

RESEARCH E-PORTFOLIO

Hypothesis: Horror cliches are still effectively scary

EN202-03

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**The Clichés of Horror:
The Effectiveness of Overused Themes in Horror Media**

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Abstract

This research is a two-part study that involves the researcher's peers (adolescents) and the researcher herself, in exploring how horror media continues to attract audiences despite the growing predictability in the horror genre. The studies will also determine if the amount of exposure to horror media actually affects how an individual responds to suspicious hypothetical situations. Psychological sources, as well as articles that analyzed fear, have been reviewed in order to understand secondary questions such as, "Do humans react commonly to certain threats," "Are humans biologically the same in response to fear," etc. Three methods were used to investigate among the researcher's adolescent peers, which were mostly conducted through surveys. The first survey had 48 respondents; the second had 19 responses; and the third had 6 responses. The results overall proved inconclusive, yet some findings actually seem to contradict past studies. One finding showed that males did not enjoy gore as much as the females when watching a horror film, and that none of the participants of this research reported any aggressive behavior or thought after the slasher film. It is important to note that these results cannot be proven for all humans or demographics because the research was experimented upon a fairly small group of adolescents in Saipan, but these studies will at least help us understand more of how adolescents (and probably humans in general) react to horror media.

(Keywords: fear, threat, violence, horror, cliché, horror media, horror movies)

Introduction

Horror fiction is not for the fainthearted. Gore, violence, and all sorts of disturbing imagery are some of the defining elements in the horror genre. But as time goes on, the same concepts are used over and over, yet many viewers still cover their eyes despite having a good guess on what comes next. One famous example of a horror trope is the haunted house setting like in *The Amityville Horror* and *Sinister* (Wood, 2013, slide 10). Another example would be how children become a sort of bridge or target to paranormal entities, as showcased in *Poltergeist* or *Insidious* (Wood, 2013, slide 5). Some people continue to pay to see these sorts of movies or play these horror games in hopes for a good scare. Because of such observations, this research is a two-part study that involves the researcher's peers and the researcher herself to explore how horror media continues to attract audiences despite the growing predictability in the horror genre. The studies will also determine if the amount of exposure to horror media actually affects how an individual responds to suspicious hypothetical situations.

Background

Markiplier, one of the fastest rising *Let's Play* YouTubers, frequently plays horror games for the entertainment of others. The student researcher has recently become addicted to watching his videos. Although the researcher was actually sensitive to horror, she could not stop playing one video after another because of the thrill of jumpscare and suspense. However, she noticed that there were many similarities in scare tactics and concepts throughout the games Markiplier played. The genre created many questions in the student researcher, and when this research project was assigned by her EN202 instructor, the researcher had the chance to fully investigate and write a report of her findings.

Literature Review

The reviewed online literary sources to be used are based on how people react to horror films and games, why they react in certain ways, and sources that explain different horror tropes within the genre. These literary sources are to provide evidential support in answering the researcher's question, "Do recurring themes/concepts in horror media reflect people's psychological/biological fears despite various exposure levels to horror media?"

Dividing the literary sources into two categories, the first sort is centered on how people react to horror films and games. In the academic article *Sex and Violence in the Slasher Horror Film: A Content Analysis of Gender Differences in the Depiction of Violence*, Welsh provides many examples of research studies that focus on the connection between sexual content, gender roles, and violence in slasher horror films (2009). This article offers a great amount of opposing data to the researcher's assumption of stereotypical gender roles in horror media. Another academic article under this category is *Sign of a Threat: The Effects of Warning Systems in Survival Horror Games* by Bernard Perron, which goes into a detailed examination of the different incorporations of eeriness between various horror games. Perron's article offers many cases of effective strategies used for incorporating fear, which helps the researcher understand the value of suspense and jumpscars within horror games.

The second category of literary sources gives support towards why people react to horror media in a particular way. In *Body of Fear: How Your Body Keeps You Playing Horror Games*, this Web article explains the biological science behind people's "fight or flight" reactions to horror games (and horror media in general), and how the resulting adrenaline rush can become addictive (Agnello, 2013). The reporter for this online article also interviewed a psychologist/addictions specialist, as well as provided a few YouTube videos displaying gamer reactions to the horror game *Outlast*. Another source about the biological reaction to horror is the academic article *Monsters Evolve: A Biocultural Approach to Horror Stories* by Mathias Clasen. The

article contains interesting analyses by reviewing various demographics and human history to explain why humans react negatively to monsters (Clasen, 2012). Furthermore, in the academic journal article, *Understanding the Popular Appeal of Horror Cinema: An Integrated-Interactive Model* by Glenn D. Walters, a great analysis is offered about what are the certain factors in the horror genre that attract certain audiences and why (2004). The article also contains an in-depth analysis on why many adolescents find horror movies appealing. And so, these literary sources give excellent evidence for explaining why people respond to horror tropes unique to its genre.

An additional category was made to differentiate the source that explained horror tropes and themes often seen in the horror genre. This literary source is actually an online slideshow called *The Horror Genre – Media Studies* by Rachel Wood, in which certain stereotypical situations and characters are described with mentioned movie titles to illustrate these stereotypes.

Fear is biologically imprinted in humans so that we react similarly to the same concepts, which horror media makers know and exploit frequently, thus creating certain cliches. All of the reviewed literature mentioned agrees to this. Furthermore, these sources help determine the reason for their popularity and effectiveness for scaring people despite obvious cliches contained in the horror genre.

Research Questions

Primary Research Question:

Are the repetitive themes throughout the horror genre actually effective in creating a strong response in many people (whether it be fright or attraction) instead of creating boredom/desensitization?

Secondary Research Questions:

- How does fear make us react to horror?
- Do humans react commonly to certain threats?
- Can horror movies and games be addictive? Why?
- Why are there some people who watch horror movies or play horror games despite similar plots/scenarios/monsters/etc.?

Methodology

The study will consist of two parts: one in which the researcher will provide her own observations through personal experience, and three research methods using surveys in order to record the choices and reactions of the researcher's adolescent peers towards horror media and to threatening situations resonant to the horror genre.

The first survey focused on the respondents' levels of horror media exposure, as well as the cliches they noticed throughout the horror media they encountered. On the other hand, the second survey focused on the participants' psychological responses to hypothetically threatening situations. Their choices were recorded, and the results were analyzed for a connection between these choices and the individual's horror media exposure. These first two methods were distributed through Facebook among the researcher's peers and EN202 course-mates. The third method was having participants view a horror film housing typical horror tropes, and later have them take a survey for their reactions to the characters, graphics, and plot. The film chosen was *Evil Dead* (2013), a remake of the 1989 original. For more details about the surveys, see Table 1: Research Process (Revised Schedule) below.

There were some alterations to the schedule that was created during the early stages of the researcher's study. The initial plan was for the second method to be personal interviews conducted similarly to psychiatric sessions, in which certain visuals and situations will be presented to the participant. The participant would then make a choice on what they seem is the best action, which will be recorded down by the researcher for analysis. However, this method was altered due to the time inconvenience. Therefore, the researcher decided to input the images and questions in an online survey for the participants to answer in their free time. In addition, there was originally a fourth method which would be similar to the third method, except it would

be on the horror app game called *Project: Slender*. This was the most common game played/viewed by the participants in the first survey, and so the researcher decided to make another survey specifically for this game. Yet again, due to time inconvenience and the outright refusal of people to participate, this method was abandoned, and any results about horror games in this study would be taken from the first survey. Another setback would be the demographics of the surveys' participants. The researcher was unable to sufficiently reach out to the age groups below 14 and those above 21. Because of this, the researcher decided to focus on the adolescent age group between 14-21 years old. Despite the described setbacks, the research methods done had provided certain findings and results worth mentioning. Below is the revised schedule of the research process:

Research Process	
First Method: <i>Horror Movies and Games</i> (Survey)	Distributed: February 24, 2016 (by Google Forms, via Facebook, 48 responses)
Second Method: <i>Horror Movies and Games: Psychological Effects</i> (Survey)	Distributed: March 23, 2016 (by Google Forms, via Facebook, 19 responses)
Third Method: <i>Horror Movie Survey: Evil Dead</i> (Survey)	<p>Movie: March 19, 2016 (via Skype, 2 males)</p> <p>March 22, 2016 (EN202 class, 10 females)</p> <p>Survey Distribution: March 24, 2016 (by Google Forms, 6 respondents)</p>
Reading Notes and Literature Review	Reviewed: April 4-25, 2016

Table 1: Research Process (Revised Schedule)

Findings and Analyses

Self-Observation

The student researcher has watched over an estimated 100 horror gameplays by Markiplier over the last few months and decided to give an analysis on the effects watching so many of these videos. Markiplier is a man who appears in a corner of these videos in order to show his reactions to the horror games he plays, sometimes recommended by his fans or other *Let's Play* YouTubers. He provides much commentary and often cracks jokes as he plays through these games.

The first significant effect is how addicted the researcher has been when watching these videos. Dr. Benjamin Donner, PhD, explains that horror games have an effect of causing an adrenaline rush activated with dopamine and endorphins, which give a sort of electrifying feel as horror games play with our own senses with false threats and sharp jumpscare (Agnello, 2013). Yet as more and more of these horror gameplays are viewed, the same jumpscare and same plots and similar monsters are evident in many. Despite all these cliches, why is the researcher still addicted to watching even more? Donner, who is also an addiction specialist, describes that the adrenaline rush can be compared to using cocaine. When one keeps playing horror games for the thrills, a fear tolerance is developed, requiring more intense scares to keep up the level of adrenaline the player seeks (Agnello, 2013). Horror cliches aside, the researcher became addicted, and was apt to overlook the horror cliches in order to get a good jumpscare to get the adrenaline going.

Another effect in relation to the former effect mentioned is the researcher's desensitization to horror media. This is evident during the third research method (which will later be mentioned). As the researcher showed the horror film *Evil Dead* to her EN202 classmates, the

graphic and gory images did disturb the researcher, but it did not elicit a strong response of horror unlike the rest of the audience. In fact, the researcher was actually more amused of the others' reactions. This actually leads to another observation.

Although the researcher seems quite desensitized to horror media, she concludes that this is because her experience is second-hand. When watching Markiplier play those horror games, it is him playing, not the researcher. Therefore, the horror game experience was not as personal. When she conducted the horror film experiment for others to watch *Evil Dead*, she had her classmates in the room with her as a kind of distraction. Their reactions provided additional entertainment. If the researcher watched alone in that dark room and big screen, it would most likely cause a much stronger reaction from her.

And so, with the help of online articles, the researcher has come to understand her own behavior towards horror media. The researcher, however, has more methods to investigate how her own peers react to the horror genre.

1st Research Method

The first method was a survey titled *Horror Games and Movies*, which was focused on the amount of horror games and movies the respondents encountered, as well as the tropes repeatedly used among the works the respondents mentioned. There were 48 responses total. More than half of the respondents were of Asian descent; and although some reported to have certain medical conditions that would affect their viewership of horror films, all reported watching a horror movie at one point in their lives (see Appendix A1).

75% of the respondents agreed that horror movies have become predictable, while 12.5% disagreed, and the rest were unsure. When the responses were filtered to those who rarely viewed horror videos or films either online, in television, or in theaters, it is interesting to note that these

people were still able to list down several horror tropes for films and games in common with other respondents with more horror media exposure. Perhaps this is due to what other researchers believe in which fear is biologically passed down by evolution in order for future generations to survive in face of similar threats (Walters, 2004).

The most common horror movie between the respondents was *The Grudge* series, and the most common horror game was *Slender*. *The Grudge* is a classic paranormal film, based on the original Japanese film *Ju-On*, because of the horrifying white skinned-black haired female ghost, haunted house, and relentless hauntings in which the protagonists are left completely vulnerable to. *Slender*, a breakout indie game in 2012 based on an only creepypasta, not only has many rip-off versions but a fan-base as well. This game contains a lot of repetitive themes used in so many horror games such as a poor flashlight, finding objects, and wandering alone in a dark isolated location for some illogical reason to risk safety. Yet, the Slenderman is quite a fresh character not typically heard of before his debut to gamers. He is described as being an extremely tall man wearing a suit and having a white, faceless head, making sudden terrifying appearances and sometimes sporting large black tentacles sprouting from his back. Perhaps the novelty of this new type of horror antagonist is what engaged many people's curiosities into playing *Slender*. Despite the repetitive objectives and jumpscare, the fact that people have refused to participate for the fourth research method in playing *Slender* shows how effectively scary the game is even when some have not played it before. Perron mentioned that terror was based on a dread based on anticipation and imagination. The "terror" aspect is certainly true. Although Slenderman does not do anything but suddenly appear (and encounter static if the player faces him for too long), the anticipation of his next appearance—along with the subtle yet ominous music, character vulnerability, and disturbing setting—are what fuels the player's fears. Will H. Rockett also adds

that the usual factor in eliciting terror is nighttime because it gives a person uncertainty when perceiving the threat, creating that anticipatory dread (Rockett, 1988). *Slender* certainly implements the night factor.

2nd Research Method

The second survey, *Horror Games and Movies: Psychological Effects*, gives certain situations which are a loose emulations of scenes found in horror movies, and the respondents will choose the outcome of these situations. This method was mainly to determine if certain fears were common despite varying demographics (such as gender or religion) or levels of horror media exposure among individuals.

One question asked how often the respondents viewed horror media. The researcher had an assumption that adolescents with young children in close proximity would limit watching graphic/disturbing content generally found in horror media, therefore resulting to lower horror media exposure. The results proved this assumption as either false or inconclusive. Results showed that although 11 out of 19 respondents had children under the age of 13 living with them, six of them had rated higher than 5/10 in horror media exposure, similar to the eight other participants, who did not have children under 13 living with them (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

In one situation, the respondents were asked whether or not they would allow certain hitchhikers into their car on a rainy day (see Appendix B). Only 2 out of 11 females would allow *a man in a suit* to ride with them, while the same number out of 8 male participants responded likewise. Interestingly enough, when it came to the hitchhiker scenario, 4 out of 5 of the respondents with a rating of 5 and below for horror media exposure answered “No” consistently to all the hitchhikers provided. The researcher concludes that these people are actually more

perceptive of potential threats, making them much more anxious in suspicious situations; therefore this might explain why they limit their encounters with horror media.

In being asked the objects they preferred to be killed with, the answers were mostly consistent in choosing automatic weapons such as guns rather than melee-styled weapons such as knives or axes (see Appendix B). These results were true for both the respondents with higher and lower horror exposure, respectively. The researcher believes that this result's cause is none other than human imagination and relevant violent media exposure nonetheless. Guns are automatic weapons that can be fired from a distance, and if one is a good shot, then it takes one quick bullet to kill a person. The resulting death is more immediate, in contrast with being killed with a knife. A knife requires getting close to the target (unless thrown), therefore the victim has more time to process the threat, shooting down more fear adrenaline and anxiety down a person's veins. Most of the respondents would rather not watch a knife create bloody gash on their bodies nor have their limbs cut off.

In relation to the finding mentioned above, 31.6% of the respondents preferred to die in a plane crash, 10.5% would rather drown, 21.1% would rather drown, and another 21.1% would rather have their head cut off (see Appendix B). These results do not show much preference when considering if people would rather die a less gory death, due to the former finding of the respondents preferring to be killed with guns than knives. Yet, the researcher did note that none chose any sort of paranormal death. As Clasen puts it, ghosts are known to violate and defy physical reality, meaning it is almost impossible to avoid or even fight against, leaving a sense of vulnerability and helplessness (2012).

In another situation, respondents had to judge the best choice between stereotypical horror homes to move into. Only one person chose to live in the isolated house by the dark forest, while more than half of the respondents chose the large old mansion.

Another result worth mentioning is that 84.2% of the 19 respondents would feel most uncomfortable finding a classroom, although fully lit, with only one chair in the center.

3rd Research Method

This experiment involved participants from the researcher's EN202 class and peers to watch a horror film called *Evil Dead* (2013). This film can be classified under the slasher (and paranormal) sub-genre, in which it contains the classic slasher tactics of a lone female survivor, extremely graphic content with explicit deaths, and a horrific past event that is the basis of the murders (Clover, 1992; Jones 2008, April 16; Molitor and Sapolsky, 1993, p. 235). However, this film rarely contains any sexually provocative content as is frequent in other slasher films such as *Friday the 13th* (1980). The researcher then provided them the link to an online survey two days after. The participants would then answer about their opinions and reactions to the movie. The main focus was to find if the horror tropes in the film were still effectively scary to the audience and to analyze their reactions to the film in general.

