

6. 'Total Recall' Production, Revolution, Simulation-Alienation Effect', *Camera Obscura*, no. 32, 1993-94, p. 10.
7. Shea and Jennings, 'Paul Verhoeven: An Interview', pp. 18-19.
8. Springer, 'Muscular Circuitry', p. 95.
9. Jonathan Goldberg points out that the cross-dressing 'transforms him into a latter-day Divine', and connects the cross-gendering to the plotline's 'attempt to suture identities'. See 'Recalling Totalities', p. 193.
10. Fred Glass comments that female genital space is powerfully suggested in this shot: see 'Totally Recalling Arnold: Sex and Violence in the New Bad Future', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 1, 1990, p. 8.
11. Yvonne Tasker points out that the action film partially allays this threat of feminization by avoiding pin-up 'poses' by the bodybuilder hero and keeping him in constant motion. See *Spectacular Bodies*, p. 77.
12. Michael Stern, 'Making Culture into Nature' (1980), in Annette Kuhn, ed., *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, London: Verso, 1990, p. 69.
13. Vivian Sobchack, 'The Virginity of Astronauts: Sex and the Science Fiction Film', 1985, in *ibid.*, p. 108.
14. Stern, 'Making Culture into Nature', p. 70.
15. See Goldberg, 'Recalling Totalities', pp. 193-6. See also Johanna Schmertz, 'On Reading the Politics of *Total Recall*', *Post Script*, vol. 12, no. 3. Schmertz argues for 'the political polyvalence' of *Total Recall*, even while conceding the film's classic masculine narrative. Robert Miklitsch, however, interprets the film's sexual politics as subservient to its 'explicitly revolutionary context'. See '*Total Recall*', p. 16.
16. Johanna Schmertz describes the dual liberatory or racist readings of the Benny character in *Total Recall* in 'On Reading the Politics of *Total Recall*' (p. 38).
17. Discussing similarly diverse audiences and readings of *Die Hard*, Sharon Willis in *High Contrast* points out that the Hollywood market 'demands such layers of audiences as a prerequisite of a film's success', p. 40.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-31.
19. *Demolition Man*, with its bodybuilder aesthetic, homoerotic overtones, but conservative satire, demonstrates the difficulty of clearly distinguishing a 'popular' camp from a more radically queer camp. See Moe Meyer's overview of the politics of this debate in 'Introduction: Reclaiming the Discourse of Camp', in Moe Meyer, ed., *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
20. These quotations come, respectively, from 'The Tremulous Public Body: Robots, Change, and the Science Fiction Film', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1991, p. 16; and 'The Terminator, Terminator 2, and the Exposed Body', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1992, p. 30.
21. See Jonathan Goldberg's analysis of the erotics of the Schwarzenegger body, in 'Recalling Totalities', p. 176.

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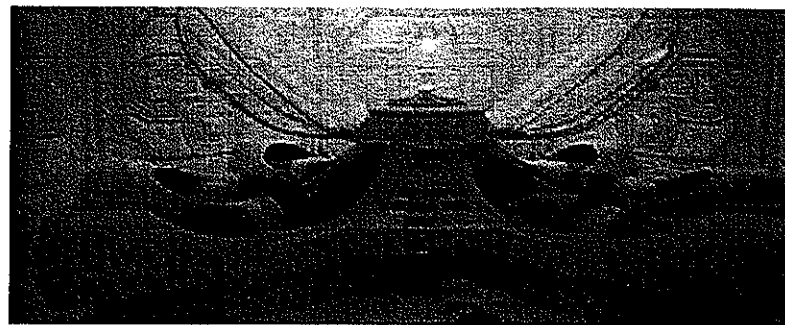
BECOMING THE MONSTER'S MOTHER:
MORPHOLOGIES OF IDENTITY IN
THE ALIEN SERIES

CATHERINE CONSTABLE

This chapter will analyse the representation of maternity and the maternal body in the *Alien* series, focusing on *Alien* (1979); *Aliens* (1986) and *Alien Resurrection* (1997), with a very brief reference to *Alien3*. Beginning with a discussion of Barbara Creed's well-known reading of *Alien*, which uses Julia Kristeva's model of abjection, I shall proceed to address the protagonist Ripley's (Sigourney Weaver) relation to the alien queen in *Aliens* and *Alien Resurrection*. I shall argue that Kristeva's model can be applied to the representation of maternity and matter in *Alien* and *Aliens*. Both films present the alien in ways that emphasize its visceral qualities: from the pulsating flesh of the pods to the mucus-secreting double jaw of the fully grown monster. In these films, human reproduction is represented as scientific or sterile, in clear contrast with the alien's physical materiality, thus setting up an opposition between the human and the monstrous. This corresponds to Kristeva's analysis of the structures of abjection, in which the subject rejects the flux of physical matter in order to secure the boundaries of its own identity. I shall demonstrate that the presentation of the human in *Alien* can be seen to conform to a traditional Freudian/Lacanian model of identity that is secured through opposing, and ultimately subjugating, the threat of the Other. *Aliens* can also be seen to use the model of opposition, but simultaneously to undermine it.¹

I shall argue that the traditional psychoanalytic model of opposition and subjugation is rendered defunct by the re/presentation of Ripley in *Alien Resurrection* as a clone who has given birth to the alien queen. Becoming the monster's mother involves a breakdown of traditional models of identity, because these models never analyse the position of the mother as a subject position. I will therefore argue that the complex structures of intersecting identities presented in *Alien Resurrection* correspond to a new and different model of subjectivity. This will involve using Christine Battersby's *The Phenomenal Woman*, which argues for a model of female identity that encompasses the capacity to give birth. The crossing of DNA from Ripley and the alien queen has a considerable impact on the lived embodiment of each character. Both gain different physical attributes, and their newfound materiality constitutes their new identities. I will use Battersby's model in order to theorize the ways in which becoming the monster's mother also involves rethinking physical matter as a site of subjectivity.

In her article on *Alien*, Creed argues that the film offers a number of versions of the primal scene. She borrows the term from Freud, defining primal scenes as fantasmatic reconstructions of parental copulation and birth. According to Creed, the first representation in *Alien* occurs at the beginning of the film when the crew of the *Nostromo* are awakened from hypersleep. There is a long tracking shot down one of the ship's corridors: this differs from the other corridors because it has white padding covering the piping and ventilation on the walls. The camera tracks forward towards an octagonal white door. To the left of the door hang two white coats, indicating a human presence. The colour of the padding and the coats suggests a sanitized region of the ship. The door opens, revealing a circular inner chamber, and the track in provides a long shot of seven containers arranged in a geometric star shape. Their clean, clear plastic lids rise as the lights flicker on. The light shines down the walls of the chamber, backlighting the opening sleep capsules and creating a contrast between layers of whiteness (Figure 1). There is a dissolve to a medium long shot taken from Kane's capsule as he reaches to remove two



white discs attached to his torso. He and the other visible figures are clothed in white shorts which cover their genitalia like swaddling clothes. Creed comments that 'the re-birthing scene ... is marked by a fresh, antiseptic atmosphere. In outer space, birth is a well-controlled, clean, painless affair. There is no blood, trauma or terror.'² The subjects spring to life fully formed, their bodies already decently covered.

