



HWA CHONG INSTITUTION (HIGH SCHOOL SECTION)

HUMANITIES RESEARCH PAPER 2019

Topic: Spiralling into Fear: An Analysis of Horror in *Uzumaki*

Slant: Literature

Total Word Count (excluding appendices, footnotes & references): 5444

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Declaration

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

Student's Signature :

A square box containing a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Lionel See".

Date of Submission: 6 August 2019

Chapter 1: Introductory Chapter

1.1 Background

Uzumaki is a critically-acclaimed horror Japanese comic written and drawn by Junji Ito. It comprises three volumes and follows the characters of Kirie and her boyfriend, Shuichi, who are residents of Kurouzu-Cho, a fictional town on the coast of Japan. The story follows the perspective of Kirie as supernatural events related to spirals occur in the town. The plot begins with Shuichi's father becoming obsessed with spirals and trying to collect them. He eventually tries to turn his entire body into a spiral, resulting in his death. As the curse gets stronger throughout the story, new supernatural events occur and start to affect the town as a whole, such as unnatural whirlpools trapping the residents inside the town. Eventually, most are driven insane or die in a gruesome fashion. The supernatural events are later revealed to have come from an ancient spiral city underneath Kurouzu-Cho (Frostick, 2017).

The story is told in short chapters that are interrelated, with every chapter introducing a new supernatural event related to the spiral. While the spiral is the main antagonist of the series, it manifests itself in individuals with almost every chapter having a new "monster".

1.2 Rationale

The horror genre is filled with images of the abject, most notably the corpse as it is rejected by the body and is considered "the ultimate in abjection" (Creed, 2007). The abject is used to cause a reaction in the audience, to allow them to "eject the abject" (Creed, 2007). Within every horror story, there must exist a monster that is capable of threatening the characters-be it physically, mentally or psychologically (Carroll, 1990, p. 43). However, *Uzumaki* makes the idea of the

spiral into the main monster of the story and thus the “abject”. The usage of the spiral as the overarching abject is unique as it is not typically able to elicit such a reaction by itself. In fact, it has been noted that it is not typically used in horror, and is actually seen as something positive in Japanese culture as it is used in “Japanese comedy cartoon, representing an effect of warmth”(Winsby & Takano, 2006). The use of the spiral as the “abject” in the story is therefore unusual and thus forms the basis of this paper-how are positive and/or innocuous objects like the spiral subverted and imbued with notions of horror.

1.3 Research Questions

- a) How does character identification and spectatorship help with regards to horror, with reference to Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (Mulvey, 1988)?
- b) What methods and techniques does *Uzumaki* use in order to turn the idea of a spiral into an abject, with reference to the Structures of Horrific Imagery (Carroll, 1990)?
- c) How does the comic portray and use the female gender in order to evoke fear in the readers, with reference to the Monstrous- Feminine (Creed, 2007) and the Final Girl (Clover, 1992) ?

1.4 Thesis Statement

This paper aims to examine cross cultural notions of the “abject” and its evolution since Kristeva’s landmark work “Powers of Horrors: An essay on abjection” (1982). This will be used to show how the spiral becomes an abject in the comic through the various methods mentioned in *The Philosophy of Horror* (Carroll, 1990), as well as through the “monstrous feminine” (Creed, 2007).

1.5 Scope of Research / Delimitation(s)

All three volumes of *Uzumaki* will be used for analysis in order to show the escalation of the supernatural events as the story progresses and to show the transformation of the spiral into a “monster”. However, as the volumes comprise of many short stories that repeat the same ideas, certain chapters will not be used and this will be indicated in the methodology. The paper will focus on the portrayal of women in the story as the protagonist, the antagonist and the victim, which the spiral manifests itself in, as well as the different Structures of Horrific Imagery (Carroll, 1990) used. The paper will also use the unique aspects of the medium through the “mise en scène” analysis of the comic panels, in order to give a more in-depth analysis.

1.6 Significance of Research / Usefulness

This paper is significant as it aims to establish the connections between the Structures of Horrific Imagery (Carroll, 1990) and the theory of abjection (Kristeva, 1982) and through this, analyse the cross cultural evolution of the “abject”. The concept of the spiral is seen as positive in Japanese culture (Winsby & Takano, 2006), yet it is used as the main “monster” of the horror story, thus making it the abject. Therefore, this paper will also further explore how innocuous objects, or even positive ones, like the spiral can be subverted and become the abject in a story.

