat.

I Know What You Did Last Summer (1997)

On 4 July, four high school graduates of a small fishing town in North Carolina celebrate the ending of this chapter in their lives by a small party on the beach. On the drive home they accidentally hit and kill a stranger. Ray, Julie, Helen and Barry believe they all have too much to lose if they confess to the police, so they dispose of the body at a nearby wharf.

One year later threats to their lives by a man, masked by the hood of his fishing skip, reunite them. They discover the identity of the man they thought they killed, and, haunted by guilt, seek

to uncover the identity of their tormentor and expose the connection between last summer's decision and this year's apparent consequences.

Event Horizon (1997)

In the year 2035, the spaceship Event Horizon mysteriously went missing while in Neptune's orbit. Now in the year 2047, the crew of the ship Lewis and Clark journey to Neptune to investigate its equally surprising return. On board the Lewis and Clark is the designer of the Event Horizon, Dr Weir, who informs the crew that the Event Horizon did not disappear, but in fact, has travelled to an unknown point in distant space through the "folding of space and time", created by the construction of a singularity, or black hole.

The mission of Lewis and Clark's crew is to investigate the disappearance of their colleagues on the Event Horizon. On board the empty vessel they discover that the ship itself has returned from the far reaches of space alive, and intent on killing its new passengers.

Stigmata (1999)

The death of Fr Alameida in Belo Quinto, Brazil, is brought to the attention of Fr Andrew Kiernan, an investigator of alleged divine miracles. He then learns of a young woman, Frankie Paige of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who suffers from mysterious wounds on her hands and feet. The two events are connected by the transfer of Fr Alameida's rosary beads, who are purchased by Frankie's mother while in holiday in South America.

In investigating the connection, Fr Kiernan learns of the secret translation of a new Gospel, the writings of Thomas, that sheds new light on the foundations of the Christian faith and threatens the power of the Vatican.

Pitch Black (2000)

The spaceship Hunter-Gratzner is carrying cargo and passengers to the new colonies in a nearby solar system. In flight damages careens the ship onto a desert moon in a tri-star system. Amongst the survivors is a serial murderer and prison escapee, Riddick, under the control of a bounty hunter named Johns. Fry is the last survivor of the Hunter-Gratzner's crew. Both Fry and Johns must protect the surviving passengers, including an Imam and his three novices, from the unpredictable menace of Riddick. The group of survivors is unaware that Fry had attempted to jettison them from the Hunter-Gratzner during

its landing onto the moon, and that her guilt makes her an unwilling leader.

The group discovers an abandoned research facility where there is a small spaceship. Their task is to retrieve the power source from the Hunter-Gratzner and carry it to the new ship in order to leave the planet, but are threatened by carnivorous alien inhabitants, who are extremely photo-sensitive. When an eclipse falls on the moon, the survivors must rely on the strength and special eye-sight of Riddick, even though they know at any time he may betray them.

Final Destination (2000)

Alex Browning can read omens. He discovers this ability while waiting for his plane to take off. In a panic, he is taken from the plane with his French teacher and five class mates. The plane leaves without them and explodes in mid-air.

While most around him are suspicious of his claims, a fellow survivor, Clear, believes him and his theory that Death was cheated on the night of the plane disaster. The task now is to uncover the omens that point to Death's next attack on each of the survivors.

Lost Souls (2000)

Maya Larkin is a young woman employed by the Catholic Church in New York City as a "secular assistant" in exorcisms, having had previous experience of demon possession and a exorcism recipient herself. During the exorcism of Henry, a psychiatric patient, undertaken by Fr Lareaux, she receives important information that the Devil will enter the body of a prominent New York author named Peter Kelson, ensuing a new reign of evil on the planet.

Maya's findings are rejected by the Church, though she is supported by Deacon John Townsend in her endeavour to find Peter and convince him of his impending future. Peter is a clinical psychologist and rejects notions of great Good or Evil, while a series of horrific events cause him to question his beliefs and his imminent transformation.

Resident Evil (2002)

This movie is based on the Playstation game of the same name. Beneath Raccoon City lie the headquarters of the Umbrella Corporation, manufacturers of biochemical weaponry. A secret entry into the headquarters, known as the Hive, begins at the cellar of a mansion at the edge of the city. An incident at the

Hive causes the escape of a fatal virus and the Red Queen, an artificial intelligence controlling the Hive's security, kills all inside the Hive and releases gas into the mansion.

Inside the mansion Alice and Matthew stir from unconsciousness to find their memory temporarily altered. A team of operatives are sent to investigate the deaths of those in the Hive and take Alice and Matthew with them as they pass through the mansion. Inside they find that those infected with the virus are killed and revived into a zombie-like state. Their task is to acquire the virus and its antidote without being infected themselves, or being killed by the Red Queen.

Myths and Rituals in Meaning Making

This section explores the nature and roles of myths and rituals in cultural mechanisms of meaning making, and what this means for a discourse on horror film. At this point, however, it is necessary to explore why we consider the term “cultural mechanisms” of religiousness in the first place.

The Culture of Religion or the Religiousness of Culture?

The act of religion is the act of constructing and maintaining a set of beliefs and material practices which provide meaning to one’s life amidst the universe of known experience. This set of beliefs offers more than a way of answering the question, “Why am I here?”. It provides a framework by which one sets oneself among others, identifies a purpose in life, hope for the future: a pathway along which to course the rest of one’s life.

Constructing a religious identity is a cultural pursuit. This is true firstly because culture is a human universal. Culture is an essential part of human living, and defines all human behaviour beyond that which is biologically determined. When we talk about where we belong in the world, how we act in it or how we should act in it, we are talking about culture.¹

Making religion is a cultural activity also because it is a social one. Just as humans find identity through belonging to a group, we find religious identity through our association through a religious group. Groups, as small as a rural parish youth group and as large as a nation, are defined by their culture.