Creed contrasts the first 're-birthing scene' with the second version of the primal scene, in which Dallas, Kane and Lambert investigate the alien spacecraft. The horseshoe-shaped craft is first seen from the left in long shots. Later there is a cut to another long shot facing the centre of the horseshoe as if between the legs of the craft. This is followed by a long shot of the three crew members who clamber in through one of two rounded openings. Creed argues that the topography of the ship suggests a female body, its outstretched legs positioned either side of a vaginal entrance. The long shot also serves to establish the vastness of the body: it appears to engulf the crew as they disappear inside. Once inside, a travelling shot reveals an organic structure. Black bone-like structures run vertically up the walls, glistening slightly in the light as if moist. The patterns of the skeletal corridor differ greatly from the

horizontal metallic piping seen on the *Nostromo*. The darkness of the alien ship also contrasts with the bright whiteness of the sleep chamber and its hallway. Creed describes the alien craft as 'dark, dank and mysterious'.³

While agreeing with Creed's description of the contrast between the spaces, I want to expand on her analysis and challenge aspects of her reading by looking more closely at the film itself. The diverse structures of the alien ship are associated with organic life in a variety of ways. The crew climb out of the inner corridors onto a vast, curved parapet constructed from long black ridges, like spines, which are interconnected horizontally by short black ribs. The camera cranes backwards and upwards to reveal a central, circular dais with a large, almost telescopic, protrusion in the middle. It seems to conjoin a number of large circular pipes like the remnants of the main veins and arteries that once fed into a vast heart. There is a cut to a long shot taken level with the dais as the crew begin to investigate its structure. Dallas moves to investigate the underside and comments that it is attached to a fossilized body. Later, there is a medium shot of Dallas and Lambert viewing some skeletal remains. These are pinky-beige in colour as though the bones had not yet been completely bleached. The skeleton consists of a series of thick ribs attached to a central spinal column. The repetition of the patterning from the parapet reinforces the visual suggestion that the entire craft is a fossilized body and thus explicitly associates the alien craft with death and decay.

In the next part of the scene, Kane is lowered into a vast inner chamber which he describes as 'some sort of cave' whose atmosphere is 'almost tropical'. Creed reads his exploration of the moist warm space as an extreme version of the primal scene in which 'the subject imagines travelling back inside the womb to watch her/his parents having sexual intercourse, perhaps to watch her/himself being conceived'.⁴ The film provides a single establishing shot of the vast space as Kane is lowered in. The cave exhibits the same organic structures as the rest of the ship. The spinal columns run down the walls and across the floor space, dividing it into a series of channels. The front two are scarcely illuminated, but can be seen to contain a number of circular mounds.

Kane's torch lights up the middle section, picking out a layer of blue mist which covers it. Later, there is a medium long shot of Kane walking along one of the ridges that separate the channels, his torch illuminating a blue line of light that runs level with his feet. As he kneels down, the sound of the electrical hum changes to a higher pitch. There is a cut to a medium close-up of his arm as he lowers his hand through the beam twice, and the electrical pitch gains in frequency on both occasions. The forcefield operates as a protective layer which Kane penetrates when he falls off the ridge. He goes on to discover that the pods also carry an electrical charge when he receives a shock as he touches one. The electrical fields are clearly designed to repel intruders, indicating that Kane has entered a hostile environment.

I have described the presentation of the alien craft in some detail in order to establish that it is already presented as a hostile and dangerous space prior to the attack on Kane. This is important because Creed reads 'the womb-like imagery, the long winding tunnels leading to inner chambers, the rows of hatching eggs'⁵ as positive images of a parthenogenetic mother figure. She argues that these images and those of the first sleeping chamber represent an archaic mother figure who gives birth to all life by herself. Creed draws on myths of the mother goddess, from the Greek figure of Gaia, the earth from whom all life springs, to the South American figure of the spider woman, who is said to create the universe through her spinning.⁶ Importantly, these reproductive maternal figures are not presented in relation to a male partner. Creed comments that 'the womb signifies "fullness" or "emptiness" but always it is its own point of reference'.⁷ The use of the womb as a key reference point clearly provides a break from the Freudian system in which the mother is encoded in relation to a phallic standard.

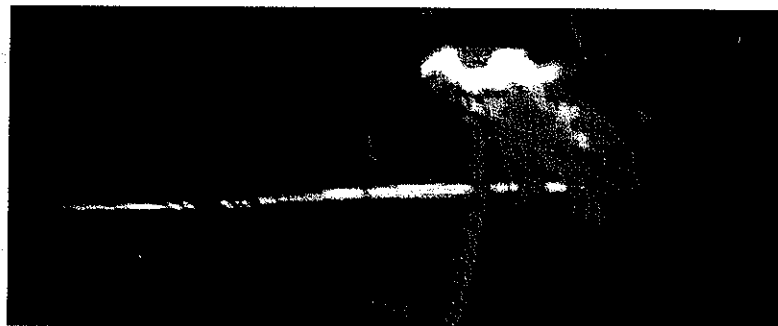
Creed's move beyond Freud's Oedipal and pre-Oedipal eras is an attempt to generate new images of the maternal figure. For Freud, the boy's love of the pre-Oedipal mother is the result of his mapping her as an all-powerful, phallic figure. This is later destroyed by the 'discovery' of maternal castration, which leads the boy to construct the Oedipal mother as mutilated and lacking. Creed



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pits her image of the reproductive mother against the Freudian images of the phallic or mutilated mother. However, she does suggest that the figure of the archaic mother can be recuperated when it is constructed negatively as death-dealing. The reconstruction of the womb as tomb is a patriarchal appropriation of the figure of the archaic mother, which Creed argues often occurs in horror films.⁸ I think that detailed textual analysis of *Alien* shows that the presentation of the alien craft as a fossilized structure clearly corresponds to the image of tomb rather than womb.⁹

Creed argues that the maternal characterization of the alien craft changes after Kane is attacked, moving from archaic mother to pre-Oedipal phallic mother. The face-hugger is viewed as phallic because it attacks through an aggressive act of penetration. However, I want to offer a different reading of the attack, using Kristeva's work on abjection and matter. After receiving an electric shock from one of the pods, Kane investigates its structure. The second close-up of the pod is the clearest: it is backlit so that the outer skin appears to be a translucent blue/white, and the curved shape of a dark pink organic structure can be clearly seen fluttering inside it. The internal life form has a central darker curve which appears to extend into a series of less dense



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'fingers'. The dense curve resembles the curve of a foetus's spine when viewed on a scanner. Kane comments: 'It seems to have life, organic life.' There is a cut to a medium close-up of Kane and the camera travels back and up, providing a medium shot of him viewing the top of the pod as it opens with a creaking sound. This is followed by a subjective shot of the inside of the pod, and the handheld camera moves forward to provide a more direct view into the gaping hole. The four newly opened leaves are deep pink with white veining, and the centre is a pulsating pink mound of flesh which glistens in the light (Figure 2). The curve of flesh resembles a womb lining, its colour suggesting it is composed of interior tissue rather than an external skin. The moist heaving flesh makes a rhythmical squelching sound as if breathing. There is a cut to a shot of Kane as he reaches into the pod, rapidly followed by another subjective shot as the creature propels itself towards his face, its tail uncoiling rapidly. There follows a cut to a medium shot of Kane as he staggers and falls with the face-hugger attached to his helmet. The central cord hangs down from behind it as the monster appears to ingest his face. Its shape resembles a placenta with an umbilical cord (Figure 3). This is followed by a return to the long shot of the alien craft in which the camera is positioned

parallel to the space between the legs of the craft. The positioning of the shot clearly suggests that the monstrous craft has given birth.