1.7 Limitations

As the supernatural events that manifest exclusively in men are rare in the story, this paper cannot provide a complete analysis of gender horror, which includes the portrayal of men in the horror genre. Thus, the analysis of the male as the victim and antagonist will not be as comprehensive. However, this does not mean that the male antagonists will be ignored. The Structures of Horrific Imagery (Carroll, 1990) and the theory of abjection (Kristeva, 1982) will be still be used to analyse them, but the role that their gender may play will not be analysed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of theoretical frameworks

This paper will use the theoretical concept of abjection (Kristeva, 1982) to examine the cross-cultural notions of the abject. This concept is further elaborated by Creed who focused on the female as an abject and therefore a monster- also known as the “Monstrous Feminine” (Creed, 2007). With chapters showing the spiral only manifesting itself in women, these two frameworks be used to analyse how the portrayal of women as the antagonist help associate the spiral as the abject. The methods to create a monster in the horror genre mentioned in *The Philosophy of Horror* (Carroll, 1990), also known as the Structures of Horrific Imageries, will also be used. This framework will help connect the theory of abjection and how it is used in horror, in order to turn innocuous objects such as spirals into abject as well. *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (Mulvey, 1975) and the “Final Girl” (Clover, 1992) will be also be used in order to give a more in-depth analysis of the role of women in *Uzumaki* and in the horror genre as a whole.

2.2 The “monster” in horror (Carroll, 1990)

In *The Philosophy of Horror* (Carroll, 1990), the “monster” in horror literature is defined as a being that can potentially harm people and endanger them in any form, the easiest being a physical threat. The very fact that it is lethal and dangerous is enough. Carroll (1990) argues that there are 5 main ways in which “monsters” are created in horror. The first being “fusion”, in which monsters are formed through the combination of “attributes held to be categorically distinct”. The second, “fission”, is about an individual having two or more identities but unlike fusion, these identities are split apart, appearing at different times or space. The third and fourth, magnification and massification both have a similar concept of increasing the size and amount of

something already considered impure. The fifth, Horrific Metonymy, puts the monster together with images and objects that we already consider impure. Thus, while the monster in question may not be scary per se, the association with the impure object results in the monster seemingly being more repulsive (Carroll, 1990, p.52).

Structures of Horrific Imagery(Carroll, 1990)	Description	Examples
Fusion (Carroll, 1990)	The “monster” is created through two different “entities” having one body (Howard, 2011)	Zombie, mummies, possessed people, etc. (Carroll, 1990)
Fission	The monster again contains two different elements in one body, but they appear at different times or space (Carroll, 1990)	The werewolf, shapeshifters, etc. (Carroll, 1990)
Massification	The “monster” is formed through the enlargement of something already considered impure (Carroll, 1990)	The shark in <i>Jaws</i> (Carroll, 1990)
Magnification	Something that is already considered impure is increased in quantity to unnaturally large numbers, thus creating a “monster” (Carroll, 1990)	Zombies, rats, locusts, etc. (Howard, 2011)
Horrific Metonymy	Through association with objects already considered impure, the monster becomes frightening even though it is not scary by itself (Carroll, 1990)	The bats surrounding Dracula (Carroll, 1990)

Fig1: Structures of Horrific Imagery (Carroll, 1990)

From the above, there are two things that can be noted. Firstly, the structures exploit our preconceived notions of repulsiveness (through enlarging, combining, etc.) in order to make the monster more threatening. Secondly, the monster usually violates categories, especially in the first two structures. Thus, it can be seen that repulsiveness is associated with the contradiction and violation of categories.

This idea is further supported in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (Kristeva, 1982). Kristeva posits that the abject is “the place where meaning is lost/collapsed” and is that which “disturbs identity, system and order”. A few examples of the abject include a corpse, blood, vomit, etc. as these remind us of our mortality and show “what [we] permanently thrust aside in order to live” (Kristeva, 1982). When the subject is faced with the abject, they will experience a violent reaction in an attempt to reject the abject (Kristeva, 1982). However, while we reject the abject, we are also simultaneously drawn in (Kristeva, 1982, p. 9). This is because we take pleasure in encountering the abject, and therefore keep being drawn to it (Dino, n.d.) However, the pleasure gained from encountering the abject is different from desire as it is gained “Violently and Painfully” (Kristeva, 1982, p. 9).