Moreover, religion is a communicative event. Belief in a supernatural order or a divinity is manifested when it is communicated, and determined by how it is expressed between people. People “find religion” when something is communicated to them. Members of a religious group share common symbols, and forms of expression by which to reinforce their communal and individual identity in their religion.

The other side of this coin is that culture is a religious activity. How a community of people frame their understanding of the universe is a product of the beliefs and values that make up that understanding. How people make sense of the mysteriousness of life impact on what they communicate to the world in their

¹ Tanner, K. (1997). *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press. Pp. 25-26.

language and behaviour, impacts on their culture. Culture and religion are interdependent participants in the making of identity.

Understanding Myths and Rituals

It is important to talk about myths and rituals because they are ways in which the religious character of a culture is communicated amongst its members. They are the building blocks of a religious identity. I wish to explore myths firstly, as the content of religious communication in a culture, and rituals secondly, as the means by which this content is communicated and enacted between members and internalised within a culture.

Myths

Myths are structured symbols that tell a story. These stories are embraced, understood, and communicated as conveyors of a deep truth or meaning underlying the world of the everyday.

They provide a culture with a sense of universality of the known world. They serve to illuminate that which is unknown and place that in a language by which a culture can understand it. They establish the fundamentals of a culture's moral system: by stating the reason for why people do the things they do.

Myths endeavour to frame the reality beyond known human experience in language of symbols known in human experience. The result is a function by which members of a culture can define the course of their lives: the belief that humans are

created lovingly and purposefully by a God who desires maintenance of the daily order (Genesis 1); the belief that humans are placed between forces of saints in heaven and lords of the underworld (Michelangelo's *The Last Judgement*); that death is an inexorable, but not invincible force, that seeks us out (2000 teen flick, *Final Destination*); that the secrets to the beginnings of our existence lie in outer space (television show, *The X Files*).

Mythic stories fall into four categories. In its widest sense a myth is described as above, a structured story that offers a glimpse into a truth about the world. Yet in its strictest definition, a myth is a story that endeavours to *create* the world order. The creation stories of Genesis and the Old Testament's Wisdom Literature tell of how the world came into being, and expound the basis for why things are the way they are.



Aliens from the third series of The X Files.

Mythic tales that explore the world order through the journey of human characters are legends. Legends differ from myths in their emphasis on human interaction with the world order. The tales of Abraham and Moses, set apart from others by their Creator, assigned arduous tasks and charged with lonely journeys, explore the challenges of human morality when faced with difficult decisions. A popular legend of our times is the series of *Harry Potter* novels (and now movies), where a young boy discovers that he is different from normal children, and is sent to a new environment where people live differently, and is frequently confronted with moral choices as he explores his new abilities and the powers of influence around him.



*A battered but not broken
Bruce Willis as John McLean
in Die Hard.*

Fables are mythic tales where characters are set apart as either good or evil. The triumph of the good characters over the bad affirm the world order. Aesop's tales are well known fables, where, for example, the triumph of the tortoise over the hare is testament to our society's praise of diligence and courage over pride and folly. Contemporary action-hero movies such as *Die Hard*, where one officer goes against authority to pursue the "bad guys", affirm the courage of the individual to follow his or her own choices, despite the authority of ignorant, bureaucratic or corrupt institutions of law and government.

The fourth category of mythic tale is the parable. Whereas fables affirm the world order, the parable subverts it. A parable is not an up-turned fable, where bad wins over good. It is more a tale where what you expect frequently does not happen, where a different world order is upheld. Examples include the stories of Jesus in the Gospels, where unlikely and otherwise insignificant characters (the hundredth sheep, the lost coin) are shown to be most loved by the Creator. Suspense movies such as *Fargo* and *Seven* are parables in their emphasis on a single character who is faced with overcoming immense human evil (in the form of serial killers) and although surviving, feels little triumph, knowing that this journey is "normal" in the world they live in.

It is important to talk of myths at this instance for two reasons. The first is that the narrative structure of contemporary horror film fall into the categories of either fable or parable. In general the focus is on one character or group of characters struggling with an evil or menacing presence that must be overcome for survival.

The second is that horror movies in general intentionally play with the mythic in Western culture. Horror movies, almost by definition, endeavour to take our deepest hopes and aspirations for our communal life and insert a story which identifies with the opposite, an equally deep consternation.

Event Horizon, for example, is the story of a space ship which had journeyed, thanks to a profound yet fledgling new technology, to the furthest stretch of the known universe. Its return however signalled that the end of the universe is not the type of place we would like to know, when it brought something back that had killed all of its crew. *Event Horizon*, then, like the story of the tower of Babel or the legend of Frankenstein, takes our culture's desire for technological advancement and thirst for knowledge of the workings of space, and brings out a fear that what we discover will place humanity in jeopardy.



Event Horizon, the ship that came back from the edge of the universe, and brought back evil.

More on this subject will be explored in later chapters. An introduction to myths as a way of exploring the meaning making capacity of horror film suffices for now.

Rituals

What is the difference between a mythic story that has meaning-making power in a culture and a simple story? Surely, today's electronic-mediated culture is full to the brim with fiction. What makes certain stories more "special" than others, especially in a secular society where the traditional institutions of religious interpretation are in decline?

Stories alone do not provide for the religious character or identity of an individual, nor of a cultural community. The ritual actions of cultural groups play a powerful role in defining their religious identity.

A ritual is a human activity which frames interaction with the mythic. It is a habitualised activity, one which has definable routine between its commencement and its closure. Using terms developed by Victor Turner², Stewart Hoover describes a ritual as an activity where the participants are kept between two realms of meaning: the *societas*, the world of the everyday and ordinary; and the *communitas*, the world of the mythic, the world full of possibility and imagining.³

While this describes well those cultural pursuits we would readily call rituals, for example, a Jewish Sabbath dinner or a Christian Eucharist, it could also easily mean watching an opera or a situation comedy on television. These are not activities we would readily label religious.