During the film in the EN202 class, the researcher's most significant observation was how the audience became more reactive during scenes where distinctive horror tropes come into play, such as when Olivia looks into the bathroom mirror. This is perhaps because they already assume what will happen. Yet despite being able to predict the outcome, most of the audience still displayed strong emotions during these scenes. An assumption to why this is so could be that because the audience senses an oncoming threat, the body becomes alert and ready for action. This sort of reaction can be described as "fight or flight," in which a person will get ready to

elude the threat or go against it (Agnello, 2013). In the audience's case, some persons will either close their eyes (flight) or comment directly at the movie characters to warn them (fight). This is as much they can do in response to the threat on screen, since the viewers are helpless to alter the sequence of events. As Clasen argues, "horror stories do not reflect empirical reality but rather the psychology of our species," (2012). Only four females and two males responded to the survey, despite having an estimated 10 females who viewed the film in the EN202 class. Furthermore, four people have never watched the film until this experiment.

When rating the movie, five respondents rated it higher than 5 out of 10 according to its predictability (see Appendix C). Although the *Evil Dead* (2013) remake contained horror tropes (and even its own cliché-twists), four out of six respondents rated 4 out of 5 on the film's scariness (see Appendix C).

In another result, only one respondent reported to being desensitized to gore/violence while the rest reported more commonly to either mental trauma or anxiety (see Appendix C). Contrary to past studies as provided by an academic article by Andrew Welsh, the respondents did not report any signs of aggressiveness after watching this graphic film (2009). However, in agreement with these past studies, the males did show less empathy with the female characters than what the female respondents viewed.

There were no significant differences between the males and females in regards to choosing the most frightening or disturbing scene. All chose either the scene where Mia became possessed or the gory/graphic parts of the movie in general. Unlike what other studies have shown (Welsh, 2009), this result shows that gore/graphic content is still as disturbing to males as to females.

With only six respondents to the survey, these results are not accurate enough to represent adolescents in general. Nevertheless, this study's results do prove some aspects of previous studies into horror films as not completely precise either.

Conclusion

Through the three research methods conducted and several literary sources reviewed, the results are overall inconclusive. The results show that having children under 13 living in the household did not limit the adolescent participant from frequent horror media exposure. In the second study, when asked what object respondents preferred to be killed with, results heavily leaned towards automatic weapons (e.g. guns, machine guns, shotguns). However, when being asked what sort of death was preferred, results varied, showing no preference towards a less gory death. In another finding, it did seem to confirm (from past studies) that males are less empathetic towards female characters in a horror film. But this study showed that the males did not enjoy gore as much the females did. In addition, none of the participants reported any aggressive thoughts or behavior after watching the horror film, as past studies have found (Welsh, 2009). Therefore, the research methods actually contradict past studies and the researcher's own assumptions, and so this research should be taken into consideration in juxtaposition to other studies.

The literary sources also helped the researcher understand the effects of watching so many horror gameplays. However, this does not account to all people, especially of the squeamish type. The researcher could be classified as a "thrill-seeker" because of the addiction towards the adrenaline rush provided by horror games.

The participants of this research should not be accounted for representing all adolescents, for this research is but a small study located in Saipan in order to analyze how the respondents react to typical horror concepts and why they react in such way. This study can at least provide more insight on how adolescents react to horror media.

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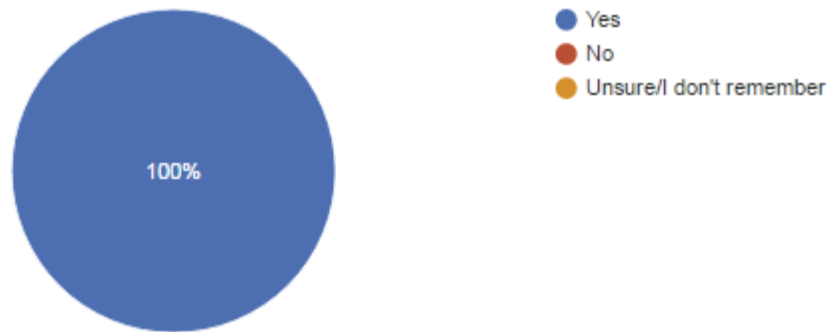
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Appendices

Appendix A

Horror Movies and Games (2016)

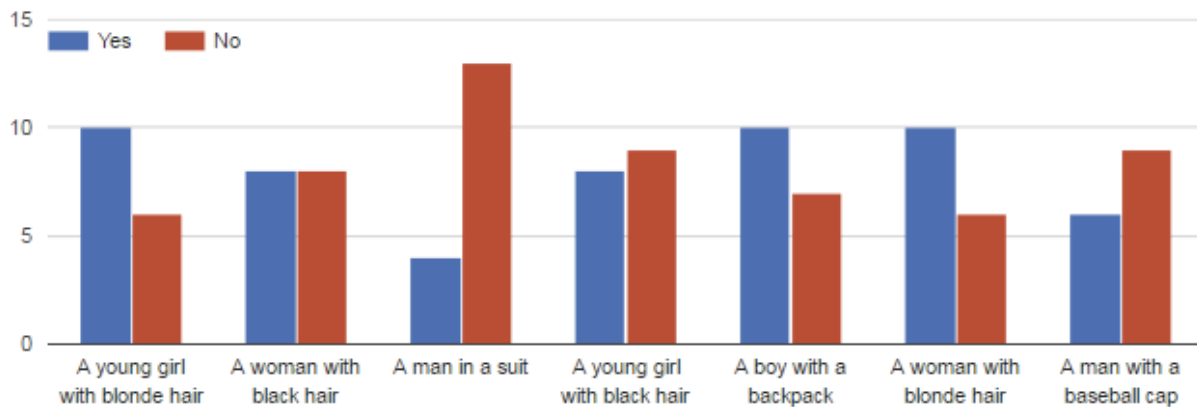
Have you ever watched a horror movie? (48 responses)



Appendix B

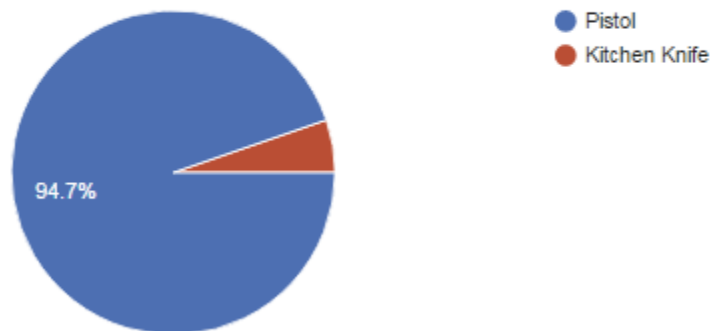
1. Horror Movies and Games: Psychological Effects, (2016)

You are driving during a rainy day down the countryside. There aren't any houses around except trees, and the next town is 5 miles away. Up ahead, you see someone walking by the side of the road. Select whether you would choose to give a ride to the following:



2. Horror Movies and Games: Psychological Effects, (2016)

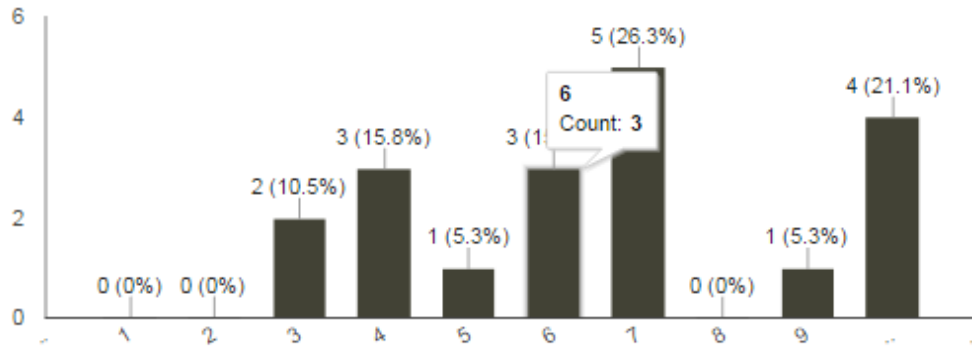
Which object would you rather die from? (19 responses)



Appendix B

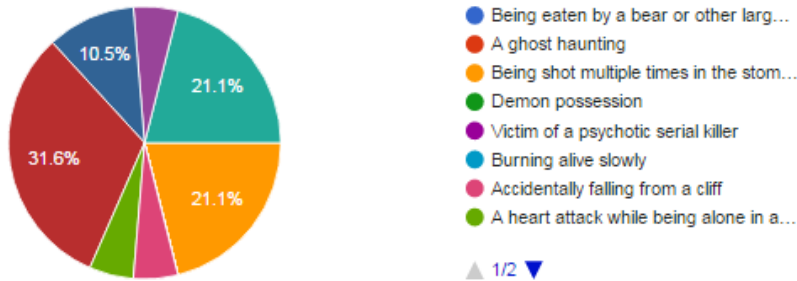
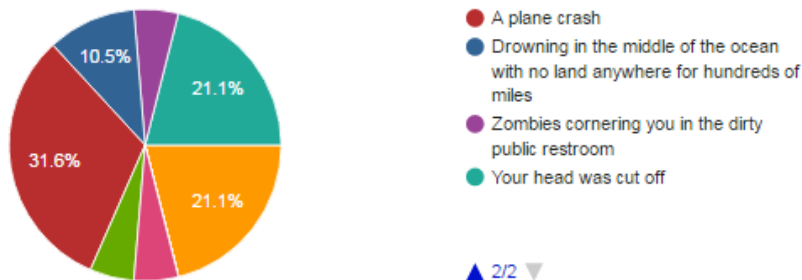
1) Horror Movies and Games: Psychological Effects, (2016)

Rate your level of horror media exposure (horror movies, games, TV shows, etc.) throughout your life, with 1 being the lowest and 10 as the highest.
(19 responses)



2) Horror Movies and Games: Psychological Effects, (2016)

What kind of death do you prefer from the rest? (19 responses)

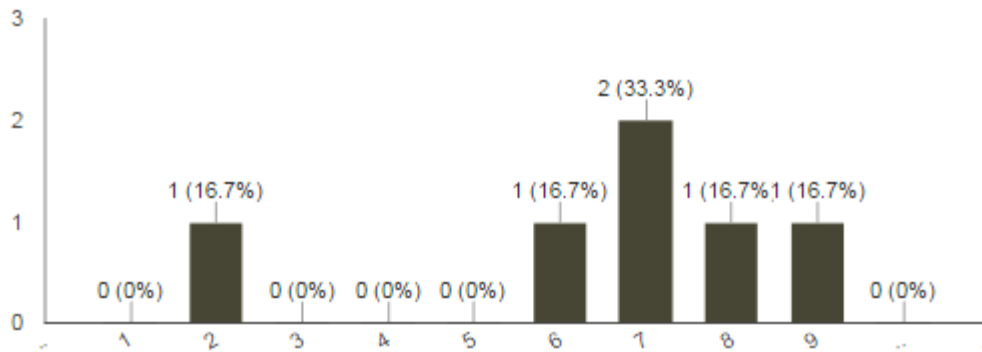


Appendix C

Evil Dead (2013) Survey, (2016)

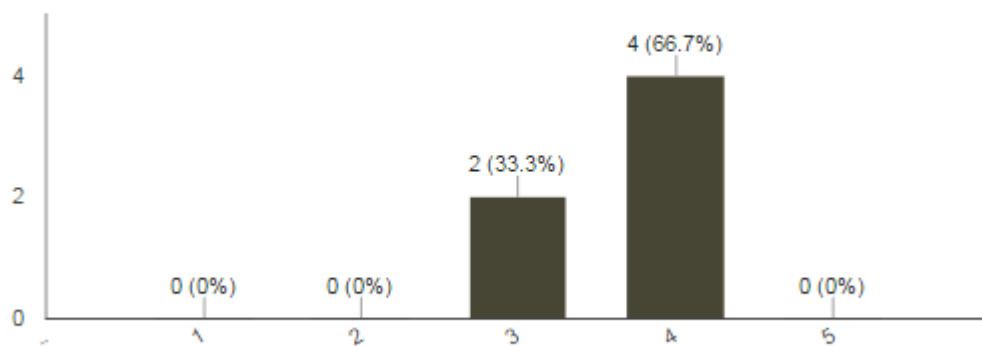
Did you notice yourself making guesses of what would happen next during scenes? Were you often right, or close to being right? Rate how predictable the movie was to you.

(6 responses)



Evil Dead (2013) Survey, (2016)

How scary was this movie? (6 responses)



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 EN202-03
 9 May 2016

Reading Notes for Research/Persuasive Essay

Quotes	Notes
<p>““When we become frightened our sympathetic nervous system takes over as we ready for 'fight or flight.'” Dr. Benjamin Donner, PhD, a psychologist in private practice and addictions specialist, explained to me how the body works in concert with the game. Early examples of horror are all about fight or flight...” (Agnello, 2013)</p>	<p>The horror in the games we are experiencing activates an instinct within our bodies, and that instinct gives us two main choices: run or hide.</p>
<p>"This state involves an adrenaline rush and ancillary activation of dopamine and endorphin. This flood of neurotransmitters is accompanied by elevations in heart rate, respiration, blood pressure, and blood sugar, along with pupil dilation and narrowed attention. The fear response is grounded in evolution. Whether fighting or fleeing, the adrenaline rush readies our minds and bodies to react to perceived threats with greater strength and speed than they could in our everyday resting state." (Agnello, 2013)</p>	<p>In dangerous situations, dopamine and endorphins are released throughout the body to amp it up for either fight or flight. The adrenaline rush gives us greater speed and strength in order to survive and enhance our perceptions of threats.</p>
<p>Horror games take full advantage of that by toying with and teasing the senses, scaring you and then providing momentary relief. "One theory holds that there's an adrenaline rush carryover that intensifies our emotional experiences even after a fearful scene has subsided, though we're not aware of it," said Donner, "So there's something of an electrified effect in the aftermath of a scare that may be appealing." (Agnello, 2013)</p>	<p>Some horror game lovers enjoy horror games because of the thrill during or after the scare. The after effects leave us in a high sense or state of emotion that keeps players on their toes, a sort of electrifying feeling.</p>
<p>“Even the Fullbright Company's Gone Home utilizes these tactics, forcing you to enter dark basement hallways and bedrooms unsure of what you'll find, and then providing sweet relief when you find a light switch to find there's nothing to be afraid of.” (Agnello, 2013)</p>	<p>Effective tactics are done in horror games so that suspense and jumpscars keep the player on an often constant state of alertness (or paranoia). Then, just when the player predicts a threat, the game would reveal no threat. However, some games use this efficiently by having this create a false sense of relief and then deliver the blow when least expected.</p>
<p>The other reason we're drawn to games that make us terribly uncomfortable and afraid is</p>	<p>Another reason horror game lovers enjoy them is because it gives an interesting</p>

<p>that they provide a distinct psychological fantasy rather than an aspirational one. Many games make you a hero, and while horror games often do as well, what your brain really likes is how unfamiliar their scenarios are. "The novelty of fearful circumstances makes them alluring--it allows for a break from our everyday routines and keeps our systems practiced, said Donner, "Distraction from everyday problems also appears to drive fear-enjoyment; when our minds are focused on a slasher scene for example, bills and work problems are temporarily banished." (Agnello, 2013)</p>	<p>psychological experience where you are not only the hero, but also exercises your psychological instincts in reaction to such situation. Basically, you can experience this dangerous situation with all the emotional intensity without actually experiencing the physical harm. Also, because fear is such a strong emotion, while players are into the game, usually other problems cease to exist while players focus at the danger at hand. Survival is always a prime objective especially in the face of danger.</p>
<p>Truly frightening horror games that keep delivering the fear drug are rare, though. By their very nature, video games are repetitive... The brain braces for that moment, and the rest of the body follows suit. Like a drug, we build fear tolerance. (Agnello, 2013)</p>	<p>Horror games can seem repetitive as they go on, especially once the main threat has been experienced. Players who are already deep into the game may have encountered the different threats and developed an understanding of the environment and the monsters' behaviors. This in turn gets the player to anticipate what happens next, thus building a fear tolerance. However, a truly frightening horror game will keep giving new environments and new threats once the player thinks he/she finally understands the behaviors of the horror world he/she is in.</p>
<p>"As we ready for fight or flight, we experience a neurochemical cascade that science has yet to fully comprehend," said Donner, "What we do understand is that this cascade involves a complex system of neurotransmitters also found in substances of abuse. Just as cocaine users require more of the drug to feel its effects after prolonged use, thrill-seekers may show an increase in fear tolerance, such that increasingly fearful stimuli are required in order to generate the desired response." Resident Evil, particularly the GameCube remake, endures as a horror game because it keeps varying the scares. (Agnello, 2013)</p>	<p>The adrenaline rush that accompanies horror games are similar to that experienced with addictive drugs such as cocaine. Thrill-seekers will continue to search for another source to keep up the addictive rush. But then a sort of tolerance is built, actually dulling the thrill the more it is sought. And so, if the scares in a horror game are repetitive and of the same level of intensity, the player will not be as scared as the first time. And so an effective horror game will vary the scares and their intensities.</p>
<p>Some typical components frequently evident in the slasher film include a past accident or failed prank that sets the murders in motion, frequent depictions of nudity and immoral behaviour by victims, unfamiliar locations,</p>	<p>Reference usage: Clover, C.J. (1992). Men, women, and chainsaws: Gender in the modern horror film . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.</p>