Within the horror genre, the abject is used to frighten the viewers. The horror genre is filled with images of the abject (Creed, 2007). The structure of horrific imagery mentioned above thus utilises these images in order to make the abject even more frightening and to create new “monsters”. Thus, the “monster” in horror films act as the abject in order to frighten the viewers as they violate the social order and are meant to be rejected. In order to classify a “monster” as an abject, it needs to be rejected but at the same time, it must still be recognizable to the subjects. The Structures of Horrific Imagery (Carroll, 1990) will help identify the different methods used

in *Uzumaki* in order to turn the spiral into an abject. The theory of abjection (Kristeva, 1982) will be used in order to explain how the various methods used in the manga serve to make the spiral into an abject.

2.2 The role of women in horror

Throughout the evolution of the horror genre, women have been represented as the victim, protagonist and “monstrous feminine”. In *Uzumaki*, while there are two main characters, the story focuses on the female lead, Kirie, and her perspective. Therefore, she is the protagonist of the story. Throughout the story, the spiral manifests itself in individuals in different ways.

However, there are several chapters where the supernatural events occur exclusively to females, making them the victim and/or the antagonist. The incidents that are not exclusive to women occur indiscriminately. The female protagonist and the specific moments where women are exclusively the victim and the “monster” help make the spiral more threatening.

2.2.1 The role of the victim and the “Male Gaze” (Mulvey, 1988)

In *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (Mulvey, 1988), Mulvey argues that in film, the women are displayed as “erotic objects for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic objects for the spectator” [p.62]. The horror genre, especially slasher films, effectively uses the “male gaze” (Mulvey, 1988) to portray women as the victim in horror, especially during the early days of the genre (Vickers, 2011). The women in horror films are generally gullible and their role in the movie is to scream when the monster arrives in order to make the monster more frightening and for the viewers’ pleasure (Dequina, 2019). The sexual transgressors are often killed first and the method of killing is usually sexualised and extended as compared to male deaths (Clover, 1992). In *Uzumaki*, the story mainly focuses on Kirie’s reactions and the spiral

often directly affects her, and she is often shown as helpless, therefore making her play the role of the victim in horror to make the monsters more frightening. The other female monsters are also shown to be more attractive. Thus, the concept of the “male gaze” (Mulvey, 1988) in the horror genre is used in order to show how *Uzumaki* utilises its female victims to make the spiral into an abject.

2.2.2 The Final Girl (Clover, 1992)

While the horror film still makes use of the “male gaze” (Mulvey, 1975) to sexualise its victims women also play the part of the protagonist in horror. As noted by Clover in *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender horror in the Modern Horror Film* (Clover, 1992), most slasher films have the male character die first, thus eliminating a male character for the audience to identify with. The only male character the audience is able to identify with is the killer, which are often unappealing or gendered as a female. (Clover, 1992). The audience is thus able to identify with the heroine of the story which is coined as the “Final Girl” (Clover, 1992). The Final Girl is gendered male, meaning that she has qualities often associated with the male protagonist such as intelligence, and is separated from other girls (Clover, 1992). These distinctions help separate the Final Girl from the rest of the girls, and help us identify with her. While literally a female, the audience still identifies with her as she has the qualities that are associated with males and in fact can be considered one. The main protagonist of *Uzumaki* is female, and the readers follow her throughout the story as she resists against the spiral, thus she can be seen as the Final Girl. However, she does not eventually survive and defeat the spiral and is also shown to be helpless and naive in the story. Thus, Kirie will be contrasted with the Final Girl in order to examine how the subversions of her character makes the spiral more frightening.

2.2.3 The “Monstrous Feminine” (Creed, 2007)

However, women in horror are not just portrayed as victims or heroes. They themselves can be the monsters. In psychoanalysis, women represent the threat of castration and are thus undesirable. (Mulvey,1988). However, while traditional film has to deal with this problem, the horror genre uses this threat to horrify, and thus turns women into something monstrous through her potential to castrate (Creed, 2007).

Additionally, women are often represented as the “abject”. They are commonly associated with “polluting objects” and when portrayed as the monster in horror, it is usually “in relation to [a] woman’s reproductive and mothering functions.”(Creed, 2007, p.48) This is because childbirth is seen as impure and “violent”, which can be traced back to the Bible (Kristeva, 1982, p.101).