² Turner, V. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

³ Hoover, S. M. (1998). *Media Scholarship and the Question of Religion: Evolving Theory and Method*. Jerusalem, The International Communication Association. P. 166.

For Pierre Babin⁴, rituals are characterised by:

- a communication of myth, something which connects with a deep and fuller meaning and purpose to life, something which reveals an essence to life,
- a revelation of the emergence of identity, something which shows a flowering of consciousness or reason amidst ambiguity, and
- a communication that accords with one's deepest aspirations for human life.

Roger Silverstone posits a supportive view. A culture's understanding of the mythic is nurtured through the process of ritual. Ritual is the doorway to the world of the sacred. Participants leave the secular realm into myth, returning transformed by the experience with a new understanding of their knowledge of life in the context of a greater reality.⁵

So, while not religious in the sense of a connection to a particular divinity, rituals are a meaning-making activity in that they insert the mythic into the everyday, offering beauty and purpose that is otherwise intangible.

A contention of this paper is that audiovisual mass media has become, in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first of Western culture, the common ritual of the people.

David Thorburn asserts that audiovisual media (in particular television, through which more information is received by more people than any other form of communication in the developed world), are aesthetic in nature. Their content is conveyed in a manner which creates a symbolic space, where images and sounds carry communally recognised meanings, ordered in a narrative structure which compels the audience to depart from the immediate world for a designated time, to suspend disbelief.⁶

More than just a carrier of information, audiovisual media are a cultural experience, and a form of cultural expression. They constitute an environment where a society's meaning-making stories are revisited, reworked, built upon and built over. A space where myths are known. They aim not just to give knowledge about reality, but also to provide pleasure and reassurance about our way of life, or challenge our hegemonies,

⁴ Babin, P. (1991). *The new era of religious communication*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press. P. 111.

⁵ Silverstone, R. (1988). Television Myth and Culture. *Media, Myths and Narratives: Television and the Press*. J. W. Carey. Newbury Park, Sage Publications, Inc. **15**: 20-47. P. 25. Citing van Gennep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

⁶ Thorburn, D. (1988). Television as Aesthetic Medium. *Media, Myths, and Narratives: Television and the Press*. J. W. Carey. Newbury Park, Sage Publications, Inc. **15**: 48-66. Pp. 49-50.

all through the ordering and reordering of commonly known symbols.⁷ They are the walls which house our *communitas*.

Horror film is a mere facet of this, although it offers its own particularity. Later chapters of this paper will continue the discussion on horror as a ritual activity. For the moment, I feel it is important to acknowledge how this understanding of ritual in audiovisual-mediated culture exposes challenges and tensions for the pursuit of theology.

Theology and Religious Identity

Theology is closely connected to the construction and communication of religious identity. Theology is often criticised as an activity of the educational elite within the cloisters of academic life and away from human concerns. Theology is, however, not just an academic discipline. Theology is making meaning out of human activity. What Christian beliefs mean have a lot to do on what Christian practices are meaningful. Theology is a cultural activity. It seeks the *meaning dimension* in our culture.⁸

The institutional and professional demands of academic theology leads to placing more emphasis on clarity and consistency in a system of beliefs than on addressing the everyday questions of living. Theology is a secondary language, drawing a literal and rational discourse from the prayers, poems, hymns and ritual practices that shape a belief of an individual's or community's faith system. Tanner considers that academic theology aims at being self-perpetuating in that it seeks an ever-broader investigation into the meaning dimension of religious culture.⁹

In the same sense, institutional churches have been accused of removing their functions from everyday life. Rituals and symbols that shape their culture have been those sanctioned by academic theology. But they do not seem meaningful to people because they no longer have a place in the public realm of images communicated in an audiovisual culture.¹⁰

At the time of the Reformation, a cultural watershed created by the evolutionary leap into print mass media fuelled the

⁷ Silverstone, R. (1988). Television Myth and Culture. Media, Myths and Narratives: Television and the Press. J. W. Carey. Newbury Park, Sage Publications, Inc. 15: 20-47. P. 40.

⁸ Tanner, K. (1997). Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology. Minneapolis, Fortress Press. Pp. 69-70.

⁹ Ibid. P. 81.

¹⁰ Horsfield, P. G. (1997). Changes in Religion in Periods of Media Convergence. Rethinking Media, Religion and Culture. S. M. Hoover and K. Lundby. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc.: 167-183. Pp. 178-179.

Protestant break from the Catholic Church. With it, some forms of cultural expression (iconography, religious visual art) were suppressed in favour of others (the preaching of the Word, systematic theological and biblical inquiry). New forms of communication meant new entrances into the mythic world. Historically embraced notions of the holy and divine were received with new interpretations, and the model of Christian life had a complete makeover.

Visual and performance arts, over time, became a secular pursuit, away from the sanctions and supports of the Church. They were granted increasing freedom to add new perspectives, commentaries and interpretations of lived reality in the cultural space, to the extent that new symbols, and new orderings of symbols, filled the mythic realm of cultural expression. Arlecchino, Romeo and Juliet, Don Quixote and Edward Scissorhands joined Moses, Paul and Anthony of Padua in the cast of legendary heroes from whose stories Western culture viewed its own.

The latter half of the twentieth century has witnessed another watershed. People have turned to the ritual space of television to find a sense of meaning, and the churches have endeavoured to make a presence there too, and in doing so have adopted and played with the symbols and structures contained therein.

This has led to certain new understandings about cultural and religious communication and authority in contemporary media culture:

- Firstly, the public sphere of contemporary popular culture is as much in the privacy of the home as it is in schools, churches, polling booths and shopping centres. Boundaries between private and public life, including religious life, are now blurred.¹¹
- Secondly, questions on faith, humanity and God are as often discussed in newspapers, magazines and situation comedies as they are debated in theological schools and congregational meetings. Theological discernment happens everywhere, and is no longer in the domain of the Church.¹²
- Thirdly, it must follow that the distinction between religious and secular life is an artificial one. Many young people find church irrelevant and at times hypocritical by the mere perception that it refuses to be involved in what they identify as “real” life. What used to be called secular now carries religious properties.

