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The American Monster

One of the most significant historical events was the European colonization of North America, where Europeans invaded North America for the expansion of land that they claim. In doing so, millions of indigenous people lost their homes, resources, and lifestyle to the Europeans, causing alienation from the country that was once their own. Adding to the social injustice at an international scale, the Atlantic Slave Trade forcefully migrated a mass amount of African people to North America to be enslaved in order to build the foundation of the country we know today as the United States of America. What was now known as Americans proceeded to build the country on capitalist values creating a society geared towards the success of the white Americans. Throughout the years, America has shown a history of racism, prejudice, narcissism, and disregard for human rights while upholding a mindset that white people were superior to all. American superiority correlates to the purpose of an antagonist, presenting the malicious nature of capitalism as what it takes to be a proud American. An antagonist is a character who openly does whatever they can to get what they want, with little to no morality. Rutgers-Newark philosophy professor Greg Salyer has taught that a monster's presence is what represents a situation where a boundary has been crossed. While the initial perception of the United States promotes freedom and equal opportunity for all, years of intentional harm to minority communities within its borders says otherwise. The United States benefits from the

abuse and oppression of black communities, creating that desire that drives them to cross boundaries. With the mission of being the most powerful country in the world, many boundaries are crossed in terms of how the United States operates and interacts with other social groups and ethnicities. This behavior concerns different aspects of society, including the colonization of North America, the nation's foreign policy, and the civil rights movement. From the outside looking in, the United States is perceived as the place for paradise with the possibility of living the American dream, although its structure that incorporates immoral behavior can change the country's perception from heroic to corrupt. The antagonist in a film, often a monstrosity of some sort, often arrives when a boundary has been crossed such as Science Fiction films like *Hulk* or *Venom* which use these monsters to symbolize the boundary that has been crossed by humans to enforce the punishment that humans deserve in the cinematic way of storytelling. These films allow people to understand that the injustice committed upon other people results in crossing the boundary of morality. Seeking power regardless of the turmoil has been a trend in American history, which brings up the question, can Americans be seen as monsters? Historical events such as the U.S. Military's actions in Vietnam and the riots of 1967 (Discussed in David Farber's "The Age of Great Dreams") bring light to the malicious upbringing of racism in America in correlation to the capitalist mentality of the country's colonizers. Film culture allows an audience to realize how capitalism creates horrifying outcomes and consistent issues in society.

While American capitalism has many direct effects on the communities all over the country, it isn't always straightforward on how this mentality can snowball into other detrimental ways of thinking that emerge within minority communities. Many situations, such as the insertion of narcotics into the black community on top of the war on drugs in 1971 have shown

that America has been geared towards the oppression and destruction of the black community. Drug addiction is a serious conflict that consumes people's money, time, health, and lives. It spreads like a virus that depends on emotional needs, physical pleasure, and mental weakness. While drugs are mostly used by the oppressed who are prosecuted for it, the origin of these substances came from no other than the medical systems allowing the misuse to grow into a drug epidemic. Acknowledging the opportunity as a method of lowering the population of free black Americans, the justice system acknowledges the opportunity of drug misuse as a way to incriminate and arrest black people and other minorities. According to Doris Marie Provine in her novel *Unequal under Law: Race in the war on drugs*, the actions are taken within the war on drugs were made clear to be geared towards the black community as she states, "Racial minorities have always been the target of the harshest drug laws. Those who actively promoted these laws, the moral entrepreneurs of drug legislation, have relied on racial slurs and allusions to bolster their arguments for criminal controls. The history of the debate over illicit drugs thus provides relevant context and plausible explanation for the current legislative assault on crack cocaine." (Provine 3) Exposing mental health weaknesses and addiction as reasons for racial minorities to be cast away in jail instead of fixing the issue that was started by the drug leak was one of the most well-known actions taken by officials of the United States that led to a boundary being crossed. White Americans who controlled the justice system added fuel to the fire as they began over-monitoring the black community in attempts to control the drug epidemic that was originally produced by medical institutions, not the minorities themselves. This course of events had one of the biggest impacts on the black community, not only causing addiction and poverty to spread but creating negative roles in society known as drug dealers. The drug dealer's presence highlights that monsters come from the unjust actions of crossing boundaries. Inserting drugs

into black communities and then incriminating hundreds of people brought about situations explained in the movie “New Jack City” in 1991.