The horror genre exploits this fear, by having women give birth to the monstrous (Creed,2007).

The idea that women are monstrous will help explain the use of the female monsters in *Uzumaki*, and further show how the manifestation of the spiral in women make the spiral more frightening.

2.3 Key Aspects of Manga

Due to the special medium of the text, its characteristics and techniques that help evoke fear in the reader should not be ignored. Understanding of the medium is needed in order to help analyse the methods that the manga uses to turn the spiral into an abject. Thus, the paper will be done through a “mise en scene” analysis of the comics. While “mise-en scene” is generally used for films, it can also be applied to comics(Delwiche, 2015). “Mise-en scene”, in the medium of comics, is defined as what is included in the panels of the comic(Delwiche, 2015). This can include “décor, props, and characters” (Lefèvre, 2014) as well as the “lighting, setting, space,

costumes, and design of the panel” (Delwiche, 2015). The general terms that are related to the mise-en scene of comics are explained in the table below.

Key Terms	Explanation and significance
Panels	The frames or panels make a comic and “help to build a sense of time and space” within the comic. ("2.1 Analysing visual texts: 2.1.4 Understanding comics", 2019). In manga, the panels and frames are more creative, and this helps emphasise the action and emotions of the character(Prough, 2018).
“Camera angle”	The “camera angle” is the angle in which the artist depicts the character. This can help to convey the emotions of the characters and evoke feelings in the readers. ("2.1 Analysing visual texts: 2.1.4 Understanding comics", 2019). This can be likened to the camera in films, which help control character identification.
Gutter	The gutter is the blank spaces between the panels and act as the movement between panels (McCloud, 1993). The reader must be able to “guess what happens between panels” and what is not included can play a significant role in the analysis. ("2.1 Analysing visual texts: 2.1.4 Understanding comics", 2019)

Speech bubbles	<p>The characters' dialogue and thoughts are written in speech bubbles.</p> <p>The shapes and sizes of speech bubbles can be used to represent the characters' emotions. ("2.1 Analysing visual texts: 2.1.4 Understanding comics", 2019).</p>
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Fig. 2 Key Terms and Techniques Used in Comics

These key terms and techniques are unique to the medium and serve different purposes mentioned in the table above. In *Uzumaki*, these techniques also help to imbued with the concept of horror, and thus should be noted when used.

There are also certain unique techniques exclusive to manga. They are known to “[play] around with the frames of comics” (Prough, 2018). The panels are used creatively in order to further the story. The manga uses certain techniques such as “angled frames, frames that span a two-paged spread, or even images that break free of the frames and moves across frames” (Prough, 2018).

These techniques help to emphasise action and emotion. In *Uzumaki*, this helps to evoke suspense and fear in the reader.. Thus, the frames and angles in which the manga is drawn have to be taken into consideration. The way the panels are drawn can be likened to the “camera” in films, in that it controls the audience’s identification with certain characters.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Powers of Horrors: An essay on abjection (Kristeva, 1982) and the further elaboration of it in the Monstrous Feminine(Creed, 2007) will be used in the analysis. The theory of abjection is frequently used in the analysis of horror films as the horror genre is filled with images of the

abject. Thus it will be used in order to identify and explain the different images of the abject present in the manga.

The Structures of Horrific Imagery(Carroll, 1990) will be used alongside the theory of abjection as they are the most typical ways in which a “monster” is created in the horror genre. These Structure will be used to identify and explain the applications of the abject in the manga and how it helps to make the spiral into one.

Additionally, in order to provide a better analysis of the role of women in the story, the “Final Girl” theory (Clover, 1992) and the “male gaze”(Mulvey, 1975) will be used to analyse the female protagonist.

The “mise-en scene”(Delwiche, 2015) analysis of landmark comic panels will be used as well in order to show how the medium of the comic is used in order to evoke horror.

Within *Uzumaki*, almost every chapter introduces a new type of “monster”, in which the spiral manifests within. Within these story arcs, the monsters can be classified into three categories, namely those that affect people on an intrapersonal level, those that affect people on an interpersonal level and those that affect metaphysically. Applying the theory of abjection we can see these categories corresponds to the key ideas of abjection (Kristeva, 1982), which are, that which threatens society and order (p.4), that which disturbs identity (p. 4) and that which is associated with femininity(p.77) These categories are used in the manga in order to elicit fear in the readers and to imbue the idea of the spiral with notions of the abject. Thus these categories will be the focus of the analysis.