¹¹ Hoover, S. M. (1997). Media and the Construction of the Religious Public Sphere. Rethinking Media, religion, and Culture. S. M. Hoover and K. Lundby. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc.: 283-297. Pp. 284-285.

¹² Ibid. Pp. 284.

- Fourthly, theology, as the discernment of the religious identity of a person or a people, happens from within full immersion in culture. Christians within popular culture are drawing meaning on what it means to be religious from all sources both in and beyond strictly Christian community life. So the boundaries between formal theological institutions and the marketplace is no longer absolute. It is the domain of the public sphere, which is in contemporary popular culture, the media sphere.¹³

I will now turn to horror movies and the place that they have amongst these cultural commodities.

¹³ Tanner, K. (1997). Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology. Minneapolis, Fortress Press. Pp. 81-82.

Horror Movies

Exploring the Genre

A literary genre is popularly described as a set of cues, given to its audience, as to what kind of situations, moods and topics to expect. Horror as a genre is merely a film piece which explores the grotesque, evil, gory and bloody, designed to instil fear and trepidation in its audience. A horror film is described by kind critics and promoters as “spine-tingling”, “terrifying”, “eerie”, “watch-if-you-dare”, etc.

Another definition of the term, genre, is more useful to this discussion. If genre is seen as a thematic purpose of a film, then it describes the range of values, behaviours, characterisations and narrative structure that the audience would expect to discover in the world of the film. For example, in a romantic comedy we would expect to see a connection made between (at least) two characters from which a new relationship emerged. The world portrayed in the film would be one that connects with any or all of the audience’s identifications of aesthetic or sexual beauty, familial love, romance, friendship and so forth.

In a film’s construction of a world with symbols and associated meanings, a genre can construct the real world in particular meaning-ways, creating or reinforcing expectations of normality and abnormality. For instance, audiences of a romantic comedy compare their own romantic experiences with those of the characters in the film they are watching. In a real sense, audiences can see their own relationships being played out in the film world, and vice versa.

The parables of Jesus, as retold by Luke, for example, may also be described in this way. Jesus begins a communication of a certain message through the use of story. All stories involve symbols in everyday life, such as shepherds, coins, weddings, etc., things people know of and present in everyday society. In telling these stories, Jesus not only offers cues, but *invites* his audience to enter a world he is creating in the story, with the intention of enabling them to see their own world through a different perspective. I wish to leave this talk of parables at his point, knowing I will return at a later stage in the paper.

If we talk of genre as the thematic purpose of a film, then we can say that horror endeavours to place on screen our deepest consternations with the prospect of unending deviations of the world order. Horror endeavours to frame immensity and explosiveness of our imaginations, and its reverse, entrapment



The alien who bursts out from nowhere in *Alien* compared with the powerful colony queen who rules the multitude in *Aliens*.



and insidiousness, within the narrative and aesthetic structure of the film.¹⁴ Horror provides images to the highest of our discomforts towards chaos and obliteration.

Two quick examples of the opposite notions of explosiveness and insidiousness are *Alien* and its first sequel, *Aliens*. In the original film, all but one in a crew of a freight spaceship is killed by a monster who lives in the shadows and crawls through the air vents, and chooses to reveal itself only when escape is impossible. In the sequel, however, the number of monsters is immense, and the survival task of the characters is not to find and expose a single threat but to escape from the reign of the multitude.

The similarities between these films and others of the genre lie in the films' endeavour to confront their audiences with a threat to human survival that comes from one of two directions: from within – in the shadows and crevices that we overlook; and from without – an immense and imposing force.

The consequent function of horror genre places the world of the audience as an order which is vulnerable to the threat of such forces.

Horror as Ritual Activity

The film industry is second to television as Western culture's major story-telling institution. The movie house showing is a communal experience, where people experience a communal ritual involving an entrance into a story, an affective experience, a suspension of belief, then a return to the everyday world. It is a place where the mythic enters the ordinary for the public. It is a place where the myths that found and shape our culture are retold, reworked and reinforced.¹⁵

Common to most of the contemporary horror films, is a narrative sequence containing the following elements:

1. The establishment of a peaceful, normal or idyllic human world, such as a quiet country town, or a relaxed and fun-loving starship crew.
2. The introduction of a threat, perhaps known only to a few marginal (or marginalised) characters.
3. The growth or persistence of the threat, once revealed to all major characters, as it kills the cast one by one.

¹⁴ Schneider, K. J. (1993). *Horror and the Holy: Wisdom-Teachings of the Monster Tale*. Chicago, Open Court. P. 7.

¹⁵ Thorburn, D. (1988). Television as Aesthetic Medium. *Media, Myths, and Narratives: Television and the Press*. J. W. Carey. Newbury Park, Sage Publications, Inc. 15: 48-66. Pp. 56-57.

4. The final battle between the threat and the remaining handful of main characters.
5. A resolution with limited closure: not a return to established world, but rather an uncomfortable quiet based on a realisation that the threat exists and may return (as a prelude to a possible sequel, if not merely a loss of innocence).¹⁶

The narrative sequence above offers an insight into the ritual quality of participating in film audience. As stated in the preceding chapter, rituals are activities where the mythic is played in real terms, where participants are drawn into an experience of *communitas* while at the edge of *societas*. To arrive at the beginning of a movie with an impression of the world order, and to depart from the movie with a different impression, is a ritual function of the film experience.

Horror film offers us a picture of the marginal in our mythical make-up of the world. It asks us to consider that which we overlook. In doing so, it compels us to question our framing of the universe, our confidence in our understanding of the world order.

Such dependencies include...