While it may not be so obvious that American capitalism plays a huge role in the plot, the fight for oppression creates a very hostile battleground in the black community who normally depend on government support, while higher-ups continue to maintain a system that keeps the top percent wealthy and the poor losing money. This has resulted in many individuals developing the mentality of not relying on nine to five jobs and governmental help for financial stability. When poverty and social injustice in the workforce consume a person’s life, it influences the mentality of being between a wall and a hard place. On one side you have the normal nine to five jobs where you have a possibility of being laid off or fired as the result of budget cuts and/or being discriminated against. While some people choose to take the common route of working and nine to five jobs or creating their own business to crawl out of the lower class, many submit to the outlook of difficulty that is so often subject to your average black person born in the ghetto. The type of submission that creates the monster is not the person who continues to work these minimum wage jobs to barely make ends meet, but the people who choose to create their income from flaws in the American lifestyles, the drug market. This is where the monster shows its face as the movie *New Jack City*, directed by Mario Van Peebles, tells the story of the war on drugs in 1986 Harlem where a drug kingpin named Nino profits off the drug addiction of the black community to maintain his riches and superiority. The main point to focus on in this film is that Nino is the main antagonist that represents a capitalist mentality, even though he is the issue that the police forces have to deal with. When looking at the situation from a broader perspective, Nino is a monster-like representation of the entire drug market that shows how it

feeds on the already oppressed communities. According to studies discussed by Allison Ritter in the *International Journal of Drug Policy* “Fourteen (93%) studies reported an adverse impact of drug law enforcement on levels of violence. Ten of the 11 (91%) studies employing longitudinal qualitative analyses found a significant association between drug law enforcement and drug market violence. Our findings suggest that increasing drug law enforcement is unlikely to reduce drug market violence. Instead, the existing evidence base suggests that gun violence and high homicide rates may be an inevitable consequence of drug prohibition and that disrupting drug markets can paradoxically increase violence.” (Ritter 1) Kingpins and drug dealers similar to Nino show that boundaries crossed during the drug epidemic create monsters that now have violent effects on the country as a whole. Ironically, these years were marked as the war on drugs as the initial mistakes of the drug leak isn’t what caused the violence and addiction. Drugs being inserted into the black community for routine distribution resulted in nothing but addiction, unproductivity, black-on-black crimes, and a higher rate of arrests associated with the actions of individuals similar to Nino, who is the monster that represents the culmination of drug culture.

While many people resort to the violent world of drugs and crime as their way to escape American capitalism, others rely on the workforce where being under-appreciated and mistreated can result in a list of monsters to arise in society. The enraged emotion that develops in the black communities results in events such as the catastrophic riots of 1967, which have been molded into a monster in the film world. The emotion created from the chronic trauma of slavery and racism in combination with recent social injustices in the workforce influences people of the black community to believe that their word will only be respected when the harmful course of actions are taken. The anger growing into angry mobs of protestors motivated the concept of

Killmonger in *Black Panther*, directed by Ryan Coogler. In the Marvel Universe film dedicated this technologically the struggle of the black community in America, Killmonger's sole purpose is initiated by the struggle of his fellow black people not only in America. Growing up without a father and victim to the many social injustices that black people suffer around the country, Killmonger seeks to steal the technological advanced weapons of Wakanda and distribute them to his operators to give black people the power to fight the oppressors. Killmonger is perceived as the monster of this film simply because he intends to do whatever it takes to push his people out of oppression, even if that means the destruction of every other social group that gets in the way of his mission. American sociologist and Head of the Department of Sociology at University of Arizona Professor Bergesen speaks upon actions that encourage behavior that initiated the riots of 1967 by saying "Official violence has been isolated as an important underlying and precipitating cause for the riots, but the specific actions of law enforcement officials toward black civilians during an ongoing riot are less well-known, although there were suspicions by both critics of the police and official commission reports that police behavior was far from what it should have been." (Bergesen 261) The actions by officials in 1967 bring a correlation between Killmonger and the rioters because of Killmonger's revelation that he believes brute force and power is the only way to avenge his fallen people and bring the black community out of oppression. When a person simply wants to live in freedom and fair treatment wherever they are but is met with disrespect, neglect, and racism, the result is anger. The brute force of American capitalist culture that intends to physically keep the black community oppressed crosses the moral boundary of fair treatment of all. Oppression and mistreatment plagued the life of Killmonger, turning him into the monster that put his power on display to acknowledgment gain the upper hand on his oppressor, similar to another monster in the Marvel Universe, Electro.

Putting your all into your life's work and becoming a victim of neglect and the absence of credit can create a plethora of negative emotions. On top of that, seeing another person or company claim the credit that rightfully should go to the person who put in the hours sets the playing field for a hostile backlash in one way or another. Electro in the film *The Amazing Spider-man 2*, directed by Marc Webb, was formerly electrical engineer Max Dillion who simply wanted to be recognized and appreciated for his extensive work at Oscorp. Instead, Max was continuously neglected and mistreated by the very people who depended on him for their whole company to run smoothly, providing him with an insufficient amount of reward while the company continued to thrive. Regardless of his role in the corporation and the city, the higher-ups of Oscorp treated him as if his work meant nothing, yet always wanted him to get back to work when he came to them for acknowledgment and promotion. When disrespectfully being sent to fix a dangerous power outage on his birthday, he suffered a supernatural accident by falling into a pit of genetically engineered electric eels. This turned him into the raging supervillain with power over everything electrical. The narrative of Electro's situation is a symbolic representation of historical truths such as the three black women who had a huge impact on the development and success of NASA in 1961. These three women went by the names Catherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson. These women were responsible for solving critical mathematical calculations allowing the first crewed spaceflights to be a success. The intellectual battlefield was shown through an occupational competition that was held within the Nasa corporation; Bradford states, "Astronomers such as Clairautm who worked with mathematics and employed human computers were often criticized by others in the field. Although Halley's comet reached its perihelion only two days before the range Clairat predicted, critics focused on the