Chapter 4: Discussion and analysis

4.1 Recognising the spiral as an abject in *Uzumaki*

The monsters in *Uzumaki* are the manifestations of spirals. While there are a variety of monsters in the series, there is a similarity between all of them—the spiral. For every monster, the spiral is there, appearing in association with the spiral. Thus, while it is not confirmed until the end of the series, the association of the spiral with the monster and its frequent appearance, serve to imply to readers that it is the main monster of the series, and therefore the abject.

The spiral itself is not frequently seen as an abject, as evidenced by its lack of use in the horror genre (Winsby & Takano, 2006). The story therefore has to change the reader's perception of the spiral. The spiral must be shown to be capable of “disturb[ing] identity, system and order” (Kristeva, 1982), in order to serve as the abject. This is done through the Structure of Metonymy in order to associate it with preconceived notions of the abject.

4.2 The spiral as a disturbance of identity

The abject disturbs identity by breaking down the distinctions between the self and other, and crosses or threatens to cross the ‘border’ (Creed, 2007). In *Uzumaki*, this “border” is between that of the human and the spiral. Monsters are thus created at the border between these two identities. The transgression of this “border” is done through two Structures of Horrific Imagery: Fusion and Fission, which serve to combine two or more different entities in a body. This is done in two ways, namely, through physical transformation and through a metaphysical one, which affects the mind of the person. The combination of different identities forces the clash of identities within and outside the body, resulting in the border between them being violated.

The spiral is first shown to be able to affect the identity of a person by altering their personality and thoughts. This is done through Shuichi's father who is introduced in the story with an abnormal obsession with spirals. The father begins by collecting spiral-shaped objects, claiming

that the spiral “fills him with deep fascination”. It can also be noted that the father’s first name is never mentioned, suggesting that the spiral has already taken over him as a part of his identity has been removed from the story. His daily life and identity as a father, as a salaryman has been affected as he neglects his duties for the spiral. His identity has been taken over by the spiral in the form of an obsession. This possession of the body by the spiral suggests the use of Fission as the personality has changed. However, it actually differs from the standard use of Fission, in that the identities of the spiral and the human are not switched back and forth. The spiral is in full control of the body. This highlights the power of the spiral in its ability to fully disrupt one’s identity as well as its irreversibility.



Fig. 3 and 4 Shuichi and his mother’s reaction to the father’s death

The look of disgust and horror on Shuichi’s and his mother’s face signify to the reader what reaction they faced with the abject spiral. Indeed, the “border” between the spiral and the human has been removed and the spiral has completely taken over as the new identity of the father. This transgression of the border is given physical form when his body literally becomes a spiral, thus

signifying the final collapse of the boundary between them, the physical one, and forever “immortalising” him as one.

The second way in which the identity is disturbed is more physical, through the Structure of Fusion(Carroll, 1990). Two or more different categories are put together to form the monster.

This is done through the transformation of people into snails, in which the identities of “human”, “snail” and the spiral are combined into one.



Fig. 5 and 6 The transformation of a student into a snail

The border between the human and the non-human, the subject and the other thus collapses as they are merged into one body. This disturbance of the identity is done through the gradual physical formation. The enlargement of the spiral emphasises it as the cause for this transformation. This also serves to place emphasis on the snail-person, and how he still looks like a human. The snail-person is drawn to retain its human appearance, such as its facial features.

The emphasis is placed on its half-complete form in order to highlight the fact the he is between the two identities, and to constantly remind readers of this transgression. The spiral has steadily brought him to the boundary between human and non-human, constantly threatening the crossing of the boundary. This forced readers to constantly face the abject nature of the transformation, and its association to the spiral, thereby invoking more fear.

Thus, it can be seen that through the Structures of Fission and Fusion (Carroll, 1990), the spiral has created monsters with multiple identities-that of human and the spiral, thus creating images of the abject. However, as the spiral seems to be dominant, the power of the spiral is emphasised and that it cannot be resisted.

4.3 The formation of the abject through the portrayal of women

Women in *Uzumaki* are portrayed as the monster as well as the protagonist. There seems to be a great emphasis on the monster as feminine, with 2 chapters focusing on a female monster, where most monsters only get one. This is because women are widely are regarded as the abject (Kristeva, 1982). Thus, *Uzumaki* makes use of the pre established notion of women as the abject in order to make the spiral scarier. This is done in two ways, the first in regard to her appearance and second with her relation to the mother-child relationship.