- the powers of Church and State in setting the limits of our social obligations and individual pursuits: Is the charismatic minister or statesman who expounds moral virtues of society, unaware of the Devil in the institution she is promoting (*Devil's Advocate*)?
- our reliance on science and rationality to uncover truth: If we could send a space ship to the edge of the universe, what would it find (*Event Horizon*)?
- our sanctification of the family: Is the nuclear family a comfortable and secure place to be? Does the endeavour to protect the family justify the actions of parents (*Nightmare on Elm Street*)?
- the hope offered by religion: If God does act amongst us, what does the Devil do (*Stephen King's The Stand*)?¹⁷
- our idolisation of youth: What if we could live forever (*Lost Boys*)?¹⁸

Where cautionary tales tell of the dangers if we stray from the moral code, horror can portray the cautionary tale regarding the

¹⁶ Modleski, T. (2002). The Terror of Pleasure: The contemporary horror film and postmodern theory. *The Film Cultures Reader*. G. Turner. London, Routledge: 268-275. P. 271.

¹⁷ Irwin, L. (1996). *Visionary Worlds: The Making and Unmaking of Reality*. New York, State University of New York Press. Pp. 79-82.

¹⁸ Martin, A. (1994). *Phantasms: The dreams and desires at the heart of our popular culture*. Melbourne, McPhee Gribble. P. 69.

moral code itself. Horror offers a glimpse of the extreme that is possible in the universe we have created for ourselves. Horror can be the antithesis to our myth-making.

In saying all this I do not intend to equate going to the movies with the practice of religion. Instead I contend that film, like other mass media, provide for the ritual communication of meaning, and like all commonly held stories have an impact on the values and beliefs on the communities in which they are shared. Horror films enter our culture through social gathering and become a commodity of the culture of the viewers. These commodities, like the stories, values and ideals carried in religious acts, impact on the cultural, and therefore religious identity of the culture's members.

Many films have been mentioned as examples in this section of the paper. In the following chapter I wish to treat a smaller number of films more closely, to focus on the theological ideas or questions brought to film audiences and the impact on religious identity in contemporary film culture.

Theological Conversations in Contemporary Horror

This section outlines four theological conversations that arise in the nine films under study. There is a reason for choosing to apply the term “conversation” rather than “statement” or “proposition”. While films cannot be acquitted of positing a certain viewpoint, perspective or polemic on any issue, they do more than merely state it. As stated in the previous section, films invite their audience into an affective experience, where the symbolic language is able to add language to other experiences in the lives of audience members. How these films do this is explored in this chapter.

Power of the Ancient

A number of these movies explore the concept of an ancient truth, either ignored or replaced by modern rationalism, that forces its way into the lives of the films’ protagonists. These characters struggle to accept this truth and the way it completely overturns their previous understanding of themselves and their world.

The opening credits of *Stigmata* opens this theme vividly. A rapid stream of images alternating between religious artwork – a crucified Jesus, crosses, spilled wine and blood – and youthful living – Frankie working at the beauty salon, clothes shopping, drinking in a night club, taking her boyfriend home – sets an opposition which will undoubtedly clash through the movie.

The director then uses popular traditional Christian imagery to evoke anticipation and release of high impact events, such as an attack of stigmata or a possession on the main character. These images include doves, candles and water.



In *Lost Souls*, sepia and monochrome colour schemes portray an old world in New York and New Jersey, especially in settings such as the psychiatric hospital, the monastery, Peter Kelson’s

apartment and office, and the dinner party where an attempt on his life was made.



A variety of motion sequences are deployed in this film to effect a feeling of spiritual presence. Slow motion activity occurs at the entrance of the exorcist team into the hospital. Throughout the film busy street life is interrupted by slow motion sequences of leaves blowing into the air, dogs barking, and women in kimonos walking down street steps.

The narrative of *Alien Resurrection* begins to reach a climax at the moment Ripley and the team of smugglers realise that Call is a synthetic. Call tells the story of the recall of her kind from production, the escape and organisation of rebel synthetics, and the mission to thwart government endeavours to use and control the alien monsters. Two centuries of history are retold to Ripley, revealing a deeper truth to her existence, in the ship's chapel, underneath a glowing fluorescent cross.

The dichotomy between ancient knowledge and contemporary life is shown in each film: between religious asceticism and youthful abundance in *Stigmata*, between old world wisdom and modern enlightenment in *Lost Souls*, and between experienced caution and ignorant greed in *Alien Resurrection*.

In light of these movies I ask myself, "Is there any merit in contemporising Christian rituals and practices? Or do we lose meaning in our attempts to make Christian life more relevant to modern day life through the eradication of perceived outdated forms?" Clearly these films identify that once held explanations for the world's events (that miracles occur, that the Devil is active and pursues the faithful), now disregarded in favour of science and empirical logic, have the power to affect identity in a culture that has passed them by. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

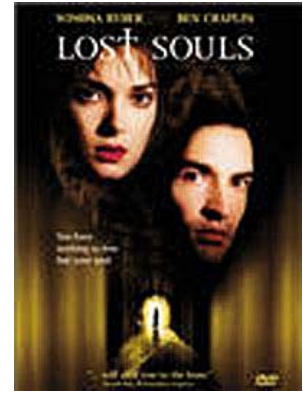
These films find an affinity with pre-Reformation Christian imagery and use it to display their fictional "truth". These films identify with a quest for truth, something that tells us more about who we are, that cannot be found in modern culture alone. Seeking these truths involves a recapture of old forms, symbols and rituals.

Resident Evil

Evil as Presence

The story of Peter Kelson in *Lost Souls* opens with a television interview where he claims, "I don't believe in Evil, with a capital

E.” For this character, evil is an illusion, that becomes less mystifying as we get closer to it. Horror films, by and large, thwart this understanding. In all films treated, evil is seen as a presence of something rational, intentional and tangible, rather than as something accidental, an absence or dysfunction of rationality.