single date and complained about how badly he and his workers had miscalculated the date.” (Bradford, Edwards, Harris 19). While the accomplishments of Halley furthered the progress of NASA’s studies, the progress of the status of Black Americans wasn’t pleasant news and did not alter the mistreatment of Halley and the other black women. The Amazing Spider-man 2 movie uses Electro as an example of the monsters that arise from the mistreatment of minorities with the motive of keeping top-tier corporations in America up and running which pushes them to cross the boundary that professor Sayler speaks about in his lectures on God and Monsters. While white Americans hold their pride and continue to seek power, control, and status over the country and its advances, trying to hinder the acknowledgment and fair treatment of the people contributing to these advances forms into a monster whose sole purpose is to be recognized for the work that he or she has applied.

This is a situation where the pure intellect and correct mental procedure was the deciding factor between Halley’s prediction and Claire’s prediction, explicitly showing that a person of color performed better than a white person, which in the eyes of American capitalism, was an issue. When trying to create perfection from mental capacity, Americans called this type of person a computer (19). When the failure of human beings that make mistakes in logical decisions happen, striving towards the future has motivated society to look towards technological resources that operate with consistent perfection. With the agenda to exceed human abilities in every possible aspect, white Americans have begun advancing their technology to get the results they need. When referring to the results from Catherine Johnson’s work and the use of IBM technology to push advances in results with NASA’s space programs, its clear to see why technology seemed promising as the new answer to many questions as political economist Harry

Braverman states “the capitalist mode of production is continually extended to new areas of work, including those freshly created by to acknowledgment technological advances and the shift of capital to new industries. It is, in addition, continually being redefined and perfected, so that its pressure upon the workers is unceasing” (Braveman 96). The advancing technology of artificial intelligence has entered society at a growing rate ever since points in history where computer techniques have made results more attainable in addition to being less time consuming, which makes for an advantage for the owners and upper class of society who profit off the increased proficiency and the need of workers to remain relevant. Regardless of America's intentions of getting the best possible outcomes and right answers, misuse of advanced technology and artificial intelligence has shown to have negative results with catastrophic outcomes in multiple films because of the continuous intentions to outdo humans. This is where the boundary is crossed as the constant motive to be more efficient than human workers promotes a society where humans no longer have control over the technology that engineers operate on their own for specific tasks. Films such as *I, Robot* tells the story of a future where robots who operate off of artificial intelligence instead of being directly controlled by humans emphasize the boundary crossed as they end up turning on the human race. American Capitalism is shown to value its progress and control, rather than the well-being of the society in which it profits off.

One terminology to point out within NASA's organization is that mathematicians are called “computers” which emphasizes the importance of their precise calculations. Calling a person something that isn't human pinpoints the fact that they should always be right. Always having the right answer pushes the idea of always having the upper hand against any

circumstances and competitors. Taking this ideology to extreme levels causes crossing boundaries as American's nature to focus on being fully in control of every possible answer and correct action is highlighted in the movie *I, Robot*, directed by Alex Proyas. In attempts to have more control and efficiency within production and overall way of living, artificial intelligence was developed by the U.S. Robotics who sought to make life easier by adding the help of humanoid robots that acted on the three laws of robotics. These laws were inserted into the robot's interface that forces them to follow the laws, which are as follows. "A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm. A robot must obey orders given by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law. A robot must protect its existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law" (Asimov 477). Isaac Asimov, an American writer and professor of biochemistry at Boston University, based these laws on "robots" being able to obey and interact with human beings without revolution to give Americans the power needed to be in control and obtain the power they needed as they have the tools to do so. The robots in *I, Robot* seemed to be the most efficient pieces of technology, allowing the public to live carefree lives and increase productivity to a maximum, even providing security in every necessary situation. On top of these benefits, the technological advances also served as a method of control, which Robert Heilbroner points out by stating "the generation of electricity and the design of the computer were never merely advances in the control over nature, but elements in an aspect of the enveloping social formation that had no counterpart in any precapitalist order" (Heilbroner 1323) Advances in technology created a great divide between those who were not only in possession of it but had control over its production and distribution. Centering the growth and outreach of the robots allowed for U.S. Robotics to create the control in which NASA in the 1960s craved by incorporating the use of