Firstly, the female monster in *Uzumaki* is presented as attractive, with her appearance being the reason for her monstrosity. She is either destroyed by her own beauty and want for attention or by her lust for men, thus putting her as a sexual transgressor. The spiral becomes part of her appeal, as it manifests in the features considered attractive such as a spiral-shaped scar. The “male gaze” (Mulvey, 1988) is used as readers are attracted to her beauty, and later on her

monstrosity. These features evolve to harm people around them, such as the scar turning into a hole, capable of attracting and swallowing people.



Fig. 7 and 8 Azami swallowing and killing a male student

The monster, Azami, becomes one because of her obsession with Shuichi. The scar turns into a spiral in order to amplify her ability to attract males. Beyond that, her other victim is shown to be a male. Her motivations and victims are males, thus signifying her as the “Femme-Castratrice” (Creed, 2007), also known as the castrating woman. As mentioned, women symbolise the threat of castration (Mulvey, 1988) and this fear is used here as her hole only targets and dismember men. The dismemberment of her victims, the jagged bones and her victims alludes to the Sirens, which were “images of the femme castratrice” (Creed, 2007). Thus, by establishing her as the femme castratrice, it also establishes the spiral as the cause for the threat of castration, thus eliciting a fear in the readers.

Secondly, she is presented in relation to the mother-child relationship. The fear of the “archaic mother” is due to her reproductive capabilities (Kristeva, 1982). The manga makes use of this pre-established abject by having the spiral manifest within pregnant women, making them drink blood in order to give birth. The act of cannibalism, which is considered a “religious abomination”(Creed, 2007), in order to give birth which implies that they will give birth to something unknown and monstrous, thus creating suspense and evoking fear in the reader. This suspense is paid off in the next chapter.

The babies are born, and they seem perfect, too perfect, until Kirie notices that the babies keep regrowing their umbilical cords and even the placenta, marked by spirals. They are also able to talk, and express their want to return to their mother’s womb. This need to return to the mother is a disruption of the natural order. The babies should wish to be removed from the mother(Creed, 2007), yet these babies wish to return and forever be physically attached to her. More than that, it is a return to the womb, which has religiously been portrayed as “unclean”(Kristeva, 1982).

These abject return to the womb is signified by the regenerating umbilical cord and placenta-a physical connection to the mother. The spiral covers the entire umbilical cord and placenta, thus associating the abject with the spiral. The spiral thus comes to represent this perversion of the natural order and the mother-child relationship.

Women are also portrayed as the protagonist through Kirie. Kirie is the main protagonist of the story, as the readers follow her character and most of the supernatural events centre around her. She is also able to survive the longest. She can therefore be seen as the “Final Girl” (Clover, 1992). She is further seen as the “final girl” as she is separated from the other females in the story, who all become monsters. When the spiral does affect her by transforming her hair, she is

able to win out by not being like the other girls- she is not attention-seeking. All this points to her being the “final girl” the only one capable of defeating the monster. Yet, she is frequently shown to be helpless in the face of the monsters and ignorant. The purpose of Kirie as the protagonist thus seem to act as a subversion of the standard horror trope. This subversion is used to help evoke fear in the readers by having enough traits of the Final Girl for the audience to still able to identify with her and this is used to create suspense. The manga utilizes this identification to showcase Kirie’s reaction with the “monster” before actually showing the monster, thus making the readers feel the same as Kirie in the situation and making the monsters even scarier. When she finally confronts the spiral at the end of the story, she is actually defeated, completely deviating from the Final Girl. This serves to portray the spiral as even more powerful as it has defeated the protagonist-the supposed “winner”.

4.4 The creation of the abject through the disruption of society

The abject can also exist through creating chaos within society by breaking laws or through the subversion of the norm in society, as this reminds use of the “fragility of the law”(Kristeva, 1982). As can be noted, many of the monster in the book already disturbs the law when they kill or threaten the townspeople. However, this aspect of the monsters are not emphasised in order to focus on the key aspects of the monster itself. In the final arc, the monsters are finally shown to have a greater impact on society. In the final story arc, some of the previous monsters (snail people, whirlwinds, etc.) return,resulting in chaos and the rebuilding of the town as the spiral.