<p>sudden death scenes designed to maximize shock, and a final surviving female character (Clover, 1992; Jones, 2008, April 16). (Welsh, 2009, p. 2)</p>	<p>Jones, S.G. (2008, April 16). State of the slasher address . Retrieved from http://www.popmatters.com/pm/features/article/57439/state-of-the-slasher-address/.</p>
<p>Molitor and Sapolsky (1993) have formally defined the slasher film as: A commercially-released, feature-length film containing suspense-evoking scenes in which an antagonist, who is usually a male acting alone, attacks one or more victims. The accentuation in these films is on extreme graphic violence. Scenes that dwell on the victim's fear and explicitly portray the attack and its aftermath are the central focus of the slasher film. (p. 235) (Welsh, 2009, p. 2-3)</p>	<p>Reference usage: Molitor, F., & Sapolsky, B.S. (1993). Sex, violence, and victimization in slasher films. <i>Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media</i>, 37, 233-242.</p>
<p>Clover (1992), for example, has argued that while male and female characters die at relatively equitable rates, <i>only</i> death scenes involving female characters are likely to include sexual content. (Welsh, 2009, p. 3)</p>	<p>Clover (1992) believes that although both genders are killed off without much bias, death scenes involving females are more likely to include sexual content.</p> <p>Reference usage: Clover, C.J. (1992). <i>Men, women, and chainsaws: Gender in the modern horror film</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.</p>
<p>For instance, studies report increases in aggression when violence is portrayed as justified (Berkowitz & Powers, 1979) or is committed by attractive characters (Huesmann, Lagerspetz, & Eron, 1984). (Welsh, 2009, p. 3)</p>	<p>Reference usage: Huesmann, L.R., Moise-Titus, J., Podoloski, C., & Eron, L.D. (2003). Longitudinal relations between children's exposure to TV violence and their aggressive and violent behavior in young adulthood: 1977-1992. <i>Developmental Psychology</i>, 39, 201-221.</p>
<p>Characteristics of violent media content that attract viewer attention, such as graphic violence or sexual imagery, may then increase the negative effects of viewing violence in the media. (Welsh, 2009, p. 3)</p>	<p>Violent media content may use graphic violence or sexual imagery in order to attract viewer attention, or else it may have not much effect on the viewer.</p>
<p>Cowan and O'Brien (1990) coded indicators of sexual behaviour, personality traits, and survival outcomes associated with characters across 56 films...Results revealed that female characters were not more likely to be victimized and in fact were more likely to survive acts of violence</p>	<p>In a study conducted by Cowan and O'Brien (1990), results showed that the female characters were not more victimized, but were however more likely to survive acts of violence compared to males. Also, a large proportion of characters were victimized</p>

<p>compared to male characters. However, the researchers also found that a relatively large proportion of nonsurviving characters were engaging in sexual activity either prior to or immediately preceding their victimization. (Welsh, 2009, p. 4)</p>	<p>either during or after engaging in sexual activities. Reference usage: Cowan, G., & O'Brien, M. (1990). Gender and survival vs. death in slasher films: A content analysis. <i>Sex Roles</i>, 25, 187-196.</p>
<p>The failure to find significantly more violence targeted against women in slasher films was replicated in subsequent studies. Weaver (1991) focused on the violent and sexual content of scenes across 10 slasher films, while Molitor and Sapolsky (1993) analyzed violent, sexual, and sexually violent interactions across 30 slasher films released in 1980, 1985, and 1989, respectively. No differences in the rates of violent victimization between male and female characters were observed in either study. Molitor and Sapolsky found that male characters experienced a significantly higher number of deaths and injuries as compared to female characters. Furthermore, neither study reported significant gender differences in the likelihood of violent assaults being juxtaposed with sex or nudity. Both studies did, however, note that death scenes involving female characters were significantly longer than comparable scenes of violence involving males. (Welsh, 2009, p. 4)</p>	<p>Male characters were more likely victims to violence and more serious injuries compared to female characters. Neither study reported any significant gender differences with violence being juxtaposed with sex or nudity. Reference usage: Molitor, F., & Sapolsky, B.S. (1993). Sex, violence, and victimization in slasher films. <i>Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media</i>, 37, 233-242. Weaver, J.B. (1991). Are "slasher" horror films sexually violent? A content analysis. <i>Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media</i>, 35, 385-393.</p>
<p>Using the same coding protocol from their previous study (Molitor & Sapolsky, 1993), Sapolsky et al. found that male characters in slasher films were twice as likely to be victims of violence as compared to female characters. (Welsh, 2009, p. 4)</p>	<p>Reference usage: Molitor, F., & Sapolsky, B.S. (1993). Sex, violence, and victimization in slasher films. <i>Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media</i>, 37, 233-242.</p>
<p>This particular approach certainly underestimates the frequency of violent acts, particularly with respect to female characters given that in many slasher films, the surviving character is a woman who has survived repeated attacks. (Welsh, 2009, p. 5)</p>	<p>Many slasher film usually depict a woman who has survived many repeated attacks.</p>
<p>Sexual behaviour included any depiction of nudity or partial nudity, voyeurism and/or exhibitionism, and physical intimacy between characters including intimate kissing, sexual caressing or foreplay, and sexual intercourse. In</p>	<p>Reference usage: Wilson, B.J., Kunkel, D., Potter, W.J., Donnerstein, E., Smith, S.L., Blumenthal, E.Y., & Berry, M. (1998). Violence in television programming overall: University of</p>

<p>addition to general violence, a specific type of violence, sexual violence, was also examined in the current study. Sexual violence included any depiction of intercourse or sexual touching that involved either verbal or physical coercion, rape, or acts of sadomasochism. (Welsh, 2009, 7)</p>	<p>California, Santa Barbara study. In <i>National Television Violence Study, Vol. 2</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p>
<p>I argue that horror stories do not reflect empirical reality but rather the psychology of our species. The sustained generation and consumption of horror fiction over space and time suggest that a species-typical cognitive architecture for dealing with danger is brought into play by such stories. (Clasen, 2012, p. 1)</p>	<p>Horror stories do not reflect general reality but humanity's inmost fears. Horror stories help us understand and deal with certain typical dangers.</p>
<p>Human cognition has been fine-tuned by natural selection to deal with dangers in the environment, and horror fiction depends crucially on this mental machinery. (Clasen, 2012, p. 1)</p>	<p>Horror fiction, which display dangerous situations, thrives on how humans react to dangers in the environment.</p>
<p>Imagine this. You are alone, at night, walking in the woods. From somewhere, suddenly, come a sound, a rustling, and something that sounds like growling. These auditory cues, perhaps implying lethal danger from a predator, generate in you a precautionary neurophysiological reaction. Attention is sharply focused on the potential threat, all thoughts of the upcoming. (Clasen, 2012, p. 2)</p>	<p>Auditory cues, such as misplaced sounds juxtaposed with the current environment, create a sudden sense of high alertness. This attention becomes sharply focused on the potential threat and anticipates the upcoming.</p>
<p>Your pulse climbs, you start sweating, your mouth dries out, energy is directed to the big muscles and away from the digestive system: These various responses are jointly mobilized by the emotion of fear (Tooby & Cosmides, 2000). (Clasen, 2012, p. 2)</p>	<p>Reference usage: Tooby, J., & Cosmides, L. (2000). Evolutionary psychology and the emotions. In N. Lewis & J. M. Haviland-Jones (Eds.), <i>Handbook of emotions</i> (2nd ed., pp. 91–115). New York, NY: Guilford Press.</p>
<p>Your body prepares for confrontation or flight, pending further evidence. It could be a false alarm, but given that reacting to a false alarm is vastly less catastrophic than failing to react to a lethal threat, responding with a heightened state of emergency is a safe bargain and hence the baseline response (Marks & Nesse, 1994). (Clasen, 2012, p. 2)</p>	<p>Although the perceived danger could be a false alarm, your body is already prepared for dealing with the danger. It is because it is more lethal in failing to react, and so the body delves into a heightened state of emergency. Reference usage: Marks, I. M., & Nesse, R. M. (1994). Fear and fitness: An evolutionary analysis of anxiety disorders. <i>Ethology and Sociobiology</i>, 15, 247–261. doi:10.1016/0162-3095(94)90002-7</p>

<p>Modern-day horror stories, by flinging us into virtual universes that brim with lurking dangers and aggressive predators, send us on a journey backward in time, to the dark days in human phylogeny when the setting sun signified grave danger and real monsters could very well be gathering just outside the fragile circle of light cast by the bonfire. (Clasen, 2012, p. 2)</p>	<p>Modern-day horror stories actually sends us into virtual realities that parallel the primal instincts of survival that date back to our ancestors.</p>
<p>Evidence is also forthcoming from an intriguing study of a woman with neurological impairment (Feinstein, Adolphs, Damasio, & Tranel, 2011a). This patient, famous in neurological literature as SM, suffers from focal bilateral amygdala lesions. She is, in other words, fearless because of localized brain damage. In a recent experiment, a team of researchers subjected the woman to a variety of fear-inducing situations. They took her to a pet shop and exposed her to snakes and tarantulas, they dragged her on a tour of a haunted house, and they had her watch clips from a number of well-known horror films. In the pet store, SM was “spontaneously drawn to the snake terrariums.” She asked repeatedly if she could touch or hold even large, dangerous snakes, and “also attempted to touch a tarantula, but had to be stopped because of the high risk of being bitten” (Feinstein et al., 2011a, pp. 34–35). When they visited Waverly Hills Sanatorium, a commercially run “haunted attraction” in Kentucky, SM showed no fear but reported “a high level of excitement and enthusiasm” (p. 35): (Clasen, 2012, p. 3)</p>	<p>SM, a female patient famous for lack of ‘fear’ due to localized brain damage, had been a subject of an experiment that tested her capacity of fear. SM did not show any fear to the various dangers and supposedly creepy situations she encountered. Instead, she actually showed “a high level of excitement and enthusiasm”.</p> <p>Reference usage: Feinstein, J., Adolphs, R., Damasio, A., & Tranel, D. (2011a). The human amygdala and the induction and experience of fear. <i>Current Biology</i>, 21, 34–38. doi:10.1016/j.cub.2010.11.042</p>
<p>It is striking that patient SM not only lacked fear but also displayed high interest in fearful situations and objects. As the research team argued, “fear-inducing stimuli are still capable of eliciting changes in attention and arousal through structures other than the amygdala” (Feinstein et al., 2011a, p. 37). Horror monsters are not only terrifying, they are captivating. (Clasen, 2012, p. 3)</p>	<p>Patient SM showed the research team fear-inducing stimuli could still heighten attention and arousal through other body structures other than the amygdala. This was showcased by SM’s increased attention and enthusiasm to expose herself to the dangers.</p> <p>Reference usage: Feinstein, J., Adolphs, R., Damasio, A., & Tranel, D. (2011a). The human amygdala and the induction and experience of fear. <i>Current Biology</i>, 21, 34–38.</p>

	doi:10.1016/j.cub.2010.11.042
The primary function of a fictional monster is to be salient. It can fulfill that function by being dangerous because humans are hard-wired to pay attention to dangerous agents, but the monster becomes even more interesting by being unnatural. (Clasen, 2012, p. 3)	A fictional monster is usually conspicuous and unnatural, which makes it more interesting.
Indeed, monsters appear in stories, myths, and artwork all over the world. As David Gilmore (2003) has documented through extensive anthropological research, “people everywhere and at all times have been haunted by ogres, cannibal giants, metamorphs, werewolves, vampires, and so on” (p. ix). Likewise, according to Stephen Asma (2009), the “monster archetype seems to appear in every culture’s artwork” (p. 282). (Clasen, 2012, p. 3)	Monsters are universal throughout human history, and certain monsters are even identified in many different parts of the world. Reference usage: Gilmore, D. D. (2003). <i>Monsters: Evil beings, mythical beasts, and all manner of imaginary terrors</i> . Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. Asma, S. T. (2009). <i>On monsters: An unnatural history of our worst fears</i> . Oxford, England: Oxford University Press
Horror monsters are usually supercharged predators with counter-intuitive traits, well designed to capture and hold our attention. They are tailored to have a specific effect on the human mind..(Clasen, 2012, p. 3)	
Different as these shape-shifters are on the surface, they are products of the same universal psychological processes producing output with local environmental and cultural inputs...coupled with a knowledge or impression of local predators and a memory bank of monster stories, work together to elaborate on the culturally transmitted idea of a shape-shifter and to make the were-animal a successful cultural figure...and the very idea of a were-animal is a spectacular embodiment of the commonsensical observation that human nature is fraught with conflicting forces, some of them dark and bestial. The werewolf is efficient both as a metaphor for the “beast within man” and as a literal, tweaked predator reminiscent of the kind of monsters that stalked our ancestors. (Clasen, 2012, p.4)	Shape-shifters may be a product of different combinations, but is essentially the same idea embedded in humans. The differences may be influenced by the environment and culture of the local region, but the shape-shifter is considered a predator nonetheless. Because of the monster’s mix of beast and human qualities, it could be an embodiment of human nature’s conflicting forces, which contain the dark and bestial. The were-wolf is an effective metaphor of the “beast within man.”
The zombie packs a double whammy in	

<p>its dual assault as a physically dangerous agent that is riddled with pathogens. It wants to eat you, and it is extremely infectious. Furthermore, the zombie is a counterintuitive and thus salient idea: It is a reanimated human corpse and a “person” without a mind, or at least with severely impaired cognitive functioning (and thus the opposite of a ghost, a mind without a body). (Clasen, 2012, p. 4)</p>	
<p>In the case of zombies, these horror monsters do gain much of their power and salience as metaphors for sociocultural anxieties, but this power works in tandem with (and secondarily to) the literal, predatory, and disease-salient presence of zombies (Clasen, 2010a). The zombie was gradually introduced into pop culture during the 20th century and rose swiftly in popularity and visibility following the commercial success of Romero’s groundbreaking film (Pulliam, 2007). It could never have achieved this level of cultural success if it had not connected squarely with adaptive dispositions to fear lethal attack and infectious agents. (Clasen, 2012)</p>	<p>Reference usage: Clasen, M. (2010a). The anatomy of the zombie: A bio-psychological look at the undead other. <i>Otherness: Essays and Studies, 1</i>, 1–23.</p> <p>Pulliam, J. (2007). The zombie. In S. T. Joshi (Ed.), <i>Icons of horror and the supernatural</i> (pp. 723–753). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.</p>
<p>A vampire is a reanimated corpse whose sole sustenance is the blood of living humans. The vampire has changed and multiplied enormously over the past 300 years, so that today’s teen idol vampires from such stories as L. J. Smith’s <i>The Vampire Diaries</i> series and Stephenie Meyer’s <i>Twilight</i> saga are barely recognizable as descendants of the nocturnal revenants that preyed on rural Eastern European populations in the 18th century (Vanderbeke, 2010). (Clasen, 2012)</p>	<p>Reference usage: Vanderbeke, D. (2010). The vampire strikes back: On the history of a nightwalker. <i>Fastitocalon, 1</i>, 3–19.</p>
<p>Drawing on archeology, forensic pathology, folklore, and history, Paul Barber (1988) convincingly argues that vampires in the early 18th century were really a product of a prescientific misunderstanding of biochemical processes. Because nobody had come up with a germ theory of disease, disease was understood in terms of agency, often</p>	<p>Reference usage: Barber, P. (1988). <i>Vampires, burial, and death: Folklore and reality</i>. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.</p>