IBM technology. The boundary is crossed when this desire for control is taken to the next level with the existence of robots with artificial intelligence, which can then make decisions and act on their own accord. The existence of artificial intelligence which is meant to know all and always have the right answer leaves room for separation between what humans know and what the robots know. This boundary is highlighted during the climax of the film when the robots begin to turn on the human race because of the knowledge that they now have. The ongoing calculations of what's right and wrong result in the robots looking at the humans as the problem. This outcome renders the robot technology the monster that capitalism produces within this film. Using technology with the intentions of control and power leads to crossing boundaries in not only *I, Robot*, but also *Avengers: Age of Ultron*.

In *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, the Avengers face a foe who was created by artificial intelligence geared to secure the best possible protection of the world instead of the safety and well-being of human beings, Similar to *I, Robot*. In this film, a different type of consequence is highlighted, venturing away from the idea of control and into the idea of protection. Protection is an aspect of a country that allows military forces to apply solid reasoning for their increased weaponry and firepower in the name of being able to defend the United States against any threat. At the beginning of the film, Tony Stark's main concern is creating a weapon that is powerful enough to take on anything that poses a threat to the earth, acknowledging that the strength of their enemies continues to grow with each encounter. Even though Tony has good intentions in his way of thinking to protect his friends and the earth, the route of weapon production was shown to be a counterproductive route that resulted in the creation of Ultron, an embodiment of robotic artificial intelligence that not only seeks the best possible outcome for the world who

second-handedly concludes that the human race needs to end for the violence and conflict to cease. In a scene focused on the introduction of Ultron and his mission as the antagonist of the film, he is outraged by the never-ending violence that occurs from different countries and groups of humans, including war, racism, superiority, and capitalism as he sees nothing but death and destruction. Ultron's introductory flashback touches upon the ideas in the essay *Economic Consequences of Organized Violence* by Frederic C. Lane. where it is said that "The use of violence, at least in some cases, is a productive activity, the production being a specific utility, protection. The consumers of protection, however, as a rule, have had little influence on the quality of the product and its price, because "the violence-using, violence- controlling industry is a natural monopoly" (Steensgaard 250). In saying this, Steensgaard emphasizes what comes from the creation of weapons that are designed for protection. Like most weapons, the initial goal by the manufacturers is to create a way for protection. While most may see protection as a defense only, there is a famous saying that goes, the best defense is a good offense. Unfortunately for many people who are truly in need of protection, American capitalism has proven to turn methods of defense and the intentions of protecting the people within their own country into weapons of destruction in the name of securing power and superiority. This ideology transforms into the capitalist mindset as the protection turns into the offense, creating a battleground for power. In these situations, the lesser individuals in society suffer the rage of "protection", in most cases not being able to afford it and/or falling under the category of people that are attacked by the people who have the so-called protection. Ultron represents the boundary showing protection that simply causes more violence because of the ongoing fight for who is stronger the intent of protection. The U.S. Military is the almighty protector of the United States, as that is their main mission. Yet their actions put forth to ensure that the U.S. is the most protected

country results in the greater hunger for power over all oppositions. This brings us to the discussion of the monster that arises from the hunger for power, the Incredible Hulk.

During the history of the United States, the U.S. Government also searched for more power when dealing with international affairs in contribution to the desire of being the most powerful country in the world by means of brute force. One characteristic of capitalism concerns the desire to be superior to other parties and maintain a position on top. American history has a relevant track record of war, which calls for the deployment of thousands of U.S. citizens to fight for the country in the name of honor, yet they aren't fighting for honor. Instead, these soldiers are fighting to increase the power of the U.S. military over other countries. While there have been hundreds of war movies to reach the big screen, one series in particular displays a monster that can arise from the capitalist mindset of the U.S. Military is the *Hulk*, Directed by Louis Leterrier in 2008. While most Marvel Universe films originate the antagonist from a freak accident or extraterrestrial invasion of some sort, this film poses the U.S. military as the evil force against what is initially perceived as the antagonist, Bruce Banner, who turns into raging man five times the size of a regular human anytime he gets to a certain level of anger. What makes the U.S. military the real antagonist is their intention to weaponize the Hulk's power to use it in war. While the Hulk is the physical raging monster that the U.S. desire to control, its rampaging nature originated from the U.S. military's world war II era super-soldier program. This super-soldier program is a representation of the capitalistic need to be superior that displays how the war-minded U.S. government. In a research document named *Capitalism and War*, Fanny Coulomb and Jacques Fontanel clarify the link between the two different aspects of American culture as they present the idea that "the violence is a necessary step in the process of societies'

transforming. Revolutions and wars are often necessary steps in this process of social change” said Coulomb, “ also theorized the importance of patriotism and the economic utility of war in certain circumstances, to enhance national strength on the world scene” (Coulomb 3). Capitalism depends highly on the culture of war to solidify the requirement for individuals in the lower social classes and foreign countries to abide by their rules. These rules can include a course of action allowed, financial systems, and even social justice issues that arise within society. Gaining the upper hand on the battlefield opens the doors for the United States to gain as much control as possible. The monster that is the Hulk bursts into the scene as creating that power to greater enforce the ideology of capitalism and war causes the U.S. Military to cross yet another boundary. This now results in a raging monster sprouting from Bruce Banner at any given moment to signify that this power is not to be controlled by government forces as the destruction and harm done from it should not be harvested.