I have emphasized the visceral qualities of the attack on Kane in order to demonstrate the way in which the representation of *matter* is crucial to the structures of horror in this film. For Creed, the attack on Kane is horrific because the character is threatened by the prospect of reabsorption into the figure of the pre-Oedipal mother.¹⁰ Within the Freudian model, the child's first psychic organization, the pre-Oedipal, is that of a state of undifferentiated union with the mother. Subjectivity is created and secured through a complete separation from the maternal figure. For Freud, the boy must pass through the Oedipus and castration complexes, ultimately rejecting the mother for a substitute love object. Lacan argues that the intervention of a third term, the Name of the Father, splits the mother-child dyad and acts as a cut that separates the pair. In this model, it is the acquisition of language that forcibly splits the child from the mother. Furthermore, once the child has acquired language, it is situated within the Symbolic and the mother is relegated to the Imaginary. Creed borrows from Kristeva in arguing that the threat posed by the horror film is that of the dissolution of the subject.¹¹ The representation of the figure of the mother is the return of that which has to be rejected and suppressed in order for the subject to exist at all.

Creed's account of the abjection of the maternal figure is problematic, however, in that she fails to trace it back to the child's earliest development and therefore to comment on the mother's relation to matter. Kristeva traces the process of abjection to the pre-Oedipal:

The abject confronts us ... with our earliest attempts to release the hold of the *maternal* entity even before ex-isting [sic] outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language. It is a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling.¹²

The process of abjection does not secure the split between subject and object; it merely establishes a 'defensive *position*', setting up permeable borders which constitute gestures towards subjectivity.¹³ These primary borders are said to

create the foundations of binary structures: 'As if the fundamental opposition were between I and the Other, or in more archaic fashion, between Inside and Outside.'¹⁴ Importantly, the establishment of this first border between inside and outside involves the expulsion and rejection of physical matter such as food and bodily waste products. This expulsion establishes the contours of the body itself and sets up a further division between the living, contained body and dead matter:

These bodily fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border.¹⁵

Kristeva's account of the processes of abjection links the maternal body to physical matter in two ways. First, the child establishes a bodily contour through acts of expulsion which form that which is to be considered 'outside' the boundary, typically the mother's body and dead matter. Second, the bodily division between inside and outside sets up the skin as a container which holds in the palpable stuff of physicality like muscles and blood.¹⁶ The maternal body operates as the privileged trope for the visceral flows of the inside.¹⁷ Within this framework the attack on Kane is horrific because the monster engulfs his helmet, covering his face (the privileged site of individuation) within its own physical structures. It is also horrific because it presents the spectacle of inside as outside, the skinless palpitating flesh of the pods raising the spectre of a viscous physicality that has been rejected. For Kristeva, the re-emergence of the maternal 'inside' is horrific rather than uncanny because the processes of abjection involve expulsion and ultimately suppression.¹⁸

I am not arguing that Kristeva's conception of abjection is the universal structure of all horror films. Indeed, as I shall show, *Alien Resurrection* does not conform to these structures. However, the Kristevan framework is appropriate to *Alien* because of the contrasts drawn between the mother ship and the alien craft. The opening sequence in which the crew spring to life fully formed within an utterly cleansed, sanitized environment is clearly opposed to the

visceral birth of the face-hugger within the organic body of the alien craft. While Creed recognizes the differences between the two birth scenes, she is concerned to present them as fundamentally similar in that both are said to construct different images of the archaic mother.¹⁹ My analysis builds on the contrast in order to position the mother ship as a traditional Symbolic space in which codes of cleanliness and decency are already operative, in opposition to the alien craft which constitutes the abjected maternal body. I would therefore argue that the female voice-over of the computer on the mother ship cannot be constructed as a maternal voice. She simply mouths the commands that comply with the aims and objectives of the Company.²⁰

Within *Alien* the initial presentation of cleanliness and sterility creates and sustains that which is to be designated abject. The threat posed by the alien is explicitly presented as one of contamination. Ripley refuses to allow Kane to be brought back on board, arguing that the crew must observe quarantine procedures. She is outmanoeuvred by Ash, whose apparent disregard for protocol positions him as a threat to the secure space. The scene in which the chest-buster is born enacts the complete destruction of this space. The establishing shot of the scene shows the crew gathered around a white table having dinner. All the food containers are made of clear plastic and the crockery is white. The crew are clothed in a combination of pastel shades and white. The predominance of whiteness in the mise-en-scene suggests sterility and cleanliness. Once Kane begins to suffer from convulsions the crew clear the table, spilling some of the containers, and try to hold him down onto its surface. There follow several medium shots of Kane's face and torso, taken from a high angle at the edge of the table. The fourth shows blood spurting from his chest cavity, the fifth shows the fluid seeping through and staining his white T-shirt. The blood is presented against the surrounding surfaces, the dark stain contaminating their whiteness. The creature finally bursts through Kane's chest and there is a rapid cut to a medium shot of Parker, Ripley, Brett and Dallas stepping back, and then to a medium shot of Lambert against a white wall as she is splattered with blood. Later, there is a close-up of the creature emerging



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from Kane's body, its ridged pink flesh covered with blood. Its shape resembles intestinal tissue. The camera travels up as it pulls free of the body. Kane's arms twitch convulsively in death, his face a motionless mask of blood. The monster stands erect, gazing sightlessly from side to side, jaws snapping (Figure 4).