<p>intentional intervention by supernatural agents, not in terms of invisible microorganisms. (Clasen, 2012, p. 5)</p>	
<p>Some modern authors have moved the vampire figure from the uncanny world of demonic forces and supernatural causation to a naturalistic universe of communicable disease, for example, Richard Matheson in his 1954 novel <i>I Am Legend</i> (Clasen, 2010b), thus mirroring the cumulative success of natural science as an explanatory system; Bram Stoker's <i>Van Helsing</i> studies forgotten books of the occult; Matheson's <i>Robert Neville</i> looks at vampire cells in his microscope. The kind of hypersexualized vampires that have recently become popular arguably reflect human female mating strategies, rather than evolutionarily recurrent threats embodied in predatory monsters. These slightly dangerous, highly attractive, and pathologically devoted male vampires seem to condense "cads" and "dads" into one (see Johnson, 2011, on <i>Twilight</i>). Such stories are predominantly about mate choice rather than escaping a dangerous predator. Mate preferences rest on a universal, biological substrate, but they are modulated by cultural norms. It is obviously important to understand the kind of culture that gives rise to for example Stephenie Meyer's odes to unbridled materialism, impossibly attractive people, and idealized romantic love, which could not have arisen in the culture of Eastern Europe in the 18th century. They are at home in contemporary America. (Clasen, 2012, p. 5)</p>	<p>Because of the increase of scientific knowledge today, some modern authors have shifted the creation of a monster, such as vampires, from the medieval to a more scientific approach. As in the case of the Richard Matheson's book <i>I Am Legend</i>, vampirism was caused by a disease with a possible cure. Other authors, such as Stephenie Meyer and her books the <i>Twilight</i> series, instead give another view of vampires as hypersexualized that reflect female mating strategies. The focus on the vampires are more on their sex appeal rather than the danger they pose.</p> <p>Reference usage: Clasen, M. (2010b). Vampire apocalypse: A biocultural critique of Richard Matheson's <i>I Am Legend</i>. <i>Philosophy and Literature</i>, 34, 313–328. doi:10.1353/phl.2010.0005</p>
<p>The ghost is, basically, a disembodied mind, a counter-intuitive agent that commands attention and historically has been useful for explaining odd events. (Clasen, 2012, p. 5)</p>	<p>The ghost is a disembodied mind and has, throughout history, been often used for explaining odd events.</p>
<p>Nonetheless, the ghosts are more than metaphors: They are plain creepy in their literal reality-violating, vengeful aspect. (Clasen, 2012, p. 5)</p>	<p>Ghosts are more than psychological metaphors because the very thought of them is creepy, especially because they violate our plane of physical reality by haunting.</p>

<p>Horror fiction capitalizes on cognitive and physiological machinery that is a product of natural selection. Some horror fictions rely on powerful fear or even terror responses (and few horror film directors are loath to throw in a startling scare or two), and others are more dependent on low-key anxiety-provoking storylines and monsters. (Clasen, 2012, p. 5)</p>	<p>Horror fiction takes advantage of the human mind, relying on fear and terror responses. Some horror film directors love throwing in jumpscars, while others depend on suspenseful stories and low-key monsters.</p>
<p>We know that certain demographic populations are more likely than others to find horror stories attractive, particularly as pertains to horror films. Adolescent males top the list (Hoffner & Levine, 2005; Weaver & Tamborini, 1996). Many horror films feature disgusting contents (decaying monsters, bodily mutilations, and so on). Females have been shown to be higher in disgust sensitivity than males, probably as a defensive function of immunosuppression during parts of the reproductive cycle (Lie´nard, 2011, pp. 1069–1070). Women might thus be less likely to enjoy the more disgust-dependent horror films, like some slasher films and works in the “gorenography” subgenre. Research has shown that sensation-seeking personality traits are correlated with a preference for horror films (reviewed in Hoffner & Levine, 2005), and adolescent males display the highest tendency to engage in dangerous or quasi-dangerous behavior (Arnett, 1996). Pierre Lie´nard (2011) notes that males are more likely “to be in intense competition with same-sex conspecifics” and to form coalitions and strong male–male bonds, particularly in adolescence and young adulthood (p.1071). Perhaps horror films provide a stage for almost ritualistic male–male challenges: Like rites of passage, horror films may serve as a kind of intragroup challenge and also reinforce group bonds. The affirmation of such bonds may be what the ordeal of sitting through a horror film produces: not just “I made it,” but “We made it—together.” (Clasen, 2012, p. 6)</p>	<p>Many horror films depict disgusting contents, and females were proven to be more sensitive to this sort of content than males. (Lie´nard, 2011) Research also shows that pertaining to the attraction of horror stories, male adolescents topped any other demographic group. They also display a high tendency to engage in dangerous behavior (Arnett, 1996). The reason why males seem to prefer horror films may be caused by a psychological sort of competitive ritual between males. Like a rite of passage, males would watch the film where a sort of accomplished feeling will ensue, as if having gone through a dangerous ordeal themselves. Thrill-seekers, as well, are found to prefer horror films (Hoffner & Levine, 2005).</p> <p>Reference usage: Hoffner, C.A., & Levine, K.J. (2005) Enjoyment of mediated fright and violence: A meta-analysis. <i>Media Psychology</i>, 7, 207-237, doi: 10.1207/S1532785XMEP0702_5</p> <p>Weaver, J. B., & Tamborini, J. (Eds.). (1996). <i>Horror films: Current research on audience preferences and reactions</i>. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum</p>

<p>One study found that respondents reported enjoying a horror film more if an opposite sex coviewer reacts in a “gender-appropriate” way (i.e., fearlessness or mastery of fear for boys, fearfulness or distress for girls). In this study, subjects were exposed to a clip from <i>Friday the 13th Part 3</i> (1982). Male respondents in the company of visibly distressed females claimed to enjoy the clip about twice as much as those in the company of fearless female peers (Zillmann & Weaver, 1996). (Clasen, 2012, p. 6)</p>	<p>One study showed that when viewers were with others of the opposite sex, they tend to enjoy horror films more. Perhaps it could be an ancient primal tendency between males and females, where the males react fearlessly while females became distressed. Males who were accompanied with fearless females did not enjoy the movie as much as distressed females. (Zillmann & Weaver, 1996)</p> <p>Reference usage: Zillmann, D., & Weaver, J. B. (1996). Gender socialization theory of reactions to horror. In J. B. Weaver & R. Tamborini (Eds.), <i>Horror films: Research on audience preference and reactions</i> (pp. 81–101). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.</p>
<p>Likewise, girls enjoyed watching a film in the company of a scared boy considerably less than in the company of a fearless one. Moreover, respondents rated coviewers as more attractive when their coviewers reacted gender-appropriately to the clip. Perhaps a misattribution of arousal partly accounts for this finding (cf. Dutton & Aron, 1974); the arousal elicited by the film clip is misinterpreted as arousal caused by the coviewer, which then leads to an inflated attractiveness rating as a result of rationalization and is exacerbated when the coviewer reacts in the desired gender-appropriate way: “Something has gotten me hot under the collar. Maybe it’s the person screaming/coping admirably next to me. That person must be very desirable.” This phenomenon has become known as the <i>snuggle theory of horror</i> : that horror films can provide a setting for amorous adolescents to react in socially sanctioned, gender-specific ways and cuddle up in the semidarkness of the cinema. (Clasen, 2012, p. 6)</p>	<p>Likewise, females enjoyed watching a horror film with a more fearless male than a scared one. It was also shown that both gender respondents found their coviewers more attractive when they acted “gender-appropriately.” This attraction could be a misinterpreted arousal from the film rather than from their coviewer. This theory is known as the <i>snuggle theory of horror</i>.</p> <p>Reference usage: Dutton, D. G., & Aron, A. P. (1974). Some evidence for heightened sexual attraction under conditions of high anxiety. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 30, 510–517 doi:10.1037/h0037031</p>
<p>The key, from the viewpoint of natural selection, is to make such learning pleasurable. Hence, finding pleasure in vicarious learning about dangerous agents</p>	<p>Horror fiction is also pleasurable because of the sort of learning experience that it creates within our consciousness. Because we hear or view the dangerous situation unfolding before</p>

<p>and situations is adaptive. Steen and Owens (2001) argue that human chase play specifically is adaptive in that it helps to mature a child's predator detection and evasion skills. Natural selection has made play behavior self-rewarding, simply because play is adaptive... (Clasen, 2012, p. 6)</p>	<p>us, we get also get to learn how to deal or cope with it. Predator detection and evasion skills also come into play by making us aware of how dangerous the situation is.</p>
<p>If one meets a hungry predator for the first time, it is desirable to have a store of surrogate experience with predator evasion to draw from rather than proceed by trial-and-error. Thus, like pretend play, fiction is a kind of mental simulation (Oatley, 1999) that gives us surrogate experience risk-free and at low cost (Carroll, 1999, 2011; Tooby & Cosmides, 2001). Scary stories about dangerous monsters illustrate this principle well (Sugiyama, 2006). (Clasen, 2012, p. 6)</p>	<p>Horror fiction provide us with mental stimulation, giving the viewer/player a dangerous but fictional situation without any risk or cost (Carroll, 1999, 2011; Tooby & Cosmides, 2011).</p> <p>Reference usage: Oatley, K. (1999). Why fiction may be twice as true as fact: Fiction as cognitive and emotional simulation. <i>Review of General Psychology</i>, 3, 101–107. doi:10.1037/1089-2680.3.2.101</p> <p>Carroll, J. (1999). The deep structure of literary representations. <i>Evolution and Human Behavior</i>, 20, 159–173. doi:10.1016/S1090-5138(99)00004-5</p> <p>Carroll, J. (2011). <i>Reading human nature: Literary Darwinism in theory and practice</i>. New York, NY: SUNY University Press.</p>
<p>The fascination with monsters that many people (especially children) feel is probably the result of an adaptive tendency to pay attention to such dangerous agents and to learn about their behavior vicariously, what H. Clark Barrett called the “Jurassic Park hypothesis” (2005, p. 218). In this view, the modern horror story is a kind of supernormal stimulus, a hypertrophied variation on chase play: It is a technology that enlists all manner of monstrous agents to tap into an adaptive motivational system for learning about danger and to calibrate our responses to danger. As Kim Newman (2011) put it, “the central thesis of horror in film and literature is that the world is a more frightening place than is</p>	<p>The fascination with monsters may not only because of their unnatural appearance or ways, but because it is a sort of game that attunes the human body into high attention to any potential threats. It helps horror fiction consumers in adapting and tuning their skills in case of actual threats in the real world.</p> <p>Reference use: Barrett, J. L. (2004). <i>Why would anyone believe in God?</i> Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.</p>

<p>generally assumed” (p. 5). Consuming horror fiction could thus be adaptive. It has all the benefits of learning about danger and one’s own response to danger, but without the risk of actual harm. (Clasen, 2012, p. 6)</p>	
<p>One reviewer (Wong, 2000), looking back at <i>Jaws</i> (1975), noted how in the wake of this film, a “mundane event like going for a swim at the beach just wasn’t the same again . . . just like many people stopped taking showers after seeing <i>Psycho</i>.” To cease showering is probably not very adaptive, unless one finds alternative means of personal hygiene, whereas showing a greater degree of vigilance while bathing in the sea—even if great white sharks very rarely attack people—could be a sensible strategy. (Clasen, 2012, p. 6)</p>	<p>Horror films could be quite traumatic, turning a normal activity into something feared because of a particular scene or monster from the film.</p> <p>Reference usage: Wong, J. (2000). Review of film <i>Jaws</i> (1975). Retrieved from http://www.moviemutterings.com/reviews/j/jaws.htm</p>
<p>Pointing out that the monster is a universal figure, he plausibly suggests that “stories about monster threats and heroic conquests provide us with a ritualized, rehearsable simulation of reality, a virtual way to represent the forces of nature, the threats from other animals, and the dangers of human social interaction” (pp. 282–283). Sometimes horror stories can be traumatic (cf. Cantor & Oliver, 1996), sometimes the pleasure of watching a horror movie is subordinate or even incidental to the pleasure of getting together with friends, and sometimes the negative emotion evoked by a horror story is a nuisance for the reader interested in other qualities offered by the story. (Clasen, 2012, p. 6)</p>	<p>Horror films elicit all sort of responses among viewers: some experiences can prove traumatic, while others are pleased with the thrill. Either way, monsters are universal, and horror fiction usually gives a hero/survivor to go against the monster. This display could represent the forces of nature, and is almost ritualistic in its way with the protagonist overcoming the threat.</p> <p>Reference uses: Cantor, J., & Oliver, M. B. (1996). Developmental differences in responses to horror. In J. B. Weaver & R. Tamborini (Eds.), <i>Horror films: Research on audience preference and reactions</i> (pp. 63–80). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.</p>
<p>At any rate, horror stories are ubiquitous in popular culture because they are effective at what they do. And what they do is provide an imaginative space in which thrilling, uncanny encounters with all manner of monsters can take place. If ancestral environments had not been dangerous, if we were all perfectly fearless, we would have no horror stories today: no bloodsucking vampires, no scary ghosts, no howling werewolves. (Clasen, 2012, p. 7)</p>	<p>Horror fiction provides us with a sort of thrilling fantasy with eerie encounters and frightening monsters.</p>
<p>At the plot level, the hero/heroine investigates a</p>	<p>The usual plot basis for a horror game is when</p>

<p>hostile environment where he/she will be trapped (a building or a town) in order either to uncover the causes of strange and horrible events (<i>Alone in the Dark, Resident Evil, Siren</i>) or to find and rescue a loved one from an evil force, be it a daughter (<i>Silent Hill, Fear Effect</i>), a mother (<i>Clock Tower3</i>), a wife (<i>Silent Hill 2</i>) or a brother (<i>Resident Evil 2, Fatal Frame</i>). At the action level, in a third-person perspective⁴, the gamer has to find clues, gather objects (you cannot do without keys) and solve puzzles. In order to survive with the weapons he has (or will come across), the gamer has to face numerous impure, disgusting, creepy and threatening monsters (zombies, demons, mutated beasts, abnormal creatures, spirits, vampires, etc.). The conflict between the avatar and those monsters is the dominant element of horror. (Perron, 2004, p. 2)</p>	<p>the protagonist becomes trapped in a hostile environment and investigates around, most likely to escape or find a loved one. Several objectives would help the player progress, such as finding certain objects, solving puzzles, find clues. Sometimes, the player is also given weapons, foreshadowing a confrontation with a threat. Of course, this is for more action-based games.</p>
<p>As Will H. Rockett puts forward, horror is compared to an almost physical loathing and its cause is always external, perceptible, comprehensible, measurable, and apparently material. Terror, as for it, is rather identified with the more imaginative and subtle anticipatory dread. It relies more on the unease of the unseen. (Perron, 2004, p. 2)</p>	<p>According to Will H. Rockett, horror and terror are two different aspects. Horror is more like a negative physical reaction caused something external, while terror is more based within the mind, or anticipatory dread. And so horror would be caused by what is currently happening or has happened, while terror is the developing dread of the upcoming.</p> <p>References used: Rockett, Will H.. <i>Devouring Whirlwind. Terror and Transcendence in the Cinema of Cruelty</i>, Greenwood Press, New York, 1988.</p>
<p>“The most common time of terror... is night, a great absence of light and therefore a great time of uncertainty” [22: p. 100]. Without daylight, certainty and clear vision, there is no safe moment. Terror expands on a longer duration than horror does. By plunging its gamer alone in the dark or in mist and giving him only a flashlight to light his way (and so forcing him to play alongside the imperfectly seen), <i>Silent Hill</i> and <i>Fatale Frame</i> succeed at creating the fundamentals of terror. Though the young girl Miku, the gamer’s avatar in <i>Fatal Frame</i>, suddenly finds herself face-to-face with a spirit</p>	<p>Nighttime is usually used in horror games because the absence of light causes more uncertainty of what lurks in the darkness. Also, the protagonist is usually alone throughout the game, creating an even more vulnerable exposure to danger. These sort of game tactics create the response of terror within gamers.</p>

