

How did alfred hitchcock change the horror genre essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho" (released in the mid-1960) altered the way in which people view Horror films - 'expecting the unexpected'. As it is now possible to distinguish the difference between the present and the past of the Horror genre, it has without a doubt gradually evolved into something gorier, disturbing, and less conventional as the audiences fear levels have decreased overtime. Hitchcock started this evolution by redefining the Horror genre; giving birth to the psychological Horror sub-genre from the idea of a monster coming from within the human.

A modern audience would not have the same reaction as a 1960's audience would towards Psycho as the Horror genre had evolved, changing the way we think, act, and feel towards a Horror film. In the inception of Psycho, we peak into the life of the protagonist - Marion Crane. The opening reveals Marion and her partner Sam, with only finance standing in the way of their relationship. Later, Marion runs away after stealing \$40, 000 (? 25, 603. 93) hoping it would enable her to marry Sam.

After a dramatic escape in her vehicle, she stops at a remote motel for the night were surprisingly all the rooms are vacant... Marion is violently murdered as she is stabbed repeatedly in various parts of her body in the famous 'shower scene'. The protagonist of Psycho switches and we now follow Norman Bates; the owner of the motel who lives with his abnormal mother. Anthony Perkin's suspicious portrayal of Mr Bates makes the audience think deeply, and question "is he is the murderer or could it be her mother? "...

Hitchcock's lack of convention struck fear into his audience by not being particularly gruesome or gory, unlike many slasher Horrors which were to follow. Hitchcock did this through advice and the help of his music composer Bernard Hermann. The tragic murder we witness in the famous shower scene is not as graphic as the audience first thinks! The non-diegetic sound created by Hermann's variety of strings makes us feel just as terrified and uncomfortable as watching a graphic scene. Hitchcock has managed to achieve this by replacing graphic content with quick close ups of Marion's limbs and a large imposing overtone.

Without the non-diegetic sound contributing to this, the ionic scene loses all of its effective impact on its audience. This technique of using non-diegetic sound to cover up the explicit action has been adopted in many modern films: notably Stephen Spielberg's shark in "Jaws" In addition to this masterpiece, the knife attack in the famous shower scene became a phenomenon, not only from the effective non-diegetic sound used, but also the quantity of camera shots taken which was a record breaking 90, not to mention from 90 different camera angles!

This panicked the audience in the 1960's, placing them in positions that they did not desire, making them feel uncomfortable. The quantity of camera shots and the way it was presented created a jigsaw puzzle of death which made it a classic masterpiece and a complete surprise to the 1960's audience as they had never digested anything like this before. This made Psycho unconventional from then on.

The technique used in Psycho such as the non-diegetic sound and the variety of well-presented shots are still effective in today's time period, and always will be, as these technique trigger a nerve in very human being, making us feel scared, vulnerable, and wanting to hide behind a couch! As previously stated, the idea of a 'monster' coming from within the human redefined the Horror genre and gave birth to the psychological Horror sub-genre. Hitchcock altered the history of Horror after proving that Horror is not always about having a science-fiction or supernatural element: "Them", "The Blob", and "Godzilla".

Many films have adopted the techniques founded and used by Hitchcock; killing the protagonist before the end of the film, non-diegetic sound, and also the variety of camera shots in one scene. Modern Horror has used non-diegetic sound, editing sequences, and a variety of shots that reflect the essence of Psycho. For instance, many Horror films have had a curtain ripped back to reveal a knife bearing murderer. Overall, Psycho has influenced many Horror films and continues to do so, which is why it is, undoubtedly, 'The Mother of Modern Horror'.