Fig. 9 The town turning in the shape of a spiral

The emphasis of the town's subversion of the social order, through the breaking of laws seem to make it an abject. However, it is more than that- it is an amalgamation of the various aspects of the spiral, showcasing the full extent of the spiral as the abject. The abjects within the town characterises the town, and in doing so the town has lost its identity as one, and has taken on the form of the spiral. The final arc essentially serves to bring together all the aspects of the spiral as the abject, established through earlier chapters, in order to portray the omnipotence and omnipresence of the spiral as the abject.

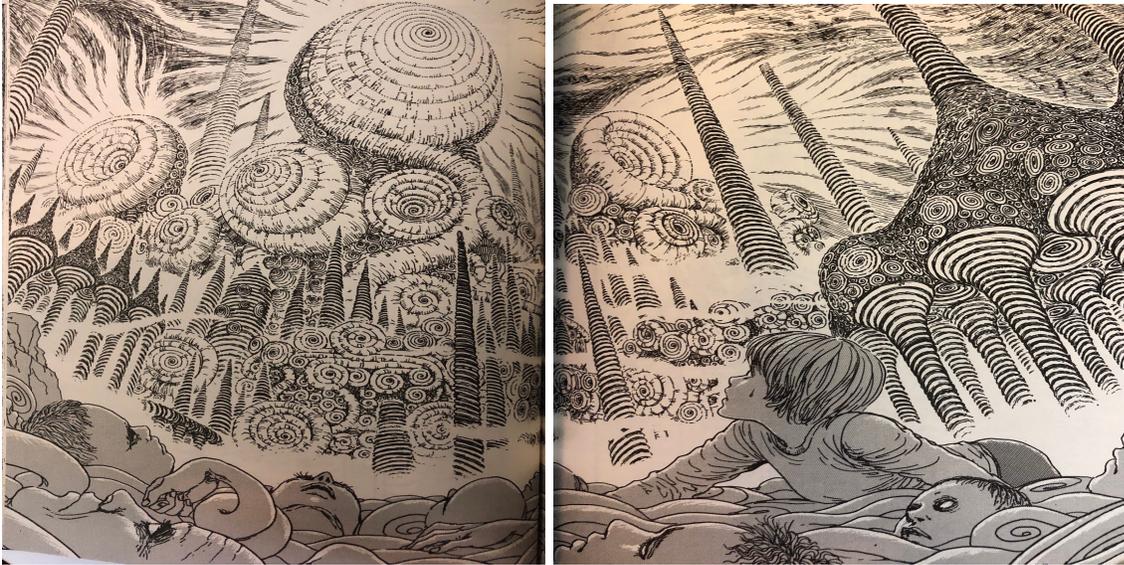


Fig. 10 The reveal of the spiral city underneath the town

The spiral, having been established as impure, is then amplified by the Structures of Magnification and Massification (Carroll, 1990). Kirie, surrounded by images of the abject, through the corpses underneath her and the spirals around, looks in awe and fear at the spiral now an abject that exists within the self and society as a whole, simultaneously attractricting and repulsing readers just like it does to Kirie. This full panel of the spiral city show how the spiral has completely integrated into the self and society, through its physical form of the spiral city as well as in the identities of the characters.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The manga seems to have been effective in turning the spiral into an abject, as evidence from the final arc. The spiral, however, throughout the story seems to have a significance to it that help make it into one. Throughout the manga, the spiral is seen by the characters as attractive as it draws the readers and characters in, by following the shape of the spiral towards the centre. The manga utilises the unique aspect of its shape by creating monsters that mirror it, for example the

attractive Azami. Additionally the spiral was perhaps chosen solely because it had a positive connotation(Winsby & Takano, 2006)- by subverting it, the manga goes against the natural order of society and expectations, and thus fully utilise the spiral to serve its intentions. In conclusion, any object can be imbued with notions of the abject through the various Structures (Carroll, 1990), and by fulfilling the requirements of the abject. While the shape of the spirals lends a hand in its creation as the abject, that does not mean only objects with like the spiral can be used. The manga fully utilises its shape- by having monsters mirror it or by subverting it, and thus incorporate it and link it to the monsters. Therefore, the analysis of the manga sheds light on how innocuous objects can be imbued with notions of the abject, and turned into the monster.

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