This second monstrous birth replays the horror of the first in so far as it, too, constitutes the inside become outside. The contour of containment which establishes the subject/character is violently eroded by an explosion from within. It is as if Kane's intestinal coils had taken on a life of their own. The later horror of the full-grown monster's attacks can also be compared with this drama. The monster emerges from the shadows, slicing and pulverizing the characters, reducing them to frescos of flesh. Parker is sliced in half, his legs dripping blood and his torso slumped forwards on the floor. In the film's final scene on the escape craft, Ripley's semi-clad body clearly forms a contrast to these presentations of mutilated flesh. Becoming aware of the monster's presence on board, she backs into a cupboard and proceeds to dress in an astronaut's suit. The film cuts from a low-angle shot of Ripley stepping into the suit to a close-up of the monster's doubled jaw, and then between medium close-ups of Ripley and close-ups of the jaw as it elongates to its full extent,

dripping mucus: these cuts juxtapose a body re-barriered through the pristine white suit with the viscous physicality of the monster. Ripley then proceeds to secure the space of the ship by forcibly ejecting the monster and pulverizing it within the heat of the engines. The twin processes of abjection – barricading the body and ejecting the monster – serve to secure the space.²¹

Alien offers a representation of the human as a sterile community forcibly confronted by a physicality it has rejected. The structures of horror in *Alien* conform to Kristeva's model of an inside that erupts and disrupts the body as container. The ending of the film secures the Symbolic space of the escape craft through the ejection and destruction of the monster. The space of the human is thus guaranteed through the abjection of the Other. In *Aliens*, however, the presentation of the opposition between human and monstrous is more complicated. While the dialectic ultimately conforms to a model in which the Other is rejected and subjugated, *Aliens* is complicated by the presentation of divisions within the human community. The film also sets up an interesting structure of mirroring by pitting Ripley and Newt against the alien queen. The final battles can therefore be read as confrontations between two parthenogenetic mother figures, a doubling that disrupts the structures of abjection.

Alien and *Aliens* offer very different representations of the human community, and this feeds into their distinctive presentations of Ripley's character. James Kavanagh argues that *Alien* can be read as 'almost post-feminist' because of its obliteration of the issue of sexual difference within the crew. 'There are strong and weak women and men on the ship, but the women's right to assume authority is not even an issue; authority and power are ceded to persons irrespective of sex, solely in regard to their position and function.'²² In *Alien*, Ripley is first and foremost a science officer, a fully integrated member of the crew of the *Nostramo*. She is fleetingly feminized when she undresses in the escape pod, a glimpse of sexual difference at odds with the impersonal egalitarian structure of the rest of the film. In *Aliens*, however, Ripley is an outsider, a civilian advisor on a military expedition. Her positioning outside the marine corps is clearly conveyed in the waking scene en route to the planet LB426. Ripley's

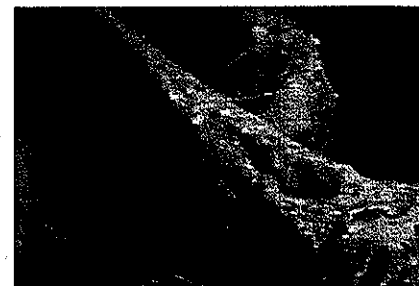
costume of grey vest top and pants contrasts with the regulation khaki underwear worn by the other waking figures. On seeing her, Vasquez asks 'Who's Snow White?' The question explicitly feminizes Ripley's outsider status in that a fairy-tale princess is clearly out of place on a military mission. This labelling also adds a humorous dimension to the opening scene, in which Ripley is discovered sleeping in an ice-encrusted glass capsule. In this case, however, the handsome prince turns out to be a salvage crew. Ripley's unusually long hyper-sleep also parallels another fairy-tale princess in distress, Sleeping Beauty.

Ripley's feminization is completed by the discovery of Newt on LB426. She is now positioned as surrogate mother to the civilian child. Constance Penley argues that Ripley's new-found maternal instinct means that *Aliens* presents a traditional construction of sexual difference which is a regressive move away from the egalitarianism of *Alien*.²³ I would argue that the presentation of Ripley and Newt diverges from patriarchal tradition in so far as both are transformed from outsider figures to key combatants in the battle against the aliens. This reconfiguring clearly changes Ripley's positioning as Snow White. Instead of waiting to be rescued – the fate of most fairy-tale princesses – Ripley rescues the marines. The reversal is also a joke, in that the figures of the surrogate mother and daughter act as a trope for the helpless women and children the military are supposed to protect. The inversion begins when Ripley challenges Gorman and commandeers a tank in order to rescue the marines from the alien craft, and is completed in the scene in which the craft that constitutes their link back to the ship crashes.

The rescue craft spirals out of control, scattering burning wreckage over a wide area. Hudson panics while Hicks searches among the wreckage. There is a long shot in which the two marines are positioned at frame left with Burke in the centre in the background. Ripley is positioned frame right in the midground, and Newt takes centre screen. The camera travels upwards and towards Newt as she climbs up onto a rock. Ripley moves alongside her, giving her a reassuring hug, and the pair stand together, equal in height, in centre frame, while the others continue moving at a lower level in the back-

ground. Hudson can be seen wandering aimlessly, lamenting their fate. The camera tracks forwards and finally closes in on a two-shot of the pair. The similarity of their facial structures presents an image of female-female mirroring. Newt calmly suggests they go back because the monsters usually come at night. Her voice and stillness contrast with Hudson's mounting panic. There is a cut to a long shot, taken from behind, in which they are positioned on the left of the frame, looking across a bleak, dark landscape towards a distant silver moon. This shot links the image of the surrogate mother and daughter with a horizon that symbolizes the future. Ripley and Newt will be crucial to the construction of future survival strategies.

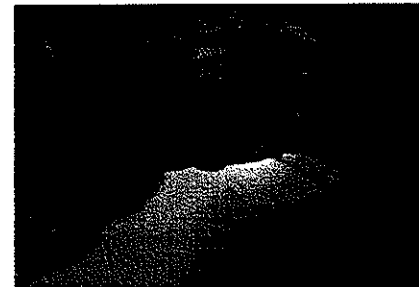
The presentation of Ripley and Newt as an image of generational continuity enables the pair to function as a trope for the entire human species. The conflict between human and monstrous presented in *Aliens* is a battle between two species types. The differences between the first and the second films of the series can be seen by comparing the scenes in which the face-hugger appears. I have argued that the face-hugger in *Alien* is presented as a foetus/placenta. It evokes horror because it is the image of a visceral inside. In *Aliens*, the face-hugger appears after Newt has been captured and cocooned. There are several medium close-ups of her face surrounded by thick white opaque strands. These appear slightly foamy at the bottom as if in the process of congealing. Newt is trapped in a viscous spider's web (Figure 5). Once the pod opens, there is a medium shot of its palpitating contents which consist of white, foaming strands. There are two shots of the face-hugger as it emerges, its elongated legs feeling their way over the edge of the pod. The creature's skin is stretched taut, each limb displaying two bony joints. Its six-legged structure and wavering movements clearly resemble a spider (Figure 6). The conflict between human and monstrous is that of humanity versus insects. Importantly, this changes the structures of horror. If the threat of *Alien* is that of a visceral *inside*, the threat of *Aliens* is that of a viscous materiality that must be designated *outside*. The congealing web functions like Kristeva's skin on the top of the milk, its palpable viscosity designating it abject.