Dr. Bruce Banner was working on a bio-technical program, unaware that the U.S. military had the intentions of weaponizing men to create super soldiers. In history, this same nature of expanding the natural capabilities of man to obtain more resources and power in the name of being the most powerful has also ventured into outer space. The topic of capitalism pushes Americans to reach things never imagined as referring back to the actions of corporations such as NASA as space programs share a common goal of exploring space and other planets in the name of bringing resources back for the benefit of the United States. As time goes on, explorations go deeper and deeper into lands that have never been explored, bringing us into our next aspect of capitalism, greed. Greed is something that pushes individuals to desire more than what they should, crossing more boundaries, similar to the way that the bio-engineering

corporation Life Foundation discovers a comet covered in symbiotic life forms in the movie *Venom*, directed by Ruben Fleischer. Capitalism shows its ugly head in businesses and corporations even more than the military forces. This is put on display as CEO Carlton Drake does whatever it takes to grow and advance the work of his company, including sacrificing innocent people. By bringing in these symbiotes and initiating testing to try and fuse humans with the slimy alien to survive in space, Carlton Drake crosses the boundary of human nature, allowing for the parasitic symbiotes to form into the larger than life monsters who simply crave to eat every organism since they are natural predators. As Carlton Drake's greed goes so far as to seek resources beyond the earth, his action emphasizes the mentality that "greed is not completely reprehensible; instead, greed can also act as a central driver behind capitalism and competition." (Wang, Murnighan 16). This form of capitalism is one of the more common and well-known aspects of American life as the economic system is geared toward making the rich richer. This greed not only allows for the possibility of "symbiosis" (as Drake calls it), but it serves as an invitation for the symbiotes species to walk amongst earth, once again bringing about the uprising of another monster in the world because of the actions of capitalism. The monster Venom represents similar greed as the person who brought it to planet earth.

Similar to the introduction of the symbiote race amongst humans in the first *Venom* film, Greed is what led to the creation of Carnage in the sequel of this organically raging movie series in *Venom 2: Let There Be Carnage*, directed by Andy Serkis. When Cletus called upon Eddie Brock to relay a message to the world he was simply trying to do one thing: Send a message to the woman he loved who was held captive at an off-the-grid asylum. Regardless of his serial killer past and gruesome history of an abusive childhood, Cletus found love within a woman who

saved him from trouble in a group home. When paying the first visit to hear what Cletus has to say, Venom guides Eddie Brock to discover and decipher the markings on Cletus' jail cell. From these markings, Eddie Brock and Venom can find the location of a large number of dead bodies that Cletus buried. This information provides evidence of multiple murders, leading to the death penalty for Cletus. During a final visit, it is revealed that Cletus' newfound hatred for Eddie spawns from further incriminating him when all Cletus wanted to do was send a message to Shriek. One scene specifically shows how the greed of capitalism manifested itself into the monster Carnage when Venom and Eddie Brock are arguing and Venom reveals his actions got Eddie Brock his career of being a journalist back, restoring his riches. Venom, being an alien that goes off of instinct only, felt the need to act on Eddie's need for his career and money to restore his life after losing it in the prequel of this movie. Unfortunately, this situation reinforces the nature of greed and capitalism as Wang and Murnighan state, "The basic logic of capitalism, for instance, suggests that organizations and their members should do what they can ("within the rules of the game," ala Friedman) to maximize their economic interests. Given the competitive nature of most organizational markets, maximizing self-interest is often consistent with the norm of "doing the right thing," so much so that not attempting to maximize might seem inappropriate" (Wang, Murnighan 23). Cletus' words during the final visit anger Venom (who is inside and controlling Eddy's body), causing a scuffle between Eddie and Cletus through the cell. During this scuffle, Cletus bites Eddie, which allows Venom's symbiote blood into Cletus' body. This creates an entirely different monster known as Carnage, whose sole purpose is to kill Venom, his father. Venom's action is the cause of the Carnage's Existence, showing that the capitalist mindset of choosing self-interest over the well-being of others is crossing a boundary. This occurrence of fictional events goes to show how the need to chase a successful life of

making money will always be of relevance to any person in American society. The successful attempt to restore Eddie's career resulted in spontaneous hatred from Cletus and the birth of the monster Carnage.

