

The Erotic for the World Weary.

Carolyn Kendrick

Throughout the history of horror stories, both written and cinematic, it has always proved true that what terrifies us most is not real monsters and ghosts, but the act of creating or imagining them for ourselves. If we are shown what haunts the protagonists (whether it be a ghost, monster, witch, demon, etc.) we feel subtly disappointed; we have been robbed of our opportunity to imagine this horror for ourselves. If a writer or director simply alludes to this object of horror, giving us hints and small elements to add to the description, we can create in our minds something far more horrific than anything created by someone else. In fact, it is for this very reason that the amateur low budget film *The Blair Witch Project* was surprisingly such a blockbuster. Many questioned how such a film could have enjoyed so much success. The answer lays in what it alluded to as opposed to actually showed. To this day no one definitely knows who or what the Blair Witch is, or what happened to the protagonist after he stood in the dark corner of her basement.

Is all this so different from the erotic? What is it that so entices us about the erotic? The greatest erotic tales always possess an element of mystery. If we look at the arguably most famous erotic novel of all time, Pauline Réage's *The Story of O*, we will notice that O is always shrouded in mystery. Who really is O? What really happens to her, and how does her story come to an end? There are no definite answers that we can point to; we can only speculate and imagine for ourselves the real identity and story of O. It is this very mystery that entices us. Just as in tales of horror, we are most stimulated when our imagination is allowed to fill in the details. For if we have too much information or too clear a description, then we have crossed the line into soft porn, or in the very least, an unconvincing imitation of the erotic. We anxiously turn the page or hold our breath as we wait for the next image to appear on the screen, hoping to see just a little more, but deep inside we do not want to know or the spell will be broken.

Our fascination with the erotic can best be explained by the simple fact that the erotic lets our imagination run free and break from the monotony of reality. When we do not want to be held down to reality, we can safely explore our fantasies through someone else's imagined (or not) adventures. The erotic is, after all,

the catch on the gun,
the last breath of air,
the momentary release of the world weary.

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