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In *Aliens*, differentiation between species types takes the form of an opposition between cerebral replication and physical reproduction. This contrast is built up in the scene in which Ripley and Newt find the queen. Newt is balanced on Ripley's hip at first, and there follow cuts between medium close-ups of their two faces and shots of the queen. Their faces mirror each other, acting as a symbol of continuity but, importantly, a continuity achieved through shared experiences of being sole survivors rather than by physical reproduction. The first shot of the queen shows the end of her abdominal sac as she lays a pod. The translucent sac rises up, leaving the pod in place and covering it with a thick veil of mucus. The second image is a subjective shot which travels along the swollen abdominal sac. The dense, rounded shapes of the pods are clearly visible inside it, and the sac moves rhythmically as if pushing them along (Figure 7). The piecemeal presentation of the queen conveys a sense of her size. The cuts between Ripley's and Newt's faces and the queen's body also serve to contrast their cerebral mirroring with her mute physicality. The opposition face/body feeds into a traditional dialectical model, sustaining other oppositions such as mind/matter, individuation/undifferentiated physicality. As a representative of matter/maternality, the queen is clearly designated Other.

However, the presentation of the queen as materiality also intersects with her construction as a species type in that she is first presented as a queen bee. Her vast swollen belly renders her immobile while the drones wait at the threshold of her moist, blue inner chamber. The insect references are multiplied in the first shot of the queen's face and body. The camera is positioned behind Ripley and Newt as they gaze up at her. The queen's long mask-like face is presented centre screen, and three sets of what appear to be long black legs run from the edge of her face to the edge of the frame. This composition places her face as the centre of her black web-like body. The later close-ups of the queen's double-toothed jaw repeat the same web-like pattern of composition. She conjoins both the bee and the spider. It is this construction of the queen as another form of life that disrupts some of the structures of abjection in *Aliens*. The queen can be mapped as simply inhuman, a bug that

lacks consciousness. However, she can also be mapped as parallel to the human, another form of life.

The battle between the two species types places them in an oppositional relation while drawing attention to the similarity between the two protagonists. Both are parthenogenetic mother figures who are tropes for the perpetuation of their respective species. The conflicts between them take the form of attempting to destroy each other's generative powers. Ripley torches the fields of pods with the flame thrower, rather than launching into a direct attack on the queen. Later, once the escape craft has returned to the main ship, the queen kills Bishop and goes after Newt. Ripley intervenes and manages to deflect her from her purpose. While the representation of motherhood as the instinctive desire to protect one's young does not break with tradition, the use of the mirroring mother figures in the final battle scenes does have a significant impact on the dialectical structures previously presented. Rather than upholding the oppositions between individuation/materiality, human/monstrous, the scenes imply that the desires and motives of both maternal figures are the same. Such a paralleling serves to undermine the Kristevan model of abjection in that it suggests that the Other might have its own desires and motives.

The end of *Aliens* can therefore be seen to offer two radically different constructions of the relation between the human and the monstrous. In so far as the confrontation ends with the queen being blasted into hyperspace by Ripley, the model of abjection is clearly dominant. However, the forcible rejection of the Other intersects with the presentation of resemblances between Ripley and the queen. This intersection means that the structures of horror are continually placed in jeopardy. For Kristeva, the abject is never securely banished. Its return is marked by a 'massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that'.²⁴ If the structure of abjection is utter repudiation, the not me, it follows that the structure of the uncanny is both that which is familiar and that which the subject recognizes to be the same. The ending of *Aliens* can therefore be seen

to play across both of these structures: setting up the queen as the visceral 'outside' to be rejected while also presenting her as a parthenogenetic mother whose motivations mirror Ripley's, swinging between the horror of the abject and the eeriness of the uncanny.

In punctuating the differential structures of abjection with patterns of mirroring, *Aliens* pushes the Kristevan model to its limits. The possibilities of drawing patterns of resemblance between Ripley and the queen are taken up in the rest of the series. In *Alien3*, Ripley is positioned as the feminine outside, the sole woman in an all-male penal colony. She is identified with the monstrous because she brings it into the colony and because she is carrying a future queen inside her. This film remains within traditional dialectics, repositioning Ripley as the abject. In contrast, *Alien Resurrection* abandons an oppositional construction of identity. The presentation of Ripley as the monster's mother does not simply conflate her with the queen, but presents the characters in relation to each other.

The opening of *Alien Resurrection* is set in a laboratory and reworks the mother-daughter relation of *Aliens*. As the camera moves forward, so the frame closes in to provide a medium close-up of the face of a female child. Ripley's voice-over can be heard repeating the words Newt said to her in another medical laboratory in *Aliens*: 'My mommie always said there were no monsters. No real ones. But there are.' The camera moves into a tighter close-up of the child's face, stopping at the word 'ones'. The face morphs into Ripley's and her voice-over then completes the line. The repetition of Newt's words conjoins the surrogate daughter and mother for an instant. However, as the camera pulls back, revealing a ring of scientists staring at Ripley's body, the connotations of the comment change. The 'monsters' may well be human scientists. The final twist is added by Dr Wren's later comments on Ripley's memories. Ripley can remember her past because the DNA from the alien queen has bequeathed her a capacity for instinctual memories. Newt's line is both a reminder of a particular relationship and a species memory. The figures of Newt, Ripley and the alien queen intersect in the morphing figure in the tube.

Ripley's identity is thus set up as an intersection point. She is altered by giving birth to the queen just as the queen will later display the nature of Ripley's bequest to her. Within a traditional psychoanalytic model, these points of intersection would constitute a breakdown of the oppositional structures of identity. On this model, Ripley's new-found memories would indicate a collapse of the division between human and monstrous, conflating Ripley with the alien queen. However, the beginning of *Alien Resurrection* is complicated in that the alien's capacity for instinctual memory also provides Ripley with a means of remembering Newt. The alien DNA is therefore reconfigured within Ripley to provide access to a specific relationship as well as to activate a species memory. The capacity for instinctual memory does not dissolve Ripley into the alien queen, but sets up a point of intersection between two distinct characters. Theorizing the possibility of productive points of intersection between self and Other, human and monstrous, requires an entirely different model of subject formation. The morphing figure in the tube stands for the possibility of change through productive encounters with otherness.

The opening of *Alien Resurrection* breaks away from Kristeva's model of abjection, offering a more Irigarayan account of subject formation. In *The Phenomenal Woman*, Christine Battersby defines Irigaray's project as an attempt to think through 'the formation of a self which can be permeated by otherness, and in which the boundary between the inside and the outside, between self and not-self, has to operate not antagonistically ... but in terms of patterns of flow'.²⁵ This conception of a subjectivity formed through permeable boundaries clearly contrasts with Kristeva's conception of a subject permanently fighting to maintain its borders. Moreover, the valorization of patterns of flow sets up a very different conception of the body. For Kristeva, the concept of the body as container relies upon the abjection of the viscous physicality of both inside and outside. In Irigaray's model, the body itself becomes a permeable structure, a volume without contours, whose physical fluidity sustains and supports the possibilities of intimate embraces with others.