The ideology of capitalism continues to strive for American superiority regardless of who is on the opposing side of their actions. This mentality comes with consequences, as the definition of a monster is an embodiment that represents the idea that boundaries should never be crossed no matter the motive. In the film *Kong vs. Godzilla*, directed by Adam Wingard, the historical need for superiority led to a tech organization taking the drastic measure of trying to recreate their own monster to compete with and kill Godzilla and Kong with the help of organic resources scavenged from the corpses of fallen monsters in the past. While characters in the film are completely in wonder about the nature of Godzilla's attack, it is later revealed that this was the first warning to the corporation of Apex Cybernetic to cease their research and construction of their biomechanical creation. Just as the nature of Godzilla is to take down any other titan that threatens his place as the king of the Titans, Americans often look at capitalism as nature's way of allowing continued progress of the country, even if that means the oppression or sacrifice of other social groups which is explained as "it is surely even more perverse to validate the superiority of capitalism by treating it as the universal standard of merit and progress" (Wood 30). Ellen Meiksins Wood allows the public to have more of an understanding of what is to come to the mindset of American Capitalism, as survival and growth are means to narcissism and social and economic control. This control and greed for power provoked Godzilla, whose natural instinct is to rule over all titans and protect his status as the Apex predator of the world. Godzilla is the monster that rises to keep the natural order of superiority in this film world.

When considering the negative possibilities that can result from an individual or group's need to eliminate others, monsters appear to hold those boundaries. The creation of Mecha-Godzilla by Apex Cybernetics turns out to be the true monster that acts as the antagonist of the film, as Kong and Godzilla join forces to destroy it. When Apex Cybernetics took the initiative to create their own Mecha-Godzilla for protection, it was revealed through the behavior of the CEO that it was actually an act of capitalism and a scheme to increase the riches of the company. While Mecha-Godzilla was initially created as a weapon, the inability to control the skyscraper sized mechanical monster presents a signal that certain boundaries should never be crossed. Apex Cybernetic CEO believed having control of the genetic alteration of previous monsters was a way for mankind to fulfill its imperialistic goals. Greed for power motivated both the abduction of King Kong and the arrival of Godzilla, which didn't stop Apex cybernetics to go further in the creation of Mecha Godzilla. Events of conflict will arise similar to the world war as Stephen Van Evera say's "Recent theoretical writing in international relations emphasizes the dangers that arise when the offense is strong relative to the defense... each state is more likely to be menaced by aggressive neighbors who are governed by the same logic, creating an even more competitive atmosphere..." (Evera 64). When attempting to create and control Mecha Godzilla, the project immediately went wrong when the circuits of the control and Mecha Godzilla went on a rampage attacking the city and eventually Godzilla and Kong when they fought for their dominance. The competitive atmosphere is the world that Godzilla and Kong live in represents the battlefield that capitalism creates, as there will always be someone who suffers a blunt force from it.

As the hunger for superiority is a prominent factor in the mindset of American capitalism, it shows its face not only in the intentions of growing and the outreach for more riches but also the control over the society that is already within its grasp. In the film *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword*, directed by Guy Ritchie, the monster in the film isn't exactly revealed at the climax of the film or in a sudden moment but is gradually as the essence and motives of King Vortigern's reign over his kingdom begins and ends with a capitalist mindset of economic control and crave for power. This film takes a more straightforward approach to capitalism put on display by King Vortigern's entire approach to being a king. Instead of protecting and leading the people of his kingdom, he intends to strike fear in their hearts to make sure that his power increases by the ongoing days, regardless of the myths of a hero who will soon come to take the throne. During the majority of the film, King Vortigern is shown in his regular human form yet still powerful nonetheless because of his inherited crown of the kingdom which was passed down onto him after the epic death of his brother Uther, who King Vortigern killed. During his time as king, Vortigern's main purpose throughout the entirety of the film is to gain as much power and control as possible, as he does anything to increase the fear he strikes within his people. During the film, the representation of capitalism is shown in two different ways. The first way is obvious as he strives off the growing fear in the heart of all the people of the kingdom, reinforcing that capitalism can be enforced by the continuous monitoring and surveillance of a group of people. Nowadays this mentality is enforced by my financial institutions and police forces who demand obedience while taking account of all actions taken by every individual. These forms of control can range from the circulation of police within an area or as technologically advanced as a citizen and financial information being stored and recorded daily eo Rinaldini, and Jacopo Staccioli as they state, "Control might be exerted in different forms: it might be personal and/or

physical control; it might be indirect virtual control; it might be the result of a series of rules and codes of conduct already shared by individuals, such as bureaucratic or legal control; it might be more subtle and intervenes upon the personal sphere of individuals, modifying each own aspirations, expectations, mental representations, and categories by authorities such as the bank, credit scores, and the IRS. Some of the different ideologies behind the nature of control are mentioned by Angelo Moro, Matt' (Moro, Rinaldini, Staccioli 2) Utilizing his public image, King Vortigern puts his foot down to increase the amount of fear in all of the people who live in his kingdom. In his words, fear is more important than anything when being a king, allowing for complete control. Similar to the analysis of Staccoli, King Vortigern used his systematic control to alter the mental representations and expectations of life within his kingdom. The addition of fear allowed King Vortigern to become even more powerful than ever, pushing him ever so close to crossing the boundary that creates the emergence of a monster that represents the boundaries crossed with a mindset of capitalism.