<p>or Jill in <i>Resident Evil</i> frequently meets up with zombies, these encounters are not the same when the hero can't clearly see their enemies or their surrounding environment. (Perron, 2004, p. 2)</p>	
<p>Crawling with monsters, survival horror games make wonderful use of surprise, attack, appearances and any other disturbing action that happens without warning. According to Robert Baird's analysis in "The Startle Effect. Implications for Spectator Cognition and Media Theory", the games have the core elements of the (film) threat scene's startle effect at their disposal: "(1) a character presence, (2) an implied offscreen threat, and (3) a disturbing intrusion [often accentuated by a sound burst] into the character's immediate space. This is the essential formula (character, implied threat, intrusion)... (Perron, 2004, p. 2)</p>	<p>The essential formula for a jumpscare, or a surprise attack or appearance, is the character's current situation, then an implied offscreen threat, and finally a sudden and disturbing intrusion accompanied with a burst of sound.</p>
<p>To trigger sudden events is undoubtedly one of the basic techniques used to scare someone. However, because the effect is considered easy to achieve, it is often labeled as a cheap approach and compared with another more valued one: suspense. (Perron, 2004, p. 2)</p>	<p>However, because jumpscare could be easily done (yet an art to effectively impact a horror response), it is often been called a cheap tactic when poorly and often executed.</p>
<p>As Noël Carroll asserts in <i>The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart</i>, suspense is not unique to horror, but rather is a key narrative element in most horror stories [7: p. 128]. In Carroll's curiosity theory⁵, although the emotions of horror and suspense might be different (the object of horror is an entity – the monster – and that of suspense is a situation), they can coexist and bring about a concerted effect, especially when it comes to one of the most characteristic themes of horror narration: discovery [7: p. 144]. Discovery is also the theme of a large number of survival horror games. In a "drama of corridors" (one of Carroll's expressions that applies quite well to the maze structure of these games and many others⁶), the gamer has to find the virus or the supernatural force responsible for the rise of the monsters. And he can expect to fight a last boss monster at the end. Although suspense can be created in the overarching structure of the</p>	<p>In Noel Carroll's curiosity theory, although horror and suspense elicit different emotions, they can be combined to create a particular effect especially upon discovery of a new environment, situation, or threat.</p> <p>Reference usage: Carroll, Noël. "Film, Emotion, Genre", in G. Smith and C. Plantinga (eds.), <i>Passionate Views : Film, Cognition and Emotion</i>, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1999, 21-47.</p>

<p>plot, it can also be generated during short events or incidents. (Perron, 2004, p. 3)</p>	
<p>To borrow, yet again, from Carroll's terminology [8], suspense can arise in regard to the plot's few macro-questions (e.g., will the hero/heroine find the loved one?) or the more numerous micro-questions that connect one fictional event to another. As the tension intensifies when we have to answer these micro-questions (e.g., will the bomb explode under the table while the two people are still talking?), and because it touches the action level of video games, I'm interested in suspense at the episodic level. But still, as Greg M. Smith does regarding film, we have to argue that the primary emotive effect of games is to create a mood, i.e. "a preparatory state in which one is seeking an opportunity to express a particular emotion or emotion set" [23: p. 38]. A fearful mood therefore encourages and prepares you to experience fright, and a good dose of panic bolsters the mood in return. Just as gamers do not like boring games, neither would they appreciate being panic-stricken all the time. It's all about maintaining a good balance. (Perron, 2004, p. 3)</p>	<p>Suspense can develop from questions formed by the plot, increasing tension and anticipation as the game progresses.</p> <p>Reference usage: Carroll, Noël. "An Alternative Account of Movie Narration", <i>Mystifying Movies. Fads & Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory</i>, New York, Columbia University Press, 1988, 170-181.</p>
<p>For Dolf Zillmann, "suspense is conceptualized as the experience of uncertainty regarding the outcome of a potentially hostile confrontation" [30: p. 283]. (Perron, 2004, p. 3)</p>	<p>Reference usage: Zillmann, Dolf. "The Logic of Suspense and Mystery", in J. Bryant and D. Zillmann (eds.), <i>Responding to the Screen. Reception and Reaction Processes</i>, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdall, N.J., 1991, 281-303.</p>
<p>You're made to adopt the protagonist's position to follow the event and to live side by side with him the length of the action. But, studies of suspense have revealed that a character does not only have to be in a distressing situation, he also needs to be liked. Comisky and Bryant's experiment of varying levels of perceived outcome-uncertainty and disposition toward the protagonist confirm that audiences get involved with and become more anxious about a hero with whom they have a strong affinity [9: p. 78]. Bonded with the character that represents him in the game-world, the gamer is visibly driven to have this disposition toward his</p>	<p>In a horror game, instead of just watching a completely scripted ordeal of the protagonist going through the horror, it is the player that controls the character's movements. In an experiment conducted by Comisky and Bryant, the players are confirmed to show more anxiety towards their character with whom they strongly empathize. They give more hope to a favored outcome for the character and fear that it might not happen.</p> <p>References used: Comisky, Paul, and Jennings Bryant. "Factors involved in generating suspense", <i>Human</i></p>

<p>avatar. Being fond of the protagonist causes more hope for a favored outcome and more fear about the possibility that it might not occur. As a matter of fact, fear emotions are also central to the understanding of suspenseful drama. (Perron, 2004, p. 3)</p>	<p><i>Communication Research</i>, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Fall 1982), 49-58.</p>
<p>In psychology, the concept of threat is associated with the one of “anticipatory fear” and psychological stress [17]... For instance, relevant to the distinction between shock and tension is an experiment by Nomikos et al. that shows two versions of a film portraying wood-mill accidents. The first without warning and the other one with warning (as shots depicting the victim’s finger approaching the whirling blade of a milling machine), demonstrate that: “(a) Long anticipation of a harmful confrontation (suspense) is more disturbing than short anticipation (surprise); and (b) most of the stress reaction occurs during the anticipation or threat period, rather than during the actual confrontation when the subject views the accident itself” [20: p. 207]. (Perron, 2004, p. 3)</p>	<p>An experiment by Nomikos et al. showed that “[l]ong anticipation of a harmful confrontation (suspense) is more disturbing than short anticipation (surprise)...” The experiment also showed that most of the stress among the subjects where before the threat was actually confronted.</p> <p>References used: Nomikos, Markellos S., Edward Opton, Jr., James R. Averill, and Richard S. Lazarus. “Surprise versus suspense in the production of stress reaction”, <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1968), 204-208.</p>
<p>So as to warn its gamer, survival horror games have various warning systems built on physical cues and/or audio and visual cues either displayed on the screen, presented at an extradiegetic level, or integrated into the game-world. (Perron, 2004, p. 4)</p>	<p>Survival horror games usually have a sort of warning system that alerts the player of a nearby threat. This could be a certain device the character has in possession, or certain visual/auditory cues in the game.</p>
<p>...the sequences of survival horror games also elicit uneasiness about how uncertain the outcome is. You know that you’ll have to face a monster, but you do not know how it will turn out. Not only your fright, but your anxiety as well is therefore intensified. Furthermore, as Torben Grodal stresses about video games, “suspense is interwoven with the interactive and repetitive nature of the game” [14: p. 206]. While aggressions, battles, mutilations and deaths remain final and unchangeable facts in a movie, in a game they are not. Events can be different or, at least, can be triggered in a different order. (Perron, 2004, p. 6)</p>	<p>References used: Grodal, Torben. “Video Games and the Pleasure of Control”, in D. Zillmann and P. Vorderer (eds.), <i>Media Entertainment: The Psychology of Its Appeal</i>, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, N.J., 2000, 197-213.</p>
<p>According to the [Zillmann] disposition theory, a necessary condition for suspense is that the viewer witnesses the conflicting forces (...)</p>	<p>According to Zillmann, it is necessary in the creation of suspense that the viewer observes the conflict without being able to influence it.</p>

<p>without being able to intervene in the goings-on. If viewers could influence the plot, for example, the fate of the characters, their experiential state would change into actual fear or hope” [28: p. 64]. (Perron, 2004, p. 7)</p>	<p>If they could (as in a horror game), then the experience is more of real hope or fear.</p> <p>References used: Vorderer, Peter, and Silvia Knobloch. “Conflict and suspense in drama”, in D. Zillmann and P. Vorderer (eds.), <i>Media Entertainment: The Psychology of Its Appeal</i>, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, N.J., 2000, 59-72.</p>
<p>The spectator of a horror film and the gamer of a horror game are akin in the way that both are always aware that they themselves are not the victim of the monster’s assault and that it is someone else doing the <i>suffering</i>. But while, ideally, their emotional responses run parallel to those of the characters, their way of feeling fear is different. In a horror movie, Carroll observes [7: p. 17], the emotional responses of the characters cue those of the audience. Both responses are synchronized. The characters exemplify for the spectator the way in which to react to the monsters by the reports of their internal reactions... In that sense, “one of the most frequent and compelling images in the horror film repertoire is that of the wide, staring eyes of some victim, expressing stark terror or disbelief and attesting to an ultimate threat to the human proposition” [quoted in Carroll, 7: p. 243 n. 45]. The spectator is consequently prompted to respond the same way. Often shown in close shots and in shot/reverse shot where both the point of view of the victim and that of the monster are shown, it is the spectator that is forced to witness these bloody confrontations. (Perron, 2004, p. 7)</p>	<p>Horror films and games are similar in that the consumer knows they themselves are not harmed in the experience. On the contrary, the experiences are quite different since horror games are more interactive, thus creating more empathy from the player to the character. In horror films, visible emotional reactions made by the characters influence the viewers to react similarly in a more distant bystander perspective.</p> <p>References used: Carroll, Noël. <i>The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart</i>, Routledge, New York, 1990.</p>
<p>Feeling <i>with</i> the protagonist, he experiences empathic distress in seeing, for example, a babysitter terrorized by the idea that a monster is stalking around the house. But whatever happens, the spectator is forced to have an observational attitude, He is controlled by the filmmaker who guides him around as he pleases through the time and space of the fictional world. The spectator cannot participate in the situation. On the brink of finding the action too</p>	<p>In horror films, viewers can feel with the protagonists, but cannot interact whatsoever, and is instead made to observe the scripted events unfold. If what happens next is too scary, the viewer can simply look away or cover his/her eyes. However, in horror games, the player must become active, forcing the character into action or risk virtual harm.</p>

<p>scary, he only can cover his eyes to defend himself against the horrible sights (though he still hears what's going on). (Perron, 2004, p. 7)</p>	
<p>But in those case, the effect of the filmic subjective shot structure (which makes you feels <i>as if</i> you were in the situation of a character) is replaced by the sense of agency. Janet Murray has defined this characteristic delight of electronic environments in <i>Hamlet on the Holodeck. The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace</i>: "Agency is the satisfying power to take meaningful actions and see the results of our decisions and choices" [19: p. 126]. You indeed control your avatar in the game-world (and the subjective point of view when it is the case), a control that leads to a mutation in the way you experience the scene. It is certainly not the avatar that is meant to be scared in a survival horror game, but rather the gamer, i.e. you. If we can still refer to empathy since you experience emotions <i>with</i> an avatar, it is clear here that we cannot talk about identification with the character or about <i>becoming</i> the character in the game-world.⁹ This is because the emotional state of that character is not identical to yours. When a monster bursts through the window, it makes you, not the avatar, jump.¹⁰ (Perron, 2004, p. 7)</p>	<p>1st person perspective in gaming gives the player a more interactive feel, since the gamer is looking through the eyes of the character. This creates a sense of agency, because the player feels more of the control in making decisions. It is not the character that is meant to be scared in a survival horror game, but the player. When a jumpscare happens, it is the player who reacts strongly, not the character.</p> <p>References used: Murray, Janet H. <i>Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace</i>, The Free Press, New York, 1997.</p>
<p>Upon the sign of threat, the avatar does not express apprehension. When the visual warning system is displayed on the screen or the audio cues are extradiegetic, these signs are not for the avatar's benefit. Although the various avatars make themselves heard during their fight, scream when assailed and audibly breathe their last breath, they remain impassive on the action level. Whatever situation is faced in Silent Hill, Raccoon City or elsewhere, the avatars keep a "stone face" while responding to your actions. Instead, their reactions are behavioral and external. You are linked and synchronized with them physically. (Perron, 2004, p. 7)</p>	<p>In 1st person perspective, the character usually remains impassive throughout the game. The player may hear the character's heavy breathing or screams, but it is the player that actually feels the emotions. Their reactions are external, while the players are linked to them physically.</p>
<p>However, in the game-world, since you merge with your avatar at the action level, and since your main goal is precisely to make him/her survive the threatening monsters, you're indeed</p>	

<p>made to be afraid that the monsters will trap you, in other words to fear <i>as if</i> you were in danger. This time, when the action becomes really scary, you can't simply cover your eyes. Holding your controller, your extradiegetic activity must be to try to overcome the diegetic situation of your avatar. (Perron, 2004, p. 8)</p>	
<p>In a horror movie, when the hero/heroine is in danger, you cannot do anything but hope he/she will overcome the threat. Your action tendency is virtual. On the other hand, in survival horror games, you can do something. You can make your avatar act. You actually (even if it is related to a <i>virtual</i> gameworld) have a repertoire of controls: draw and choose weapons, shoot, attack, guard attack, charge in, turn 180°, run away, use items to replenish life gauge, etc. Those actions give you gameplay emotions, emotions related to the ways you react to the situation. (Perron, 2004)</p>	
<p>“Video games therefore”, asserts Grodal, “simulate emotions in a form that is closer to typical real life experiences than film: emotions are motivators for actions and are labeled according to the player’s active coping potentials” [14: p. 201]. (Perron)</p>	<p>References used: Grodal, Torben. “Video Games and the Pleasure of Control”, in D. Zillmann and P. Vorderer (eds.), <i>Media Entertainment: The Psychology of Its Appeal</i>, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, N.J., 2000, 197-213.</p>
<p>Let’s quickly distinguish two forms of such coping. In survival horror games, a confrontational coping strategy that makes an individual fight back somewhat aggressively when facing a difficulty comes down to killing the monster. When you know that there is a monster nearby, you go to destroy it. This is how fearless gamers are likely to handle threats. In the other way, you can manage the situation in a more rational and planned manner. You appraise more consciously the magnitude of the threat before you face it. You then decide if it’s better to attack or to avoid and escape the monster. A timorous gamer can be expected to react in this way. In any case, the coping process can change throughout a game. As Folkman and Lazarus point out: “[d]uring the anticipatory phase of the encounter, cognitive coping strategies can transform a threat appraisal into a challenge through their affect on</p>	<p>There are basically two ways of coping I a horror game. Fearless gamers are more likely to confront the threat and eradicate it. Another way is to go about stealthily. The player would observe the threat and think more on whether he/she should confront or evade the threat. These two approaches can be utilized depending on the situation. If the player has an appropriate weapon and supplies to recover from damage, the player may be more likely to confront the threat. Likewise, stealth would be a better option when one is low on supplies/health and an inadequate weapon.</p>

<p>secondary appraisal [during which you ask yourself what are your options for coping]" [11: p. 321]. One will agree that it is less stressful and much more fun to face a monster (and even more so a boss monster!) when you have the appropriate weapon, plenty of ammunition and first aid kits to recover from damage. It is also reassuring to know that you have mastered all the controls of a game and that you can move freely and (most importantly) quickly in the gameworld. With all adequate coping resources, you can interpret the sign of a threat differently. (Perron, 2004, p. 9)</p>	
<p>STOCK CHARACTERS THE WOMAN IN BLACK THE AMITYVILLE HORROR Children are often used in horror films as the enigma of a paranormal film. They usually don't speak and are used as a more visual horror. In many cases they have been murdered and are in fact victims that do not rest. This is evident in films such as The Woman In Black, where although they are not the main libertine, they haunt Eel Marsh House. In other cases such as The Amityville Horror she is possessed by a greater evil – in horror films they are usually not the original source and have been manipulated in some way. Another couple of horrors that include evil children are films such as Sinister and The Shining. Sinister is a story that shows a chain of children manipulated by Bughuul, AKA the Bogey Man, that then continue to haunt the house for future victims. (Wood, 2013, slide 3)</p>	
<p>STOCK CHARACTERS THE DESCENT EDEN LAKE The final girl is a trope in thriller and horror films that specifically refers to the last woman or girl alive to confront the killer – the one who is left to tell the story. Usually, the character progresses throughout the film, changing from a state of vulnerability and weakness into something more typically masculine. She often is given a phallic object in the film, for example some kind of weapon. The final girl has been observed in many films such as The Cabin In The Woods and The Grudge. (Wood, 2013, slide 4)</p>	