Importantly, Irigaray's model of the subject as flow arises from a

re/conceptualization of the space of the Other. She argues for a model of identity based on mother–daughter relations. The model of the permeable body arises from a re/imagining of the female body.²⁶ Battersby takes up Irigaray's project of theorizing from the position of the object to argue for a different model of the female subject. She argues that the female subject position exhibits five distinct features: capacity to give birth, being positioned within unequal power relations, lack of a sharp division between self and other, an identity that emerges through embodiment, and an identity linked to the monstrous.²⁷ In taking the capacity to give birth as a defining feature of a subject position, Battersby clearly challenges psychoanalytic models in which the mother functions only as an object to be rejected/abjected. (The focus on birth is not empirical, is not an attempt to argue that all women should have children.²⁸) Importantly, the use of birth as a paradigm for re-thinking identity formation creates a model in which two selves can be mapped as interrelated and yet distinct:

For the (normalised) 'female' there is no sharp division between 'self' and 'other'. Instead, the 'other' emerges out of the embodied self, but in ways that mean that two selves emerge and one self does not simply dissolve into the other.²⁹

It is this possibility of two emergent selves, interrelated yet different, that I want to put into play in considering Ripley's relation to the queen in *Alien Resurrection*. The crossover of characteristics arises because Ripley has given birth to the queen. Their intimate relationality clearly corresponds to Battersby's model of an identity that 'allows the potentiality for otherness to exist within it, as well as alongside it'.³⁰ The abiding interpenetration of otherness can be seen in Ripley's characterization: she has gained particular motor skills from the queen. She has a significantly increased strength and her senses of hearing and smell are particularly acute. The scene in which Call breaks into her cell displays Ripley's other attributes. As she pushes her assailant's knife into her hand steam rises from the metal, indicating that it is being corroded by her acidic blood. Call asks her who she is. There is a cut to a medium long-shot

of the pair kneeling opposite each other. Ripley is still holding her hand onto the steaming knife as she reels off her previous identity: 'Ripley, Ellen, Lieutenant first class, number 36706.' The positioning of the knife at centre frame clearly suggests she is not who she has been. Call tells her that she is 'a thing' grown in a lab and that the alien has been taken out of her. There is a medium close-up of Ripley's face and shoulders as she replies 'I can feel it, behind my eyes. I can hear it moving.' She holds Call's hand by the wrist as she delivers the line, tracing the socket of her eye with Call's fingertips. The use of touch shows the great increase in her tactility. It is as if she can express knowledge of her alien aspects through touch rather than language.

The choreography of Sigourney Weaver's performance serves to sustain the presentation of Ripley as more animal than human. When Call finds her she is lying on the floor, apparently asleep, with her left knee bent. She moves into the kneeling position opposite Call in one fluid roll. Later in the scene there is an over-the-shoulder shot of Ripley in which the camera is level with Call's head. Ripley suddenly rises from her heels, kneeling upwards, and the camera tilts rapidly keeping her in frame. There is a cut to a high-angle shot taken from over Ripley's shoulder as she reaches to grasp Call's frightened face in her hands. The angles of the shots emphasize the latent power displayed by Ripley's sudden movement. However, the gesture itself appears to be one fluid motion resembling a cobra arching upwards to strike. The alien queen has altered the nature of Ripley's lived embodiment. Ripley's new identity as 'the monster's mother' is conveyed through her new-found physical attributes and her fluid bodily gestures. This is important because her new identity can therefore be seen to arise through her materiality: 'it erupts from the flesh'³¹ in a non-hylomorphic way. This reverses the Kristevan/Lacanian model in which materiality is that which has to be abjected, placed outside language, in order for the subject to be secured.

If the alien mother bequeaths Ripley a new physicality, the nature of Ripley's bequest to her is made obvious in the birth scene. Ripley is called to witness the birth. There is a series of five shots with fade-outs in which an alien carries



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her to the birthing place. The fourth shot is a medium close-up in which Ripley's head is positioned directly below her carrier's and she appears to be lying beneath him. This shot clearly suggests a sexual encounter, another metaphor for the crossing of human and alien potentialities that occurs across the film. On arrival at the birthing place, Gediman tells Ripley that the queen has developed a mammalian reproductive system. The long shot of the queen taken from over Ripley's shoulder shows the dense, swollen belly she has developed. Unlike the sac in *Aliens*, which was light and translucent, showing the movement of the eggs as the mother laid them, this belly is dark heaving flesh (Figure 8). The contrast shows the development of the queen as a species type. The insectual image of the queen bee appears to have given way to a human reproductive system. There is a cut to a close-up of the queen's jaw as she throws her head back and screams. The sound is guttural, indicating pain. It is a sharp contrast to the sinister hissing sound directed by her predecessor at Ripley in *Aliens*. Indeed, unlike that earlier confrontation, the queen is hardly aware of Ripley's presence. All her sounds and movements belong to the process of giving birth. A later high-angle shot shows the mother arching her

body as she throws her head backwards, imitating the rhythmical movements of human labour.

Ripley's bequest to the queen – the pain of labour – is a gift of a potentiality that has been mythologically encoded as distinctively human. In the story of Genesis, God curses Eve with the pain of childbirth as a punishment for having offered Adam the apple.³² However, the birth scene in *Alien Resurrection* is an intersection point for both human and alien aspects. The baby is born by splitting the belly in two. It emerges from the dense flesh covered in a translucent layer of mucus. The light, visceral covering is similar to the white covering from which Ripley was seen to emerge after the operation. The image is that of a chrysalis, which re/works the insectual references of *Aliens*. The point is also made by Gediman, who coos 'you beautiful, beautiful butterfly' at the newborn.

The newborn is mapped as monstrous through its first act, the killing of its birth mother. While the presentation of Ripley and the alien queen displays a complex series of intersecting potentialities, their offspring is less diverse. It is the point at which the deadly force of the alien combines with a human infantile sadism. The alien infant has a humanized appearance, possessing an upper torso and a skull-like face. It lacks the double jaw and distinctive clenched-toothed mouth of the alien. The infant's mouth is hinged like the jaw of a skull, providing a width of stretch which enables it to crush Gediman's head between its teeth. The later killing of DiStephano displays the doubled genealogy of the child's ferocity. Having cornered Call in the cargo deck of the freighter, the *Betty*, the infant turns to confront DiStephano. The camera moves into a close-up of the infant, and the strobe lighting effect blanches out its skin, turning its mouth into a dark gash and drawing attention to the baby blue colour of its deep sunken eyes. The strobe lighting, used throughout the attack, facilitates a kind of perverse joke. The baby blue eyes are a reminder of the traditional helplessness of the newborn human child. They contrast with the ferocity it displays and also serve to present its aggression as an alien trait. The attack ends with a medium shot of the infant looking down at the

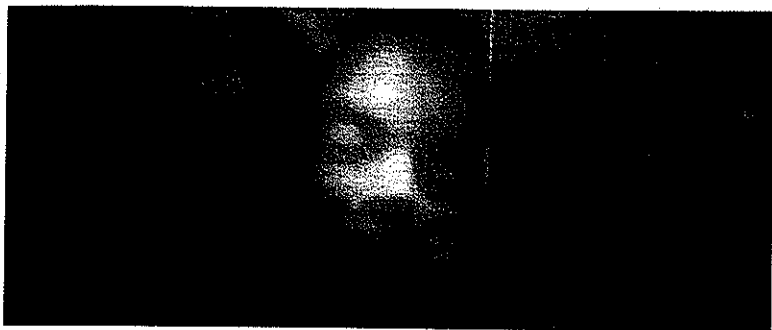
pieces of DiStephano's brain in its hand. As the camera travels forward so the child flattens out its palm and straightens its elongated fingers, allowing the bloody debris to fall to the ground. This shot suggests that the violence may also be read as an expression of curiosity, positioning the attack as a form of infantile sadism.