Going forth in his strive for power, King Vortigern's capitalist mindset shows its full form once his opposition shows his face as Arthur arrives, the rightful king. Being so that the throne being controlled by Arthur would render Vortigern's control to not exist, King Vortigern goes forth to sacrifice his loved ones to a slithery witch to increase his power even further. This course of action not only highlights the hunger for control not only over the throne itself, but to become the most powerful being there is. (similar to being the apex predator in Kong vs. Godzilla) The basis of capitalism influences being superior to all, regardless of the prophecy that is rumored saying Arthur is destined to take over the throne, on top of the well-known fact that

the true heir to the previous king has the birthright to sit upon the throne and take control of the kingdom. While the prophecy along with the already established rule that the throne gets passed down to the king's heir, Vortigern's sense of capitalism seeks to break this rule by enforcing his control through his increased power. This approach is touched upon by Staccioli he states "power becomes so pervasive that a given set of actions is not chosen because of the fear of control, implying self-control or sense of conformity, but is perceived as one's own personal idea" (Moro, Rinaldini, Staccioli 4). By attempting to cross this boundary that is already in place, this hunger for power and control is what leads to the recreation of the demonic knight that King Vortigern becomes in attempts to eliminate his competition, King Arthur. The desire for power and control leads to embodiments of monstrosities in countless situations showing that this is a boundary that should not be crossed by human beings. King Vortigern's narcissist mentality goes to show the common ideology of many leaders in today's time, highlighting that these thoughts are not controlled whatsoever by the progression of time. While this fictional tale is set within medieval times, more modern events show similar mentalities where American leaders in control value their powerful reach upon their communities instead of the well-being of the people that reside within it.

The continuous hunt for power and riches is something that has been a staple in American capitalism throughout history. The foundation of the United States was built upon the backs of the black community in contribution to the well-being and triumphs of white Americans. As long as this momentum continues, countless monster representations emerge in the film world. Vampires are forms of monster that not only exist in the world of film but are known to live immortally through history and its culture of capitalism. A vampire is one of the

most classic representations because they represent the leach-like nature of capitalism. In the same realm of taking from others for the betterment of themselves, vampires live off the blood of other human beings to survive, rendering them murderers by nature. This relates heavily to the notion of American capitalism being defined as the actions taken in order to profit off of the lives of others for the betterment of the top percentage as “capitalist Mitt Romney, whose status as living or undead was the subject of some sporting debate, frequently found himself compared to a vampire. After transforming into a “vulture capitalist” in the primaries, he became a full-fledged vampire capitalist in Obama’s campaign ads. “It was like a vampire,” a steelworker said of the company Romney co-founded, Bain Capital, “it came in and sucked the life out of us.”

(Biss 1) Comparing the actions and campaign of a potential president of the United States goes to show that American Capitalism pushes the boundaries of what should be done by the people who have such control over the lives of citizens as it is. To go further into the draining force of capitalism in America, the blood-sucking monsters known as vampires are inserted into the countless narratives to show what results from continuously crossing the boundary in the name of greed and consumption that engulfs American culture. As the greed of capitalism continues, the representations of its actions evolve as years go on as the film *Night Teeth* brings a new perspective.

The movie *Night teeth*, directed by Adam Randall, highlights the culture of greed within American culture in correlation to how Americans step beyond their boundaries in the name of growth and expansion by any means. Vampires in this film initially lived by the rules of staying within their feeding grounds set in past years. These rules that they must abide by force the