Each movie adds its own form to this notion. In both *Scream* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (hereby referred to as *Last Summer*), evil has human form, but who moves and acts as if without emotion, with a single desire to destroy. In *Alien Resurrection* and *Pitch Black* the form is of monsters, although we are led to question the judicious morality of the lead characters in both films. *Event Horizon* portrays evil as a place, likened to hell, though not named as such, where pure chaos reigns. *Lost Souls* and *Stigmata* deify the form of evil, the Devil for the former and Christ for the latter. In a similar way does *Final Destination*, where death is portrayed as a rational force. *Resident Evil* provides a number of personifications, including an artificial intelligence, a crowd of brain-dead and hungry zombies and a lizard-like monster made of pure DNA that had been infected with the same virus afflicting the zombies.

Evil exists in a coupling of directions: the Great One and the Multitude. Horror endeavours to place on screen our deepest consternations with the prospect of unending deviations of the world order we take for granted. Horror endeavours to frame immensity and explosiveness of our imaginations, and its reverse, entrapment and insidiousness.¹⁹ In this sense, images of evil are either a singular creature that exerts outward an immense power (the Devil in *Lost Souls*, *Resident Evil*'s artificial intelligence, the masked killer of *Scream* who disappears and reappears silently), or an immense number of entities which close inward (the aliens in both *Alien Resurrection* and *Pitch Black*).

Evil Thwarts

In these cases, the definition of evil is that which thwarts certain aspirations and sensibilities of the characters. Idyllic images are portrayed at the start of these films, whether they be the quiet country village of Woodsboro in *Scream* or the close and supportive crew of the ship Lewis & Clark in *Event Horizon* or the tight friendship of two couples in *Last Summer*. Evil seeks to

¹⁹ Schneider, K. J. (1993). *Horror and the Holy: Wisdom-Teachings of the Monster Tale*. Chicago, Open Court. P. 7.

break down these relationships to isolate individuals, often killing characters one by one.



This diabolism continues thematically in many of the films. In order to save themselves from the remorse that has crippled their plans for the future beyond high school, the four of *Last Summer* reunite after a year apart to reconcile with the guilt of killing a pedestrian in a motor accident. The stalker however, thwarts all endeavours to relieve their guilt by resurfacing as the presumed-dead accident victim.

In the same way the unnameable villain that has engulfed the Event Horizon and given it life plays on the shame and guilt of the crew of Lewis & Clarke, thwarting their search for reconciliation with their own individual pasts. The being lures Dr Weir into his discipleship by speaking through an illusion of his late wife. It tempts Peters onto a ledge from which she falls by making her believe she is chasing her crippled son, now healed.

In *Final Destination*, death thwarts young people's ideals of invincibility. Awed and suspicious of Alex's apparent ability to predict people's demise, a fellow survivor of the excursion group's plane crash confronts him saying, "You're not going to control me. I'm going to live forever". Alex grows more aware of Death's plan, its greatest ally being its victims' youthful and playful ignorance.

Youthful and playful ignorance is also part of the theme for *Scream*, moreover its depiction of young people as desensitised to trauma and violence in their own surroundings. Retelling events over the past few days to each other, the students of Woodsboro High frame the murders as if scenes in a horror movie, thereby establishing themselves as "audience" to their own world. Meanwhile the serial killer thwarts their preconceived ability to understand and predict his next move, that they have acquired through the diligent study of the film genre.



The zombies of *Resident Evil* multiply by infecting members of the rescue team. The infection is quick, and other members of the team are unaware of exactly when an infected person will turn on them. The evil of this movie thwarts the team's mutual trust. Trapped inside a room with zombies on all side, they must enlist the help of the Red Queen artificial intelligence, who has been their greatest foe to date. In the meantime, Alice and Spence slowly regain their memory, where Spence reveals himself as the villain who exposed the Hive to the virus in the first place. Alice, Matthew and the rest of the

team become suspicious of everyone, which inhibits their ability to make rational decisions and escape the Hive.

Evil Participates in Moral Society

Enlightenment philosophy told us that the rational individual is the moral individual, and that the institutions of Western democracy thrive in serving the well-being of all its members. The holocaust of World War Two destroyed the West's faith in this, becoming the nightmare of the first World's meta-narrative. Horror movies, placing our nightmares on the screen, expose the notion that mere acceptance of our moral culture does not make us safe from harm. Evil is not a divorce from morality, but plays in our institutions which make our values, whether they be the B-grade video producers, the pharmaceutical companies or even the social definitions of youth and adolescence. Horror movies challenge their audience to not be an audience to its culture, but to participate in the identification and suspicion of the meta-narrative.

Secret Story, Secret Society

Some characters are deployed in horror film narratives to offer glimpses into the real truth behind events. Sometimes these characters are marginalised by circumstances within the narrative, and often disappear or are "killed off", leaving the main character to uncover the rest of the story. Such examples include the document translator who offers secrets to Fr Kiernan in *Stigmata*, who walks the halls of power in the Vatican but is placed under suspicion by bishops. Call, in *Alien Resurrection*, belongs to an underground group of illegal synthetics who have carried the story of the original Ripley and the government's plans to subdue and control the aliens. *Lost Soul's* Deacon Townsend, aware of the prophecy centred around Peter Kelson, follows his fate and makes an attempt on Kelson's life, creating further suspicion around his colleague, Maya Larkin, whose research has already been rejected by the Church's administration.



When not set as marginal characters by the narrative, these characters may be depicted as suspicious or untrustworthy, thereby being made marginal to the audience. Such characters are Matthew in *Resident Evil*, who trespasses into the Hive and is held captive by the rescue team, and the funeral home's care-taker in *Final Destination*, whose deep voice, and

knowledge of, yet apparent indifference to, Death's design, makes him appear an accomplice.

Horror seeks to lead the audience to find an affinity with those whose awareness of the narrative's fictional truth separates them from the film's fictional world. Horror portrays a suspicion of moral culture and an affinity with that which is marginal. Religious identity, a membership to a truth, means a connection with that which is different, rejected, of lower status and of questionable reputation to the moral and cultural Establishment of mainstream society.