The way in which the monstrous child is dispatched by Ripley plays into the theme of intersecting identities that structures the film. Ripley enters the cargo deck and demands that the infant release Call. She then moves towards the child, and there is a cut to a close-up of the pair embracing in which the infant's face is positioned in profile in the upper left corner of the screen and Ripley is looking up into his face from the lower right corner. The infant's elongated fingers can be seen stroking her hair. Their shape acts as a visual reminder of the fourth clone which Ripley discovered earlier, and emphasizes the infant's genetic link to Ripley. There is a later close-up taken from the same side, but from a different angle, so that Ripley appears to be lying beneath the infant. The camera turns, repositioning them as standing once again. However, the initial angle is a reminder of a previous shot in which Ripley was being transported to the birth place and appeared to be having sex with her carrier. The motif of sexual intercourse compounds the intermingling of alien and human potentialities represented by both participants.

The intimate reunion of mother and child that prefaces the infant's death means that the traditional dispatch of the final monster cannot be regarded as a triumph. The infant's body is gradually destroyed as it is sucked out into hyperspace through a tiny hole in an inversion of human birth. There are three close-ups of Ripley's distraught face as she watches its death throes: in the second she utters the words 'I'm sorry'. The infant's sounds move up a register during its death. The guttural roars of its previous attacks and low moans of pleasure during Ripley's embrace give way to a higher, more human, register as it seems to be struggling to form words. The infant's intestines are sucked out first and its face, its most humanized feature, is left intact until the last moment when the skin is pulled from the skull and the facial bones them-

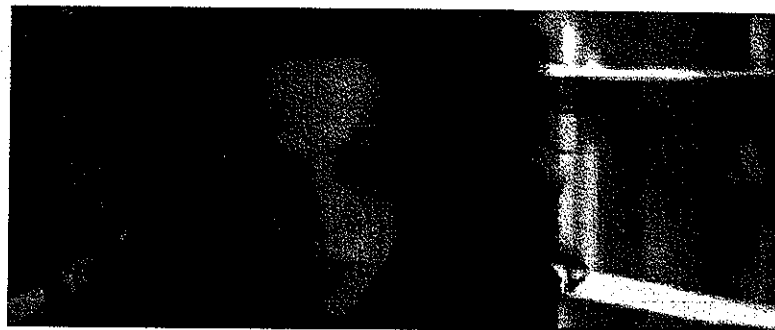
selves are finally pulverized. This painful piecemeal destruction clearly contrasts with the orgasmic expulsion of the final monsters in *Alien* and *Aliens*. In *Alien*, Ripley dispatches the threat, securing the Symbolic space of the craft. In *Aliens* the battle between Ripley and the queen is a fight for species survival in which the human is pitted against the insectual. By *Alien Resurrection* the oppositional relation between the human and the inhuman has been completely reconfigured to form a series of intersecting potentialities. The lack of an oppositional relation between self and Other, human and monstrous, means that the final confrontation between Ripley and the alien child is structured around similarity and therefore permeated by a sense of appalling loss.

Alien Resurrection may therefore be said to rework the structures of horror. If the ending of *Aliens* oscillates between the abject and the uncanny, the climax of *Alien Resurrection* completely reworks the uncanny. The final monster cannot be abjected in one swift movement because its appearance emphasizes its links to Ripley. Moreover, the blood relation between the child and its (grand)mother means that the destruction of the monster is an act of infanticide. Within the uncanny, the relations of familiarity and resemblance unsettle the subject because they act as a reminder of an 'opaque and forgotten life',³³ the pre-Oedipal union of the mother-child dyad. The uncanny can therefore be seen to constitute a reminder of maternity which unsettles the structures of opposition that create the subject. However, the finale of *Alien Resurrection* positions the mother as a subject and presents the killing of the child as painful because it constitutes a part of herself. The incestuous embrace that precedes the killing emphasizes this closeness, but does not constitute a disintegration of difference. The embrace shows the fondness that exists on both sides. The terrible inversion of birth that is played out at the end finishes the remarkable play of intersecting potentialities between Ripley and the queen that has structured the text. It is an appalling moment of loss because it seems to negate the trajectory set up by the constant crossings over, leaving Ripley as the sole reminder of the possibility of productive intersections.



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The structures of resemblance in play at the end of *Alien Resurrection* become most acute in the film's most eerie scene, in which Ripley discovers clones one to seven. This scene expands Battersby's model of two emergent identities into a series of emergent selves. The scene sets up mirrorings across the text and across the *Alien* series. The bodies of the clones are presented floating in green fluid, each in a separate tubular container. The first container is lit by a top light that shines down onto the crown of the head of the floating body. This clone consists of a human head and torso conjoined with an alien tail. The light on the green water gives the flesh a yellow, waxy look as if it had been preserved from decay. As Ripley approaches the second container, there is a cut to a subjective shot of the clone's face. Her long black hair forms a still cloud in the water as the camera moves around the tube showing her two mouths: one with human lips parted in a silent 'o' and the other with the alien's clenched razor-toothed jaw (Figure 9). This close-up is mirrored by a close-up of Ripley towards the end of the swimming scene. She is looking back towards the last human female crew member, who has been grabbed by one of the aliens. Ripley tilts her head from side to side as she gazes, her black hair forming a swirling cloud about her face (Figure 10). The green water



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blanches her skin tone, emphasizing the contrast between the darkness of her hair and the whiteness of her flesh. The lighting makes her less than human, as does her expression. She is gazing with curiosity rather than looking upset by the death of the crew member. This close-up of Ripley recalls the earlier shot of the clone, emphasizing their relationality.

The third container is shown through a travelling subjective shot which begins at the feet of the clone and moves up its body. The left arm of the third clone is crossed over the body and her hand is positioned on her right shoulder. The posture acts as a reminder of the initial presentation of the young Ripley. However, the clone only has one arm. There is a medium shot of Ripley taken through the contents of the fourth container. The clone's jawline, neck and arm are silhouetted on the left side of the screen. Her elongated hand and finger are positioned on the right side. Ripley's face is presented centre frame. She is side-lit and appears slightly blurry through the density of the green water. The convex tubing distorts her features as she moves off screen right. There is a cut to a medium close-up of the clone, whose clenched, alien jaw mirrors the previous distortion of Ripley's face.

