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## Gender Representation in Midsommar

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## **GENDER REPRESENTATION IN *MIDSOMMAR***

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This presentation will explore the relationship between genre and representations of gender in Ari Aster's 2019 film *Midsommar*. In a recent interview, Aster suggests that "Genre filmmaking provides you with a sturdy framework that you can lay messier emotions onto and tell a very personal story, but it provides you with a strict path that you have to adhere to and forces you to find the catharsis in that story." While Aster highlights the importance of genre in his filmmaking, critics have struggled to place the genre of *Midsommar*. The film's conventions and affects are firmly rooted in the horror genre, yet Aster himself has identified *Midsommar* as a breakup film. This tension between genres positions *Midsommar* as a film that complicates its relationship to horror. While the horror genre conventionally subjects the feminine to an arc of victimization at the hands of a monstrous other followed by redemption, *Midsommar* instead shows the female protagonist establishing a sense of self by participating in horrific ritual violence. *Midsommar's* use of gender has generated questions that mediate how viewers engage with the genre. The aim of my research is to explore the ways in which *Midsommar* both participates in and goes beyond its genre conventions.