A Triumphant Life

In *Scream*, Randy, the video store clerk, states that there are simple rules for surviving a horror movie. One of these, is to remain a virgin; this is redeeming quality in the horror genre whereas losing one's virginity is punishable by serial murder. Randy's redeeming quality, in this film, is the fact that he, despite his detailed knowledge of horror film, refused to treat the events surrounding his life as if it were a horror film. While all his friends left the final scene to "watch" the crime scene of their school principal's murder, he chose to stay, knowing that these events were real and not to be received with such emotional distance.

The character Gail Weathers, the news reporter, is also redeemed in the same way. She left her video camera behind, and as such her mediated distance from these events, to participate in the rescue of the main character Sidney.

In the movies treated one theme is salient: that defeat of the evil that lurks through the film involves a refusal to accept that which the evil is endeavouring to thwart. In the film *Event Horizon*, the audience learns that Captain Miller is suffering the guilt of choosing to let an inferior be killed whilst trying to save the rest of his command. His refusal to be taunted by the stream of images of this act by the entity within the ship allowed him to escape. Likewise, Julie manages to overcome her guilt over the car accident in *Last Summer* and stop believing that deserved the stalking by the supposed victim.

Alice succeeds in escaping the Hive in *Resident Evil*, only by choosing to trust Matthew and confessing that she had played a part in the destruction of the Hive's security. Ripley only succeeds in destroying the last alien in *Alien Resurrection* by rejecting that part of her which identified with aliens, as she had been brainwashed into believing by the military research team that had created her. Her final entry into Earth's atmosphere is symbolic of her acceptance of her humanity.

Conversely, Peter Kelson's continued disbelief in his identity, despite having been convinced by Maya Larkin's exposure of the threat caused by his family, leads to his execution by Maya in the final seconds of the film.

Surviving a horror movie involves accepting that there is a battle to be undertaken with the world at large. Moral society is not yet complete. To accept a religious identity is to accept that which is different from the rest of the world, perhaps at odds with it. To achieve that identity's potential is to join the fight against that which thwarts the making of a truly justified society.

Implications for Contemporary Theology

What Is It About Horror?

Lynn Schofield Clark suggests there is rebellion in watching horror film.

[Experimentations with the supernatural] also, of course, challenge authority. Teens know that adults consider such actions to be deviant and even dangerous; that is part of their appeal. Like séances and other supernatural activities, horror films and television programs give young viewers a chance to vicariously participate in rebellion while also containing their fears through its symbolic defeat.²⁰

For Schofield Clark, horror films explore the margins of the contemporary world order by placing on screen audiences' fears about death, the after-life, evil etc., and then by relieving them, through the defeat of the horror and the re-establishment of the world order.

While I agree whole-heartedly with this understanding of the popularity of horror film in teen culture, I would like to add that horror film does more than identifying and relieving audiences' fears. Horror also has the ability, and task, of making a narrative world that involves viewers' doubt of society's grasp of reality. *Resident Evil*, for example, suggests that corporations work on dangerous projects protected from scrutiny. *Final Destination* offers us information we would prefer to reject on the nature of death. *Event Horizon* makes it known there is more to the universe than empty space. *Stigmata* shows us not everything can be explained rationally.

The rebellion in watching horror film is not just in participating in a dangerous world. It includes a passive aggression towards our society's view of the real world and comfort in the established world order. Audience identification in themes in the worlds of horror film includes a rejection of the homiletic descriptions of God, good and evil, earthly existence and a justified society produced communicated in the institutions of government, family, university and mainstream religion.

In this way, horror film does more than offer opportunity for vicarious participation. It offers a place to do theology, in a new

²⁰ Schofield Clark, L. (2003). *From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media, and the Supernatural*. New York, Oxford University Press. P. 63.

way which is free from the perceived constraints of traditional ways of thinking.

Theology as Mythic and Marginal

Bobby C Alexander has researched the place of televangelism in American culture, and describes the overarching religion as such:

*Televangelism viewers believe secular society is allied with Satan in an effort to defeat God and God's purposes for the world. The militancy of viewers in promoting biblical morality is motivated by the view that the moral regeneration of the secular world is critical to the defeat of Satan and to God's redemption of creation. Viewers believe they are God's agents in the world and that their efforts are vital to the defeat of Satan... Viewers believe they will have a share in Gods perpetual rule as a reward for remaining faithful to God and God's purposes.*²¹

Though only a small proportion of the American population, Alexander believes that televangelism provides a ritual base which legitimises the credibility of this religious identity in the viewers' own eyes.

There are connections to be made in places between the description quoted above and the theological conversations outlined in the previous chapter. In the theology of televangelism, evil is a presence that must be thwarted through action. The recognition of this involves joining a team of believers that are separate from the secular world, and even at odds against it.

Schofield Clark also recognises that American evangelicalism speaks to these themes more so than Western Protestantism or Catholicism.

Evangelicalism has not provided the cause for our concerns with evil, but due to the often acknowledged connections between culture and the religious heritage of the United States, evangelicalism has inadvertently provided a framework for thinking about and representing evil in popular culture. evangelicals have long been concerned with the pervasiveness of evil in the world, and with the belief in a transcendent God who will eventually

²¹ Alexander, B. C. (1997). Televangelism: Redressive Ritual Within a Lager Social Drama. Rethinking Media, Religion and Culture. S. M. Hoover and K. Lundby. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc.: 194-208. P. 196.

*triumph over evil. Evangelical traditions [...] are therefore seeking not only to fight evil, but to define it.*²²

It could be said that the current wave of evangelicalism speaks to believers by using themes already embedded in their culture: that the themes current in their communication “connect the dots” of one’s view of the world in the same constellation as film narratives.

Horror films offer a *myth* which is *marginal*. The telling of a story constructs a world of narrative symbol that offers a certain meaning to the real lives of an audience. This meaning is seen as foreign to the present social construct of reality, and marginalises those who align themselves with this meaning with the rest of society.

