

WITCHING AND BITCHING: GENDER REPRESENTATION IN CONTEMPORARY SPANISH FILM

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Abstract: in the last thirty years Spanish women have entered the public sphere and have achieved a progressive empowerment in their struggle for gender equality. These changes in women's roles have provoked anxiety among some men, who see them as a threat to their privileged position in patriarchal society. This tension is suggested or openly depicted in contemporary Spanish horror films created by a new generation of young male filmmakers in which the threat and the element that brings horror to the narrative is usually a female character. The film *Witching and Bitching* aka *Las brujas de Zugarramurdi* (de la Iglesia, 2013) offers a filmic materialisation of this tension within the Spanish context, by presenting a battle between male identities in crisis, anxious about the emergent role of women, and strong, independent female characters, who are depicted as monsters.

Keywords: Gender, masculinity, *monstrous-feminine*, identity, horror film, Spanish cinema