The last clone extends the mirroring across the series as a whole. The

establishing shot shows her lying on a metal operating table, her legs splayed outwards and a green cloth covering her pudenda and right thigh. The posture suggests that she has given birth. The camera travels towards her, ending with a medium shot of her upper body drawing attention to the suture in her thorax, showing that she has 'given birth' to the queen. There is a cut to a medium close-up of Ripley followed by a repetition of the medium shot of the clone, who struggles to form the phrase 'Kill me'. The clone stammers on the second word when repeating her request: 'Kill m'me'. The intonation pattern recalls the request of the female colonist found by the commandos in *Aliens*: she begs 'Please k'kill me', stammering on the second word. In *Aliens* the colonist is a mirror image of Ripley's nightmare self: both have been impregnated by the alien. By watching the colonist on the monitor, Ripley is looking at the double of her unconscious self, or the fate she might have had. In *Alien Resurrection* the previous doubles of the colonist and the dream self intersect in the figure of the clone. Ripley obeys the request and torches the operating table.

The clone scene presents the most forceful construction of resemblance between selves. Yet the clones are not simply to be conflated with Ripley: they constitute differential selves in so far as their bodies literally instantiate the possibilities of different kinds of intersections between Ripley and the queen. The collection of bodies constitutes a series of potentialities. If the colonist constitutes the literal manifestation of the fate Ripley feared at the beginning of *Aliens*, so the final clone forcibly materializes the fate of a 'meat by-product' (the term Colonel Perez uses to describe Ripley). The clone's body has clearly been subjected to surgical practices. The positioning of the green cloth reveals patterns of stapling down her abdomen and the incision in her thorax still gapes. She has been left without being stitched up – presumably to die, since the order, earlier in the film, to stitch up Ripley was a decision to allow her to live. Ripley's relation to the clone is the relation to that which she might have been, a relation of potentiality, the fate she did not have. The act of euthanasia enables the clone to escape the cycle of

being experimented upon. The destruction of all the clones marks an end to their helpless powerlessness.

The structure of intersecting identities that occurs across *Alien Resurrection* has a doubled temporal aspect. The clones and the infant represent both what Ripley might have been and what she might become. This relation of potentiality expands Ripley's responsibilities. She cannot allow the clones to be used in future medical experiments, just as she cannot allow the sadistic infant to go on killing indiscriminately. While the use of the double in *Aliens* has the same futural aspect – the fate that Ripley might still have – the colonist also represents an unconscious fear that Ripley ceases to have. By the end both she and Newt cease suffering from nightmares. They have successfully dispatched the threat of the Other. This is important because the structures of identity in *Alien Resurrection* are different. Ripley is created through her relationality to the queen, the clones and the infant. Their deaths position her as the final intersection point. Yet as an intersection point she is also permeated by their ghosts, which remain in the present acting as potentialities. The sense of their continued presence is provided by Ripley's later mirroring of the second clone in the swimming scene. The open-endedness of *Alien Resurrection* is the result of an absence of the psychoanalytic frame. Identity is more than recollection and replaying of basic structures: it becomes a series of intersections which have a futural aspect. Ripley may yet become the alien queen, laying her pods in some capital city on Earth; she may be used in further experiments to create dangerous weapons; she may become a psychotic killer: all of these possibilities remain – until the arrival of *Alien 5*.

NOTES

1. Barbara Creed, 'Alien and the Monstrous-Feminine', in Annette Kuhn, ed., *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, London: Verso, 1990; Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. L.S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
2. Creed, 'Alien and the Monstrous-Feminine', p. 129.

3. Ibid. Creed refers to a single vaginal entrance, although two entrances can be seen.
4. Ibid., p. 130.
5. Ibid., p. 131.
6. Ibid., pp. 131, 133.
7. Ibid., p. 136.
8. Ibid., pp. 135, 136, 140.
9. James H. Kavanagh, 'Feminism, Humanism and Science in *Alien*', in Kuhn, ed., *Alien Zone*, p. 76. Kavanagh reads the body of the craft as combining elements of both womb and tomb.
10. Creed, 'Alien and the Monstrous-Feminine', pp. 137, 138.
11. Ibid., p. 137.
12. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 13.
13. Ibid., p. 7.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 3.
16. Ibid., p. 53.
17. Ibid., p. 54.
18. Ibid., p. 5.
19. Creed, 'Alien and the Monstrous-Feminine', pp. 129-31.
20. Kavanagh, 'Feminism, Humanism and Science in *Alien*', p. 77.
21. See Vivian Sobchack, 'The Virginity of Astronauts: Sex and the Science Fiction Film', in Kuhn, ed., *Alien Zone*, p. 107. Sobchack reads the revelation of Ripley's body as significant, arguing that it strips the character of her 'narrative competence' and reconstructs her as a sex object. I argue that it is Ripley's act of dressing again that is crucial to this scene.
22. Kavanagh, 'Feminism, Humanism and Science in *Alien*', p. 77.
23. Constance Penley, 'Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia', in Kuhn, ed., *Alien Zone*, p. 125.
24. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 2.
25. Christine Battersby, *The Phenomenal Woman: Feminist Metaphysics and the Patterns of Identity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, p. 49.
26. Irigaray's project can therefore be compared with Creed's attempt to generate new images of the feminine that are not simply the inverse of the phallic standard.
27. Battersby, *The Phenomenal Woman*, pp. 38, 39.
28. Ibid., p. 4.
29. Ibid., p. 8.
30. Ibid., p. 57.
31. Ibid., p. 39.
32. Genesis, iii, 14-19.
33. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 2.

PSYCHO-CYBERNETICS IN FILMS OF THE 1990S

CLAUDIA SPRINGER

'I want to get out of this rat hole! I want to get online! I need a computer!' declares Johnny (Keanu Reeves) in the 1995 film *Johnny Mnemonic*. His desire to flee the inhospitable world and take refuge in cyberspace is not unusual in science-fiction films of the mid 1990s. The dark, decrepit, garbage-strewn, plague-infested wasteland in *Johnny Mnemonic* is typical of these films' dystopian vision of humanity on the brink of destruction. Fear that human beings have lost control figures prominently in the millennial anxiety that pervades contemporary science-fiction films. A combination of environmental destruction, late-capitalist corruption, drug-resistant diseases, and increasingly sophisticated electronic technology (not to mention alien invaders) threatens human existence in 1990s science fiction.

Human beings in science-fiction films have already lost their uniqueness to robots, androids, and cyborgs. Replicants – genetically engineered androids – were touted as 'more human than human' by their corporate creators in the 1982 film *Blade Runner*, and the film's contrast between dejected humans resigned to a dreary existence dictated by corporate greed and the replicants' passionate intensity proves the motto depressingly true. During the 1980s and early 1990s, steely hard muscular cyborgs were a science-fiction film mainstay,