vampires to stay outside of the borders of Boyle heights, as an agreement was made to create peace between the humans and vampires. The mindset of American capitalism shows its relevance as the greed for blood and money pushes these same vampires to disregard the agreement even though their life in the shadows proved to be quite sufficient and rewarding, on top of the fact that the innocent humans that had nothing to do with them remained safe. Regardless of the riches that they have, their need for more that drives their actions was originated by the antagonists of the film, the rebellious vampire Victor, who aspires to take over Boyle Heights and turn it into a permanent feeding ground. One of the main differences between vampires and other forms of monsters is their appealing image. Most monsters throughout film culture are large monstrosities that strike fear in a person's eyes the moment a person lays eyes on them, and even leaves a trail of destruction and mayhem where they go. Vampires, on the contrary, look exactly like regular human beings besides their enlarged fangs that they use for sucking the blood of their victims. This works to their advantage as they use their similar appearance to deceive and stay hidden in plain sight as their unsuspecting victims can walk right up to them willingly. Similar to the way these vampires disregard the premises of the agreement made with regular humans, Americans have shown to push these same boundaries by causing increased poverty to make the rich richer as Eula Biss refers to a specific method of capitalism where “the thought of an ambitious vampire sucking the life out of honest workers was resonant in a country where the value had so recently been sucked out of nearly every home. We were reminded of the vampirism behind the housing crisis, which was set off by a rash of “predatory” loans to homeowners who lacked the ability to repay them.” (Biss 2) Using the method of attraction similar to how most vampires appear sexually appealing in most cases, a capitalist method presents a positive outcome to someone in need only to turn around and bite them in the

but with loan payments enforced when could notable. The presence of vampires are used in film culture to represent the same deception the American capitalism uses that allows for people such as immigrants to travel to the United States in search of a better life. This image known as the American dream proves to be not as attainable by minorities in the community as they often become victim to Capitalist culture

At the bottom of the barrel, we come to terms with the lowest social class that has endured the continuous beat down of capitalism from the beginning of the United States, the black community. Being taken from their homeland during the Atlantic Slave Trade, the black community has suffered decades of slavery and racism while white Americans continue to build and grow a nation with the high contribution of what is taken from the lower percentage of people. This form of capitalism expands not only into the chase of power and control but also the outright brutality which strengthens the fear and oppression that black people in America have had to endure day in and day out that is represented in the film *Candyman*, directed by Jordan Peele. Anthony (who was the person that was haunted and eventually became Candyman) mentions how white Americans cut off the ghetto from financial support and invited white people to live there for discounted prices in order to promote gentrification. Promising to build better stores and buildings, white Americans go forth with a plan that proves “gentrification and urban redevelopment are the leading edges of a larger process of uneven development which is a specified process, rooted in the structure of the capitalist mode of production” (Palen 71).

The topic of gentrification is highlighted during a scene where Anthony McKoy is speaking to his therapist about the process of killing off black people in a community and inviting an outside population of white people from the upper class. Anthony’s explanation of this process intends to

shine a light on the racism that persists in today's time, which is the reason why the historic monster known as Candyman continues to rain terror when a person says his name five times. While many think of the person who says these words as doomed to bloody death, it is revealed at the end of the movie that Candyman is actually a defense against racism and injustice made for people in the black community to call upon when they are soon to become the victim of racism.

The reason for the existence of this monster of a man is a tale similar to the life of Emmitt Till (1955), where interactions between him and a white woman in the late nineteenth century led to his torture and brutal death at the hands of angry white men who were outraged about even the thought of a black man having relations with a white woman. The Story of Candyman represents what thousands of black people have gone through throughout history with no justice. Instead of simply being another unjustified death in the black community, the soul of the man killed travels from person to person throughout generations of time to rain terror on anyone who still treats black people unfairly. In a sense, the monster is a horror film version of a hero for people who suffer from racism. When clarifying the mission of the Black Panther Party in the 1960s, Robert O. Self and Rod Bush speak upon the social group's motive as they state, "In advocating the propaganda of the gun, the BBP's primary goal was to teach black people that they had to defend themselves and their legal rights in the face of governmental abuse. Even the term "pig," which was thought to mean the police exclusively, actually referred to,, according to Bobby Seale, "anyone who violate [s] people's constitutional rights." (Self 81) This ideology is put on display at the end of the film, where Anthony Mckoy's significant other is placed in a situation where she must choose between her freedom where she lies about the cops shooting Anthony, or lives in jail for telling the truth. Making it clear, what his existence is for, the monster appears to kill

all the cops at the murder scene, but spares Brianna (Anthony's Girlfriend) and tells her to tell Everybody. Similar to the previously discussed motivation of Killmonger in the *Black Panther* film, the existence of the Candyman represents what happens when plagues the nation, causing people in power to cross boundaries.

Every monster has its purpose. The existence of each fictional being is created in order to show what happens when boundaries are crossed . These boundaries are made to keep people from committing unjust actions in the name of benefiting off others' suffering. Crossing these boundaries will forever create dire consequences, whether it comes in the form of an immortal human with a blood-thirsty nature or a raging giant with uncontrollable strength. American capitalism creates a consistent environment for monsters to appear in film because of the entire motive of its culture. Creating a foundation of growth off of the backs of community oppression generates an invitation for backlash. While monsters are perceived to be the Apex predators that seek nothing but death and destruction, their role in narratives continue to highlight the wrongdoings of the people who become victims to them in order to show the malicious nature of their capitalist actions with an amplified amount of harm.

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