Can it be said that the decline of traditional forms of religion is explained by their failure to provide a new way of seeing the world which offers believers with a new sense of identity that is different from the rest of the world? Can it be said that the rise of evangelicalism and televangelism is explained in the same way?

While evangelicalism existed long before television and film became the most popular forms of entertainment and cultural communication, its family of denominations does enjoy a growing membership in both the U.S. and Australia, or at least is not declining as quickly as Catholic and Protestant churches.

In any case, the criticism of these denomination in decline is that they are “out of touch” with culture, and display outdated values. And this is described by an emphasis in communicating theology in literal and rational terms, rather than inviting the audience into myth.

Theology as Genre

The Synoptic Gospels offer a view of how Jesus talked to the people during his earthly ministry. Jesus was a product of his time, a predominantly oral culture, where story-telling was a major form of communication of faith. The written word was available only to the educated elite, eg. scribes, who at their own discretion would pass on knowledge to believers.

A popular form of Jesus’ communication was his parables. Peter Horsfield recognises seven characteristics of the parables of Jesus, which I wish to summarise in three.²³

²² Schofield Clark, L. (2003). *From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media, and the Supernatural*. New York, Oxford University Press. P. 26.

²³ Horsfield, P. (2002). *The Mediated Spirit, The Commission for Mission, Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria*.

Rhythm and realism

In his stories, Jesus uses characters and situations known in everyday life, such as shepherds, rural families, wedding banquets. He refrains from using religious language that may be inaccessible to the uneducated, and focuses instead on making pictures that would make sense to the widest of audiences.

His characters are simple, lacking complication, and serves more as universal symbols rather than situation-specific ones. The use of repetition in his narrative discourse offers audiences a rhythm by which they could enter and feel comfort in the world of the story, to then “play” with audiences’ expectations and responses.

Disorientation

While the stories first construct a narrative drama which is realistic, often (as the defining nature of a parable) that world-order is then perverted, in an endeavour to confront audiences’ expectations. Well-known examples are the father’s welcome and celebration of the return of his wayward son (Luke 15: 11-32), and the hospitality and compassion of the Samaritan outcast (Luke 10: 25-37).

Hearers of the story are invited to construct their own meaning, to consider the symbols displayed in a new dimension. They are then left to question the intention of the story-teller.

Lack of resolution

Only in one instance retold in the Gospels (eg. Luke 8: 4-15 – the Parable of the Good Sower) does Jesus explain the meaning of his parables, and even then, it is only revealed to a select few. In fact, he intentionally left the stories open to interpretation by the audiences themselves.

There is a politic in his story-telling. By telling the God-world relationship in stories with realistic/accessible characters and situations, and by leaving the stories open to defined meaning, Jesus moves the power to make theology from the religious elite to the people.

This rhythm of invitation, disorientation and interpretation is the work of an audience immersed in a *genre*. To draw viewers into a symbolic world, whether in front of a story-teller, a book or a movie screen, and challenge them to make meaning out of it is to set them on the task of doing theology. Horror movies, in setting audiences in the world of the supernatural, the unknown and unknowable, the marginal in our established world-view, assume a capability once reserved only for the institutions of organised religion.

To what extent can the rejection of organised religion be attached to a notion that elite God-language fails to involve the hearer in the message of the pulpit. A hearer who would more

comfortably be immersed in a world where simple characters and situations connect with the everyday of his or her own life.

Concluding Remarks

Just as the printing press fuelled the Protestant Reformation in 16th century Europe, so audio-visual communication presents a challenge to established religion in this time. Not just because it tells a story in a new way, but, in doing so, tells a new story.

Theologians cannot ignore this new communication and its impact on the religious character of media-culture. My exploration of horror film is just an example of the cultural shift that marks the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries' cultural reformation. Horror film, as much as all other forms of audio-visual media, present a new forum for theological discourse that impacts on Christian life. The rejection of this by traditional organised religion will only serve to alienate and cloister it, fuelling many people's already growing opinion of churches being "out of touch" with the real world.

The challenge of the church universal, then, is to seek ways to participate in the world of media-culture, to comprehend how its own symbols and language are interpreted against all others in an electronic meaning-making organism, and to assert a place where its message can be best received.

Filmography

Alien Resurrection

1997

Twentieth Century Fox

A Brandywine Production

Producer: Bill Badalato

Director: Jean-Pierre Jeunet

Screenplay: Joss Whedon

Event Horizon

1997

Paramount Pictures/Lawrence Gordon

A Golar Production

Producers: Lloyd Levin, Lawrence Gordon, Jeremy Bolt

Director: Paul WS Anderson

Screenplay: Philip Eisner

Final Destination

2000

New Line Cinema

A Warren Zide – Craig Perry Production

Producer: Glen Morgan

Director: James Wong

Screenplay: Glen Morgan

I Know What You Did Last Summer

1997

Columbia Pictures

A Mandalay Entertainment Production

Director: Jim Gillespie

Screenplay: Kevin Williamson

Lost Souls

2000

New Line Cinema

A Prufrock Pictures Production

Producer: Ninar Sadowski and Meg Ryan

Director: Janusz Kaminski

Screenplay: Pierce Gardner

Pitch Black

2000

Universal Pictures

An Interscope Communications Production

Producer: Tom Engelman

Director: David Twohy

Screenplay: Jim Wheat, Ken Wheat, David Twohy

Resident Evil

2002

Metropolitan Film

A Constantin Film – New Legacy – Davis Films Production

Producer: Bernd Eichinger

Director: Paul WS Anderson

Screenplay: Paul WS Anderson

Scream

1996

Dimension Films

A Woods Entertainment Production

Producers: Cary Woods and Cathy Konrad

Director: Wes Craven

Screenplay: Kevin Williamson

Stigmata

1999

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

An FGM Entertainment Production

Producer: Frank Mancuso

Director: Rupert Wainwright

Screenplay: Tom Lazarus

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