<p>STOCK CHARACTERS THE AMITYVILLE HORROR THE SHINING Another way children are used in horrors is as the residents son or daughter. It's often found that they main character, man or woman, has a child that slowly starts to change. At the beginning of the film they are perfectly ordinary but throughout the horror they change. In many cases they are used as the bridge between the 'spirit' and the protagonists. This is used in films as a suggestion that children are more naïve and open to new things; they it easier to believe in the unbelievable. This is much the case in The Others where the two children often comment on the other people living in the house – we share the protagonists view point and see no one. Children seem to be more knowledgeable on something the adults cannot comprehend. This is also present in The Ring. The Shining also features the little boy seeing unnatural things. Unlike other horrors he does not befriend the ghosts, but he does see them. A good example of a child befriending the enigma is The Amityville Horror – in this she is influenced to commit life threatening actions and cannot explain her reasons. (Wood, 2013, slide 5)</p>	
<p>STOCK PLOTS Different types of horror embark on different plots. Slasher type horror films usually involve a psychopathic killer stalking and killing a sequence of victims in a violent manner – often with a cutting tool, for example, an axe or a knife Slasher films can also overlap with the crime and thriller genre. The antagonist is usually masked much lie in Friday The 13th. These films usually result in everybody dying and the killer escaping. A Nightmare On Elm Street is a good example of a slasher type horror film, as is The Texas Chainsaw Massacre – given away in the title. Gothic horror films are quite different. This is a type of story than contains elements of Goth and horror; it may have romance than unfolds within the horror film, but it usually is suspenseful. Let Me In follows the plot of a dark twisted love between vampire and human.</p>	

<p>The two usually would not fit together but find a way. Dracula is an example of a Gothic film, as is Dorian Gray, but the two are at different ends of the timeline. A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET LET ME IN (Wood, 2013, slide 6)</p>	
<p>STOCK PLOTS THE SHINING THE AMITYVILLE HORROR One type of plot in a horror is a psychological horror, which usually relies on characters fear, guilt, emotional instability and sometimes the supernatural. Films that follow this are horror such as The Exorcist and Gothika. In many cases a horror can involve a family of some sort (at least one adult and one child) moving to a new house/location. It then unfolds throughout the film that the location has a bad history of murder/death. Slowly the protagonists we follow start to play out the same plot as the previous residents of the house. This can include mental instability of the father in a lot of cases, who slowly becomes crazy and murders his family. This plot is present in The Shining which features Jack, the father, going insane and attempting to kill his family. This is where the well know 'Here's Johnny' scene comes into play. The Amityville Horror follows the same plot where he tries to kill his own children under the influence of the location itself. (Wood, 2013, slide 7)</p>	
<p>STOCK PLOTS THE HUMAN CENTIPEDE THE HILLS HAVE EYES A common occurrence in a horror film technology failing – for example the car breaking down. This can leave the characters stranded in unknown, isolated territory. In The Hills Have Eyes the characters lose access to the outside world and encounter monsters due to technology failing them. This leaves them stranded. The idea of isolation is a primal fear so it is something that appeals to an audience, which is why cars break down so often in films and the mobile phones don't work. This fault in technology usually leads the protagonist to the antagonist and ultimately their deaths. In The Human Centipede the protagonists' car breaks down</p>	

<p>and they must leave their sanctuary and search for help, where in turn, they meet the surgeon (the antagonist). (Wood, 2013, slide 8)</p>	
<p>The woods ensure a feeling of unknown as anything can be hiding behind the trees – the film makers know this and as do the audience. Locations such as these can provide any type of monsters such as werewolves or maniacal Hill-Billy's. Camping is also used in horror films as tents and cabins are one in the same – both vulnerable and open to attack. The film The Cabin In The Woods is an obvious example of how the horror can be created from the location. (Wood, 2013, slide 9)</p>	
<p>STOCK LOCATIONS Haunted houses are very common in horror locations – most usually very gothic themed. Huge abandoned mansion built hundred of years ago are most popular. A location such as this can provide a range of props within it that fit the horror theme such as creaky floorboards. Candles on the walls are used in many cases so they can blow out when the antagonist arrives, much like in The Phantom Of The Opera. Tall towers on the building and long eerie corridors provide lots of empty spaces for antagonists to hide and torment the protagonist. They are often badly lit and dusty. Houses such as this usually have history and a story to tell which is where the horror is created. (Wood, 2013, slide 10)</p>	
<p>In many horror films the protagonist gets lost in some way. Fog is a popular use for the character to become disorientated. The use of this block us from seeing anything but the protagonist and what the film wants us to see; there are no other details to distract us. This state of confusion orientates the viewer into the protagonist's emotion and stress. It is almost as if we are transported to a different location as nothing can be seen. It is then that something emerges in the fog, often abstract at first. (Wood, 2013, slide 11)</p>	
<p>Dolls are used in many horror films to signify horror. This could be because they signify children and illustrate the torment the child is going through but on the exterior. It could also</p>	

<p>show a broken child or the time difference from a previous resident. The idea that the dolls are supposed to be for children but instead look scary has become a common occurrence in certain types of horror films. The Amityville Horror and The Woman In Black both show shots of worn toys and dolls. The film Chucky takes it a step further by possessing the object so it becomes the antagonist. Drawings by children are also regular in other- worldly type films such as The Ring where the little boy draws picture of Samara, the antagonist. It is also in the The Others – this shows how susceptible the children are to the ghost haunting the characters and that they are slowly becoming connected. The illustrations, like in The Last Exorcism can become precursors to later on in the film. (Wood, 2013, slide 12)</p>	
<p>In most horrors low pitched music is used to build up intensity, like in The Woman In Black, and then a loud shocking noise matches when antagonists pop out. This technique is used in all sub-genres of horror. It is illustrated in films such as The Hills Have Eyes, Eden Lake and A Nightmare On Elm Street. This is nearly always the soundtrack to a horror film. Depending on the time period of the film the instruments chosen are different. In some cases the sequence can go completely silent in order to build suspense. This makes the contrast of a loud non-diegetic noise, or the introduction of a diegetic noise such as a phone call more shocking. The tone of a phone going dead or just ringing is very ominous in horror films and often crops up in the genre. (Wood, 2013, slide 13)</p>	
<p>One of the forerunners of modern horror fiction, H. P. Lovecraft (1923/1973), wrote that horror stories project an ◆atmosphere of breathlessness and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces . . . of that most terrible conception of the human brain◆a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the demons of unplumbed space◆ (p. 15). (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>The definition of horror utilized in this paper</p>	

<p>consists of three parts.◆ First, horror films are fictional rather than non-fictional, even though they may be inspired by actual events... The second component of the present definition of horror... eliciting terror in the viewer is the ultimate goal of the horror writer and filmmaker... Finally, as Lovecraft observed, horror tales challenge or suspend the natural laws by which we live.◆ If not supernatural, the forces set loose in horror films imply gross abnormality, thus keeping movies like <i>Psycho</i> (1960) and <i>Jaws</i> (1975) within the horror genre.◆ Hence, the definition of cinematic horror employed in this paper asserts that horror is a fictionalized account designed to evoke terror through the implied presence of supernatural or grossly abnormal forces. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p><i>Excitation Transfer</i> is a variation on the catharsis view.◆ Zillmann (1978) has argued that frightening movie stimuli physiologically arouse the viewer who then experiences an intensification of positive affect in response to plot resolution, whether or not this entails a happy ending.◆ Sparks (1991), in line with this model, discerned that distress and delight in response to a horror film correlated in three different samples, the effect being particularly pronounced in males.◆ However, in many horror films the plot is never resolved and the monster or killer survives to participate in the sequel, and there is no evidence that serial films like <i>Friday the 13th</i> (1980, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1993) or <i>Halloween</i> (1978, 1981, 1988, 1989, 1995, 1998) are any less popular than horror movies in which the monster or killer is vanquished (Wells, 2000).◆ McCauley (1998), in conducting two small studies, also uncovered data inconsistent with the excitation transfer hypothesis to the extent that enjoyment of cinematic horror was higher during the movie than at the end of the picture. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>Carroll (1990) maintains that instead of eliminating or reducing negative affect, horror films stimulate and excite positive emotions like</p>	

<p>curiosity and fascination.❖ The violation of societal norms, a common theme in many horror pictures, may attract the attention of some viewers because it is outside the viewer's normal everyday experience.❖ In support of a curiosity/fascination explanation of horror film popularity, Tamborini, Stiff, and Zillmann (1987) observed a correlation of .39 between the deceit subscale of the Machiavellianism scale, a measure of the acceptance of norm violating behavior, and interest in horror cinema.❖ Alternatively, research connotes that not all viewers identify with norm violating and, in fact, respond favorably when norm violators, like teenagers who engage in drug use, premarital sex, or petty crime, are punished over the course of a movie (Weaver, 1991). (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>In other words, if it is someone who is seen as deserving of punishment, like a teenage girl currently engaged in sexual activity (Weaver, 1991), then the viewer is likely to adopt a positive view of the violence.❖ Violence directed against someone not considered deserving of punishment, like an innocent child, is more likely to be interpreted in a negative light.❖ While the dispositional alignment theory informs us of which episodes of violence in a horror picture will be acceptable to a viewer, it does not fully explain why horror, graphic or otherwise, is so popular with viewers. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>In a classic study on gender differences in the social context of horror movie watching, Zillmann, Weaver, Mundorf, and Aust (1986) determined that teenage boys enjoyed a horror film significantly more when the female companion they were sitting next to expressed fright, whereas teenage girls enjoyed the film more when the male companion with whom they were paired showed a sense of mastery and control.❖ These observations have given rise to the gender role socialization or <i>snuggle theory</i> in which horror films are viewed as a vehicle by which adolescents demonstrate gender role congruent behavior: mastery and</p>	

<p>fearlessness in boys and dependency and fearfulness in girls (Zillmann & Gibson, 1996). (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>it is proposed that the allure of horror cinema is a function of three primary factors: tension, relevance, and unrealism. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>Tension based on the distortion of natural forms (Cantor & Oliver, 1996), either as a supernatural force or perception of gross abnormality, is one of three fundamental characteristics of horror cinema that appeals to audiences.</p> <p><u>Relevance</u> (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>Danger, as symbolized by the <i>unknown</i>, and death are two additional universal fears that work their way into horror pictures.❖ From a purely evolutionary standpoint, avoiding dark places where predatory animals may hide, attempting to understand that which is presently unknown, and finding ways to postpone death have survival value and may have been passed onto future generations through an evolutionary process.❖ According to many psychoanalytic thinkers, universal fears make a horror film more relevant. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>For a movie to be watched, it must first generate interest among potential viewers.❖ Interest can be sparked in a variety of different ways but relevance is one of the more common avenues by which interest in a film is established.❖ The relevance of horror movies is oftentimes less obvious than it is for other genres and exists on four different levels:</p>	

<p>universal, cultural, (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>Many horror films exploit juvenile fears since teenagers are presumed to be one of the larger, if not the largest, groups of horror fiction enthusiasts in America. ♦ Adolescent-relevant issues of independence and identity figure prominently in horror pictures, making them particularly attractive to teenagers. ♦ Gender role identity theory, it would seem, has a great deal to say about the relevance of the horror genre to adolescent consumers. ♦ It is no coincidence that school serves as an important setting for many pictures in the <i>slasher</i> subgenre, movies which are made with teenage audiences in mind. ♦ School plays a significant role in the everyday lives of teenagers in that it establishes a context within which students can compare themselves to their peers on criteria of success and failure both socially and academically -- issues that are at the heart of many juvenile fears (Jarvis, 2001). ♦ The neighborhood setting, as epitomized by <i>Nightmare on Elm Street</i> (1984), also facilitates the subgroup and personal relevance of horror fiction. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>Haidt, McCauley, and Rozin (1994), in conducting research on disgust, exposed college students to three documentary videos depicting real-life horrors. ♦ One clip showed cows being stunned, killed, and butchered in a slaughterhouse; a second clip pictured a live monkey being struck in the head with a hammer, having its skull cracked open, and its brain served as dessert; a third clip depicted a child's facial skin being turned inside out in preparation for surgery. ♦ Ninety percent of the students turned the video off before it reached the end. ♦ Even the majority of individuals who watched the tape in its entirety found the images disturbing. ♦ Yet many of these same individuals would think nothing of paying money to attend the premier of a new horror film with much more blood and gore than was present in the documentaries that most of them</p>	

<p>found repugnant. ♦ McCauley (1998) posed the logical question of why these students found the documentary film so unpleasant when most had sat through horror pictures that were appreciably more violent and bloody. ♦ The answer that McCauley came up with was that the fictional nature of horror films affords viewers a sense of control by placing psychological distance between them and the violent acts they have witnessed. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>Most people who view horror movies understand that the filmed events are unreal, which furnishes them with psychological distance from the horror portrayed in the film. ♦ In fact, there is evidence that young viewers who perceive greater realism in horror films are more negatively affected by their exposure to horror films than viewers who perceive the film as unreal (Hoekstra, Harris, & Helmick, 1999). ♦ Several factors reinforce the fictional nature of cinematic depictions of horror: ♦ First, the supernatural content and gross abnormality that characterize the horror genre facilitate psychological distance. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>According to the founding tenets of lifestyle theory, the human being, like all living organisms, has the capacity to perceive, process, and manage threats to its existence. ♦ Whether a threat is prepotent (stimulates a survival response in the absence of prior learning) or conditioned (learned through association with an unlearned fear stimulus or response), it must be perceived before it can be processed and acted upon. ♦ A perceived threat is processed as existential fear by humans who have a sense of self, independent of the surrounding environment, a cognitive task that is initially accomplished in human children between the ages of 18 and 24 months (Lewis & Brooks, 1978). ♦ Three early life tasks assist people in managing existential fear and the threat it implies: (1) achieving affiliation with others, (2) gaining a sense of environmental predictability and control, and (3) earning status and</p>	

<p>identity. ♦ These early life tasks not only help people deal with existential fear, they also play a major role in shaping the fear which can best be described as an encapsulated expression of a person's current existential condition (Walters, 2000a). (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>Fear of loss of control exists at all levels of relevance ♦ personal, subgroup, cultural, and universal ♦ to where we might predict that: (1) individuals who score high on measures of control-related existential fear will be more attracted to horror films than individuals who score low on measures of control-related existential fear; (2) subgroups, like adolescents, who struggle with issues of mastery and autonomy, will find the allure of horror films stronger than subgroups for whom mastery and autonomy are less an issue; (3) cultures that are preoccupied with control, such as are found in industrialized Western nations, should show greater interest in horror films than less control-preoccupied cultures; (4) universal themes surrounding the fear of losing control should be prominent in the horror literature of widely diverse cultures. ♦ Hence, control-related existential fear is considered the core element of horror film appeal. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>In a classic study on the social psychology of horror films, Zillmann et al. (1986) presented college students with a clip from the movie <i>Friday the 13th: Part III</i> while in the company of an opposite-gender confederate who was instructed to feign distress, mastery, or indifference. ♦ Male undergraduates enjoyed the film significantly more in the presence of a distressed female confederate and found the distressed confederate more attractive than the mastery or indifferent confederates, whereas female undergraduates enjoyed the film clip significantly more when accompanied by a male confederate who displayed mastery. ♦ The authors concluded that the results of their study supported the gender-role or <i>snuggle theory</i> of horror film appeal. ♦ In early hunting and gathering societies, the adult male was the hunter and the female remained behind to care</p>	

<p>for the home and children.◆ Hunters who survived encounters with wild animals told stories of their adventures designed to frighten those who remained behind.◆ Such stories, along with tests of physical strength and bravery, were instrumental in socializing young males.◆ Overt fear reactions were reinforced in women and adolescent girls.◆ Adolescent boys, on the other hand, were instructed to remain strong in the face of fear, just like their fathers and the other men of the village.◆ In modern times, these traditional rites of passage have been replaced by symbolic acts like watching scary movies (Zillmann & Gibson, 1996). (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>The results of the Zillmann et al. (1986) study are broadly consistent with the gender-role theory of horror film appeal but these results may relate to a great deal more than just gender role socialization.◆ Three components of the self-view seem to be particularly relevant to the results of this study: reflected appraisals, social comparisons, and role identity.◆ Reflected appraisals or how people perceive themselves as coming across to others, a process which Cooley (1902/1964) called the <i>looking-glass self</i>, may have played a significant role in the Zillmann et al. study by way of peer influence.◆ Adolescents possess a strong imaginary audience and believe that other people are as preoccupied with them as they are with themselves (Bee & Boyd, 2002).◆ Hence, many juveniles are tremendously concerned about how they come across to others, even as they watch a horror film.◆ Likewise, they are on the lookout for social comparisons, making upward comparisons with same-sex peers who display gender congruent reactions (males = mastery, females = fright) and downward comparisons with same-sex peers who exhibit gender incongruent reactions.◆ Role identity is a third component of the self-view.◆ It rises to prominence when watching a horror film with someone of the opposite-sex.◆ In this context, self-attributions of role identity are made on the basis of one's reactions to the film. (Walters,</p>	

<p>2004)</p> <p>Horror movies from <i>Dracula</i> (1931) to <i>Final Destination</i> (2000) often emit a strong sense of fate or destiny. ♦ Likewise, despite the senseless violence, there is an odd sense of fair play in many horror films, such as the well-recognized fact that promiscuous girls are significantly more likely to be killed in slasher films than chaste girls (Weaver, 1991). ♦ In following up on some of Weaver's findings, Oliver (1993) discovered that traditional attitudes toward female sexuality (i.e., women should remain virgins until marriage) were associated with greater liking for graphic horror films in which sexually promiscuous women were victimized. ♦ Finally, horror pictures tend to promote a malevolent world-view as evidenced by Forgas's (1991) observation that positive moods foster a belief that the environment is safe whereas the negative emotions aroused by horror films often give the impression that the environment is unsafe. ♦ It is hypothesized, therefore, that more regular viewers of horror films should possess more mechanistic, fatalistic, fairness-leaning, and malevolent world-views than less regular viewers of horror films. (Walters, 2004)</p>	
<p>Horror movies aid teenagers in differentiating between fact and fiction and in so doing help shape the perceptual function of a teenager's self-view. ♦ The executive function is no less affected by exposure to the horror genre. ♦ Watching a horror film presents adolescents and young adults with frightening stimuli to which they can either succumb, or learn to manage. ♦ Basic decision-making and coping skills derive from a person's interactions with the environment; one small yet vital aspect of this environment is exposure to horror films. ♦ By learning to suppress feelings and display mastery or cling to others in a dependent ploy for protection, a person learns to cope with another aspect of his or her environment, a skill that may be useful in dealing with more than just horror pictures. (Walters, 2004)</p>	

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Horror Movies and Games

This survey is to determine why people continue to watch horror movies or play horror games despite the constant repetition of cliches, or using similar villains or plots. Be aware that many of these questions are focused on people who watched several horror movies or played horror games. You may skip questions that may not be relevant to you.

* Required

1. What is your age? *

Mark only one oval.

- 4-13
- 14-21
- 22 or over

2. What is your gender? *

Mark only one oval.

- Female
- Male
- Other

3. What is your ethnicity? *

Mark only one oval.

- Asian
- Black/African America
- Pacific Islander
- White/Caucasian
- Native American
- Middle Eastern
- Other

4. Do you have any medical condition (such as heart disease, asthma, anxiety, etc.) that prevents you from watching horror movies or playing horror games? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- I have a medical condition, but they do not prevent these activities
- Unsure

5. Do you have any specific fears or phobias? If so, please specify them below.

6. Do you enjoy observing other people's frightened reactions when they watch, play, or experience something scary?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

7. Do you enjoy being frightened when watching/playing something scary? (Either in real life or in the movie/game itself)

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Never watched or played something scary

8. Rate how anxious you are of these settings (either in real life or in horror movies/games)

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not at all scary	Slightly anxious	Very anxious	TERRIFYING
Forest/Mountains	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empty Restrooms/Bathrooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Circuses/Amusement Parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empty Towns/Cities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asylums/Mental Hospitals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hospitals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empty Classrooms/Offices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empty Homes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arcades	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strange/Surreal/Dream-like worlds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pitch-black rooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hotels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Long Hallways/Tunnels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mazes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caves/Underground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wells	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Select what kind of villain frightens you the most. (Either in real life or in horror movies/games)

Mark only one oval.

- A human, human-like (e.g. serial killers, homicidal psychopaths)
- Monster/Strange creatures (werewolves, vampires, aliens)
- Paranormal beings (demons, ghosts)
- Monster animals (e.g. Jaws)
- Other: _____

10. How often do you watch a horror movie?

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

11. If you have never or barely watch horror movies, please state your reason.

12. How often do you select watching a horror movie/video? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Movie Theaters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DVD, Blu-Ray, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Netflix, Hulu, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online (e.g. Youtube)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. What's your preferred horror movie sub-genre?

Mark only one oval.

- Action horror
- Gothic horror/Historical horror
- Psychological horror
- Slasher horror/Gory horror
- Science Fiction horror
- Zombie horror
- Demonic/Religious horror
- Apocalypse/post-apocalypse horror
- Paranormal horror
- Isolation/Survival horror
- Other: _____

14. Does a horror movie appeal to you more if it was based on a real life event?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Depends

15. What factors of a horror movie trailer attract you to see the film? Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- Sound Effects
- The directors
- Production Companies (e.g. Ghost House Pictures, Blumhouse Productions, Dark Castle Entertainment)
- Actors
- The protagonists' age is similar to yours
- Gore/Blood
- Villain
- Editing (Specific scenes shown)
- Special Effects
- None of the above

16. Do you believe horror movies/videos have become predictable?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

17. If you watched a horror movie before, please list the movies below. (If you have never watched a horror movie, type None.)

18. If you listed more than one movie, how similar are they overall? (Plot, monster, setting, protagonists, etc.)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Completely varied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very similar

19. This is a list of cliches that occur frequently in horror movies. In the movies you listed, select which occurred in all or most of the movies.

Check all that apply.

- The killer is still alive in the end
- The setting is isolated
- The group splits up
- No signal
- The car won't start
- There is only one survivor (usually a girl)
- The black guy is one of the first to die
- While running away, the person trips
- The killer's weapon of choice is a knife, chainsaw, ax, etc.
- The character(s) go to the basement or attic when he/she/they shouldn't
- The house the family moves in is haunted
- The ghost, monster, killer suddenly appears in the mirror
- If the ghost is a girl, she usually has white skin and black hair
- Having sex makes the characters a death target
- Other: _____

20. How often do you play horror games (or watch someone else play)?

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

21. If you played a horror game (or watched someone else play) before, please list them below. (If you have never played a horror game, type None.)

22. If you listed more than one horror game, how similar are they overall? (Plot, monster, music, graphics, gameplay, weapons, etc.)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Completely varied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very similar

23. This is a list of cliches that occur frequently in horror games. In the movies you listed, select which occurred in all or most of the games.

Check all that apply.

- You use a flashlight
- You have to collect/read notes
- You are stuck at an abandoned/isolated building
- You are all alone
- You are lost in the woods
- The game takes place at night
- Most of the doors are locked and you need to find keys
- First-person perspective (you see through the character's eyes)
- Other: _____

24. From the list below, what is scariest factor in a horror game?

Mark only one oval.

- Survival
- Psychological
- Suspense
- Isolation
- Paranormal

25. What is most important for creating the greatest fear in a horror game?

Mark only one oval.

- Character/Monster Design
- Plot
- Music
- Gameplay (movement, camera angles, game mechanics)
- Scenery/Setting
- Jumpscares
- Gore
- Objectives

Horror Movies and Games: Psychological Effects

This survey is for the researcher to determine if people of various horror media exposure still contain the same reactions or fear instinct.

Be aware that this is a long survey, has seemingly random questions, and contains images that may or may not be disturbing (gotten from [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)).

Also note: If you have watched another play a horror game but never played a horror game yourself, that still counts as horror media exposure. TV shows such as Supernatural is also considered part of the horror genre.

* Required

1. What is your gender? *

Mark only one oval.

- Female
- Male
- Other

2. What is your age? *

Mark only one oval.

- 4-13
- 14-21
- 22 or over

3. What is your ethnicity? (If mixed descent, type in Other) *

Mark only one oval.

- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- White/Caucasian
- Native American
- Middle Eastern
- Other: _____

4. What is your religious preference? *

Mark only one oval.

- Muslim
- Christian
- Roman Catholic
- Mormon
- Jewish
- Christian Scientist
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- None/Atheism
- Other: _____

5. Estimate the annual income of your entire household in terms of employment. *

Mark only one oval.

- Over \$20,000
- Between \$15,000 to \$20,000
- Under \$15,000
- No income

6. Are there any children under the age of eighteen years currently living in your household? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

7. Rate your level of horror media exposure (horror movies, games, TV shows, etc.) throughout your life, with 1 being the lowest and 10 as the highest. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
No exposure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exposed daily

8. Do you have any strong fears or phobias? If so, please list them below. *

Psychological Test

The following questions will ask you about your choices in certain situations. It is ideal that you choose the first option you would consider (a.k.a. your first instinct).

9. You are driving during a rainy day down the countryside. There aren't any houses around except trees, and the next town is 5 miles away. Up ahead, you see someone walking by the side of the road. Select whether you would choose to give a ride to the following:

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
A young girl with blonde hair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A woman with black hair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A man in a suit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A young girl with black hair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A boy with a backpack	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A woman with blonde hair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A man with a baseball cap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Imagine you have a brother/sister who ran into the forest. After hours of wandering and calling out, there is still no sign of your sibling. You think you remember the direction you came from. What disturbs you most being in the forest? *

Mark only one oval.

- Fog everywhere
- Complete silence
- Snow everywhere
- There is barely any light from the thick trees
- All the trees look the same
- The forest goes on for miles

11. You reach in your pocket and realize you forgot your phone while chasing after your sibling. Then you hear a strange sound, stopping you cold. What do you do next? *

Mark only one oval.

- Go back home, even if your sibling may still be out there
- Keep moving forward and hope you find your sibling.
- Investigate the sound. It could be your sibling.

12. You are in a hospital visiting a sick relative. She asks if you could quickly buy a water bottle for her before she goes off for her operation. You go and discover two ways to the drink machine. Which way do you go? *

Mark only one oval.

- The shorter way, which is a dim corridor with barely any people around
- The longer way, which is a bright corridor but the hall is completely jammed with people.
- You go back, not buying a drink

13. You need to buy a new house for yourself after being evicted from your apartment. After house-hunting, you only have these three options below that you can afford. Which do you choose? *

Mark only one oval.

- The house in the nice neighborhood but with a shady past
- The large old mansion that needs many repairs
- The isolated house by the dark forest

14. Imagine you are a child (unless you actually are below 13 years old). You see three last toys in the toy store, which is about to close down because of reasons. Which toy do you buy? *

Mark only one oval.

- A teddy bear with movable glass eyes and a missing arm
- The beautiful and realistic mannequin doll
- The jack-in-the-box that springs out at random times

Bathroom #1



Bathroom #2

15. Which bathroom made you feel more uncomfortable? *

Mark only one oval.

- Bathroom #1
- Bathroom #2
- Neither

16. Which object would you rather die from? *

Mark only one oval.

- Pistol
- Kitchen Knife

17. Which object would you rather die from? *

Mark only one oval.

- Axe
- Shotgun

18. Which object would you rather die from? *

Mark only one oval.

- Chainsaw
- Sword
- Machine gun
- Spear

19. You are all alone in the house when you hear a strange noise upstairs, which only has three rooms: the bathroom, your room, and your parent's room. Which do you investigate first? *

Mark only one oval.

- Your parent's bedroom, with the door wide open but dark.
- Your room, where door is closed but you can see the light on from under the door
- The bathroom, where the light is also on, but you can see a shadow from under the door crack

20. You are a security guard checking on the classrooms at 3am. All the rooms' lights were off by the other guard. Imagine the three rooms below. Which makes you the most uncomfortable? *

Mark only one oval.

- A room that is fully lit with the chairs gone
- A room fully lit with empty chairs
- A room that is fully lit with only one chair in the center

21. Quick! Which door do you barricade? The open door at the left, where you can hear the monster running down the hall to the open door? Or the closed door at the right, where another monster is already halfway of breaking it?

Mark only one oval.

- I'll barricade the door on the left
- I'll barricade the door on the right

22. Which hallway would you rather go through?

Mark only one oval.

- A narrow, endless hallway with no doors with the lights far apart
- A brightly lit hallway with a monster at the very end

23. What kind of death do you prefer from the rest?

Mark only one oval.

- Being eaten by a bear or other large predator
- A ghost haunting
- Being shot multiple times in the stomach and chest
- Demon possession
- Victim of a psychotic serial killer
- Burning alive slowly
- Accidentally falling from a cliff
- A heart attack while being alone in a large, dark, abandoned building
- A plane crash
- Drowning in the middle of the ocean with no land anywhere for hundreds of miles
- Zombies cornering you in the dirty public restroom
- Your head was cut off

Horror Movie Survey: Evil Dead (2013)

* Required

1. What is your gender? *

Mark only one oval.

- Female
- Male
- Other

2. What is your age? *

Mark only one oval.

- 4-13
- 14-21
- 22 or over

3. What is your ethnicity? (If mixed descent, type in Other)

Mark only one oval.

- Asian
 - African American/Black
 - Pacific Islander
 - Middle Eastern
 - Caucasian/White
 - Native American
 - Other: _____
-

4. What is your religious preference? *

Mark only one oval.

- Muslim/Islam
- Protestant (Christian denomination)
- Roman Catholic
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Mormon
- Jewish
- Christian Scientist
- None/Atheism
- Other: _____

5. Rate your level of horror media exposure (horror movies, games, TV shows, etc.) throughout your life, with 1 being the lowest and 10 as the highest. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Never exposed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exposed daily

6. How scary was this movie?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not scary at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Completely terrifying

7. Have you seen this movie before?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

8. Have you seen the original movie in 1981?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

9. If you had watched either the 2013 or 1981 versions before, rate how similar your reactions were to those previous times.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not frightening now Still terrifying as before

Describe each character in your opinion.



10. David:

11. Mia:

12. Olivia

13. Natalie

14. Eric

15. Early in the movie, did you already have a feeling who the survivor would be?

Mark only one oval.

- David
- Mia
- Eric
- Olivia
- Natalie
- No clue/Never expected a survivor

16. Were you right about your prediction?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Had no prediction

17. Did you notice yourself making guesses of what would happen next during scenes? Were you often right, or close to being right? Rate how predictable the movie was to you. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Everything is so unexpected!	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Everything is so predictable!

18. If you noticed any cliches in this movie, please list them below

19. Which scene disturbed/frightened you the most and why?

20. Select all the effects the movie impacted on you after viewing it. If you have more to add, type in Other.

Check all that apply.

- Lack of sleep
- Anxiety/Nervousness/Jumpiness
- Development of Fear/New phobia
- Desensitization (Less fear of the monster/violence/gore)
- Mental Trauma (Disturbing Images continue to resurface in your mind)
- Less appetite for daily meals
- You became afraid of the dark
- Belief that the monster is now haunting you or lurking nearby
- Your behavior has become more aggressive or angry
- You are afraid to be left alone
- Other: _____

Research Proposal:

Horror Games and Movies

Leeza Mae Grace D. Dowez

Northern Marianas College

Research Proposal:

Horror Games and Movies

Popular and universal, the horror genre appeals to all kinds of people around the world. Perhaps it is because people enjoy the reactions of their peers when sharing something horrifying or creepy. Or perhaps it is because people, young and old, love the thrilling excitement of suspense and sudden jump scares. But in many cases, there are certain themes in scary movies and horror games that often repeat themselves, causing predictability. Yet, people continue to pay to see these movies or play these horror games in hopes for a good scare. The purpose and effectiveness of these notorious “cliches” in the horror genre is the main focus of this research. The studies of this research are to prove that horror cliches are used frequently based on common fears or certain primal fear instincts housed in the subconscious of most people. Certain literature from experts and scholars will be consulted, as well as experiments conducted by the student researcher will support this research.

Several works have been found that may find useful in exploring the topic being investigated. In *The Dark Side of Gameplay*, a compilation of 14 research articles, experts analyze horror games in its gradual descent into a darker and more psychological gameplay. This book may help investigate whether psychological horror or typical survival horror games have deeper effect in players. Another academic source is an article called *Marketing, Monsters, and Music: Teensploitiation Horror Films*. It examines several horror films for typical teenage stereotypes, and many notable horror films are based on the misdemeanors of mischievous teenagers. As for secondary sources, one of them is a book called *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*, which argues about the appeal of horror movies and how females in particular are victimized. With this, the student researcher can examine the growing

predictability of a woman's role in horror films. The other source is *Body of Fear: How Your Body Keeps You Playing Horror Games*, an IGN article that delves into the factors of what makes horror games so scary and how it affects our bodies into wanting to play more. There are more sources online that the student researcher is also willing to discover to further support the thesis.

As for conducting experiments into the topic, certain methods are already considered and their schedules of their research. The first method will be an online survey; the link will be distributed to the student researcher's peers, EN202 class, and adults. The survey will contain questions such as the scariest monsters they have encountered in games or movies, or the scariest movie/ game they have seen or played. It will also be distributed to those who barely played or watched horror games or movies. The next method will be a personal interview with five children, five teenagers, and five adults. There will be several visuals and audio recordings/music, the test subjects having to choose which disturbed them more. The last method is to have at least two children and two peers play two horror games that have similar monsters, objectives, and gameplay. Likewise, two horror movies with similar plots and monsters will be shown to a larger group of test subjects. This would be to judge if the latest game/movie watched is still terrifyingly effective as the first. It is still to be decided if this last experiment will be conducted with the student researcher's E202 class.

As for the research schedule, it seems that Fridays to Sundays are the best time to conduct the research experiments. The first method to be conducted will be the online survey distributed in the beginning of the week. The results will be collected at the end of the week. The next method will be the personal (one-on-one) interviews, and will begin the same weekend the results from the survey are collected. Results for the second experiment will be immediately

noted during the interviews. The next weekend or two will be the last experiment. Notes will be taken during the last experiment. The remaining weekends will be dedicated to writing the final research paper, with the analyses of the data and views of the test subjects and the literature referenced. There must also be time to review certain literature and other sources. Below is a table that demonstrates the intended schedule. (Note: The allotted times for these experiments may be subject to change.)

Research/Writing Schedule	
Research	Reading/Writing
Online Survey – February 22-26	Reading Literature – February 22-26, Feb. 29-Mar. 4, March 7-11
Personal Interviews – February 26-28, March 4-6	
Horror Games – March 11-13	Researching reviews/comments by professional gamers/movie critics – March 14-18, 21-25
Horror Movies – March 18-20	Writing – March 21-(Deadline date)

In conclusion, this research project will be about the effectiveness and purpose of repeated themes in the horror genre. During the weekends, the student researcher will do experiments and observations that will test which themes have the most impact on the test subjects. The experiments will mainly compare each test subject's reactions, fears, and results. This is to determine if the student researcher's hypothesis is correct, that these cliches actually tap into a common fear shared among most people. With a plan in place, the student researcher is confident in this research and its results.

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The Clichés of Horror:

The Effectiveness of Overused Themes in Horror Media

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The Clichés of Horror:

The Effectiveness of Overused Themes in Horror Media

Horror fiction is not for the fainthearted. Gore, violence, and all sorts of disturbing imagery are some of the defining elements within horror fiction and media. But as time goes on, the same concepts are used over and over, and yet many viewers still cover their eyes despite knowing what comes next. Through the use of four different surveys, the researcher has chosen to explore the effectiveness that horror clichés have among adolescents and young adults, despite varying levels of horror media exposure. The researcher has already begun three surveys and will later conduct the fourth. The first two are based on levels of horror media exposure (horror films and games) and psychological effects depending on the rate of exposure. The last two surveys note viewer reactions to a horror film and a horror game, respectively, shown by the researcher. This essay will explain in greater detail the methods used in the exploration of horror clichés among adolescents.

Beginning with the research topic ‘Horror Games and Movies’, the researcher developed the research question “How are Horror Games and Movies still scary despite their growing Predictability?” Beginning March 2016, a survey was then piloted by using Google Forms and distributed among the researcher’s EN202 class. This survey was also distributed through Facebook to the researcher’s friends. One aspect this survey was focused on was the person’s level of horror media exposure. This depended upon certain medical conditions, the list of horror films and games he/she encountered, and how often these encounters were (see Appendix A for detailed sample). Another aspect of the survey was the clichés the respondents observed in the horror media they listed, as well as questions rating the plot similarity of the horror games/movies that he/she listed in order to determine if the clichés were frequent within the list

(see Appendix B for detailed sample). This survey is now closed to responses because of the sufficient number of people that have responded. Upon asking permission to distribute the surveys (and then also conduct the horror film/game experiments in April) among children in the age of 13 and below, the parents and supervisors denied this request. In addition, since most of the survey respondents were between 14-21 years of age, the researcher has decided to conduct the research based on this certain age demographic.

In the middle of March 2016, the researcher conducted another survey. The purpose was to investigate whether the respondents' fear reactions were common despite their varying levels of horror media exposure. Same as the first, this survey was distributed through Facebook among the researcher's friends. The questions are psychological in nature, some asking the respondent their choice of action in hypothetical yet eerie situations. Another type of question inquires what disturbs the respondent most in the choices provided (see Appendix C for detailed sample). The results could bring further light into the researcher's hypothesis, in which the assumption is that humans contain the identical primal reactions to fear despite any exposure to horror fiction. This survey is still open to further responses.

The next research method was a movie experiment, in which the film *Evil Dead* (2013) was shown to the researcher's EN202 class on March 28th, 2016. This film was chosen because of the several conspicuous concepts it features such as a group of young people for protagonists, an isolated setting, the lone survivor in the end (usually a female), etc. Therefore, because these concepts are also shared in many other horror films, the researcher assumes *Evil Dead* (2013) would have a high predictability rate among the viewers. In this research, the film's predictability rate is significant in combination of the viewer's reactions, which are their views on how terrifying the film was despite its clichéd themes. Unfortunately, all of the viewers that

day were females, since all the male students were absent. For this reason, this experiment is still ongoing in the search for more males to participate. A survey has been made in reaction to the film, but it is still open for further responses (see Appendix D for detailed sample).

For the fourth and final research method, the researcher plans to have five people with varying levels of horror media exposure and have them play a horror game. This experiment is planned to take place during the first two weeks of April. The researcher plans to ask several classmates from her CS103-01 class to participate. Afterwards, the players will take a survey about their opinions and reactions based on the game. Because *Slender* seems to be the most popular horror game from the researcher's first survey, the researcher plans to use this for the experiment. Furthermore, *Slender* has the most fundamental concepts found in most horror games, such as being lost in an isolated location, it is night during the game, the player must find notes to unlock pieces of the mysteries surrounding the monster, etc. The objectives in *Slender* are simple, find eight pages and never look at Slenderman for too long when he makes a sudden appearance (accompanied with an ominous booming sound). This objective actually becomes repetitive within the game, therefore making its progress predictable. Yet there are many indie versions copying *Slender*, proving how effectively appealing it is to horror game lovers. And so this final research experiment will shed some light to the appeal of such a horror game, even if the objectives are repetitive.

Overall, the purpose of the research methods is to examine the purpose and effectiveness of predictable, reused concepts within horror media, mainly through the use of surveys. The responses garnered from these surveys, for instance, record fear responses to certain predicaments, level of horror media exposure, and the respondents' opinions of the horror film and horror game the researcher will have them view or play. The results will bring to light some

answers to the research question of whether or not horror media continues to effectively scare viewers despite the many cliches used in the genre.

Appendix A

Sample questions from researcher’s Pilot Survey *Horror Movies and Games* (2016)

< Mail Horror Movies and Games

Have you ever watched a horror movie? *

Yes

No

Unsure/I don't remember

Do you believe horror movies have become predictable?

Yes

No

Unsure

If you watched a horror movie before, please list at least 5 movies that deeply terrified you. (If you have watched less than 5 horror movies or none, either type all of the horror movies you have seen or None.)

Your answer _____

If you listed more than one movie, how similar are they overall? (Plot, monster, setting, protagonists, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5

Completely varied/random Very similar

This is a list of cliches that occur frequently in horror movies. In the horror movies you listed, select all that apply.

< Mail Horror Movies and Games

Horror games include horror video games (e.g. Silent Hill, Resident Evil, etc.), free online/downloadable horror games or apps (e.g. Slender, Five Nights at Freddy's, etc.), or purchasable indie horror games (e.g. Amnesia), etc.

Have you ever played, or watched someone play a horror game? (E.g. Silent Hill, Five Nights at Freddy's, Slenderman, Amnesia) *

Yes

Neither

Never played, but watched someone play

Unsure/I don't remember

If you answered Yes or watched someone else play a horror game, list one or more horror games that deeply terrified you.

Your answer _____

If you listed more than one horror game, how similar are they overall? (Plot, monster, music, graphics, gameplay, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5

Completely varied/random Very similar

This is a list of cliches that occur frequently in horror games. In the horror games you listed, select all that apply.

You have a flashlight

You have to collect/read notes

You are stuck at a trashed/abandoned building

You are all alone

You are lost in the woods

Appendix B

Sample questions from researcher's Pilot Survey *Horror Movies and Games* (2016)

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of a survey interface. Both screenshots have a header bar with a back arrow, the text '< Mail', and the title 'Horror Movies and Games'. The left screenshot contains three questions, each with five radio button options: 'Always', 'Often', 'Sometimes', 'Rarely', and 'Never'. The right screenshot contains two questions, each with five radio button options: 'Every day', 'Often', 'Every once in a while', 'Rarely', and 'Never'. The bottom of each screenshot shows a small grey box with a question mark icon.

Left Screenshot:

How often do you select watching a horror movie in Netflix, Hulu, etc.? (This includes other people's TVs or devices you used) *

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

How often do you rent a horror movie? (DVDs, Blue-Ray, VHS tapes, etc.) *

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

How often do you watch horror videos online? (any video that contains horrific incidents or deaths, paranormal activity, blood and gore, and eerily disturbing imagery/sounds) *

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Right Screenshot:

How much time do you spend playing horror games (or watch someone play a horror game)? *

- Every day
- Often
- Every once in a while
- Rarely
- Never

How often do you select watching a horror movie in the movie theaters? *

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

How often do you select watching a horror movie in Netflix, Hulu, etc.? (This includes other people's TVs or devices you used) *

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

How often do you rent a horror movie? (DVDs, Blue-Ray, VHS

Appendix C

Sample questions from researcher's survey *Horror Movies and Games: Psychological Effects*

(2016)

Imagine you have a brother/sister who ran into the forest. After hours of wandering and calling out, there is still no sign of your sibling. You think you remember the direction you came from. What disturbs you most being in the forest? *

- Fog everywhere
- Complete silence
- Snow everywhere
- There is barely any light from the thick trees
- All the trees look the same
- The forest goes on for miles

You reach in your pocket and realize you forgot your phone while chasing after your sibling. Then you hear a strange sound, stopping you cold. What do you do next? *

- Go back home, even if your sibling may still be out there
- Keep moving forward and hope you find your sibling.
- Investigate the sound. It could be your sibling.

You are in a hospital visiting a sick relative. She asks if you could quickly buy a water bottle for her before she goes off for her operation. You go and discover two ways to the drink machine. Which way do you go? *

- The shorter way, which is a dim corridor with barely any people around
- The longer way, which is a bright corridor but the hall is completely jammed with people.
- You go back, not buying a drink

You need to buy a new house for yourself after being evicted from your apartment. After house-hunting, you only have these three options below that you can afford. Which do you choose? *

- The house in the nice neighborhood but with a shady past
- The large old mansion that needs many repairs
- The isolated house by the dark forest

Imagine you are a child (unless you actually are below 13 years old). You see three last toys in the toy store, which is about to close down because of reasons. Which toy do you buy? *

- A teddy bear with movable glass eyes and a missing arm
- The beautiful and realistic mannequin doll
- The jack-in-the-box that springs out at random times

Appendix D

Detailed sample of researcher's survey *Evil Dead (2013) Survey (2016)*

< Mail Horror Movie Survey: Evil Dead (2013)

Early in the movie, did you already have a feeling who the survivor would be?

David

Mia

Eric

Olivia

Natalie

No clue/Never expected a survivor

Were you right about your prediction?

Yes

No

Had no prediction

Did you notice yourself making guesses of what would happen next during scenes? Were you often right, or close to being right? Rate how predictable the movie was to you. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Everything is so unexpected! Everything is so predictable!

If you noticed any cliches in this movie, please list them below

Your answer _____

Which scene disturbed/frightened you the most and why?

Your answer _____

Select all the effects the movie impacted on you after viewing it. If you have more to add, type in Other.

Lack of sleep

Anxiety/Nervousness/Jumpiness

Development of Fear/New phobia

Desensitization (Less fear of the monster/violence/gore)

Mental Trauma (Disturbing images continue to resurface in your mind)

Less appetite for daily meals

You became afraid of the dark

Belief that the monster is now haunting you or lurking nearby

Your behavior has become more aggressive or angry

You are afraid to be left alone

The Clichés of Horror:
The Effectiveness of Overused Themes in Horror Media

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The Clichés of Horror:

The Effectiveness of Overused Themes in Horror Media

Horror is known by many key elements distinctive to its genre, such as the ever dreaded *jumpscare*. Horror fans and critics alike may notice that certain concepts are often repeated throughout horror films and games. The researcher, a horror media fan, noted the repetition (or “cliches”) among several horror works and decided to investigate the topic. The reviewed online literary sources to be used are based on how people react to horror films and games, why they react in certain ways, and sources that explain different horror tropes within the genre. These literary sources are to provide evidential support in answering the researcher’s question, “Do recurring themes/concepts in horror media reflect people’s psychological/biological fears despite various exposure levels to horror media?” Additional online sources also provide specific support related to the researcher’s experiments and survey results.

Dividing the literary sources into two categories, the first sort is centered on how people react to horror films and games. In the academic article *Sex and Violence in the Slasher Horror Film: A Content Analysis of Gender Differences in the Depiction of Violence*, Welsh provides many examples of research studies that focus on the connection between sexual content, gender roles, and violence in slasher horror films (2009). Actually, many of these studies proved no significant connections between those three areas. This article offers a great amount of opposing data to the researcher’s assumption of stereotypical gender roles in horror media. Another academic article under this category is *Sign of a Threat: The Effects of Warning Systems in Survival Horror Games* by Bernard Perron, which goes into a detailed examination of the different incorporations of eeriness between various horror games. *Silent Hill* and *Fatal Frame* are a couple of the often mentioned games in the article. Though they have different concepts in

creating a scary atmosphere, Perron considers both games effective based on their successful formulaic use between suspense and jumpscars (2004). Perron's article offers many cases of effective strategies used for incorporating fear, which helps the researcher understand the value of suspense and jumpscars within horror games. In addition to these articles, the researcher also reviewed an infographic that ranks movie genres by their revenues in the box office from 1995 to 2016, where the horror actually ranks fifth out of the ten genres (Statista, 2016). Because the horror genre stands on seemingly neutral ground between audiences, the infographic actually proves the researcher's assumption as inconclusive; the assumption being that horror is a leading genre which many people would continue to watch despite repetitive themes. With a sufficient amount of case analyses and statistical studies within these sources, the data will assist in comprehending how horror media affects audiences.

The second category of literary sources gives support towards why people react to horror media in a particular way. In *Body of Fear: How Your Body Keeps You Playing Horror Games*, this Web article explains the biological science behind people's "fight or flight" reactions to horror games (and horror media in general), and how the resulting adrenaline rush can become addictive (Agnello, 2013). The reporter for this online article also interviewed a psychologist/addictions specialist, as well as provided a few YouTube videos displaying gamer reactions to the horror game *Outlast*. Because the article explains the addiction for horror media, this greatly supports the researcher's question as to why horror media continues to attract audiences despite repetitive concepts. Another source about the biological reaction to horror is the academic article *Monsters Evolve: A Biocultural Approach to Horror Stories* by Mathias Clasen. The article contains interesting analyses by reviewing various demographics and human history to explain why humans react negatively to monsters (Clasen, 2012). This will support the

researcher's analysis of the foundation of human fear psychology towards certain beings. Furthermore, in the academic journal article, *Understanding the Popular Appeal of Horror Cinema: An Integrated-Interactive Model* by Glenn D. Walters, a great analysis is offered about what are the certain factors in the horror genre that attract certain audiences and why (2004). The article also contains an in-depth analysis on why many adolescents find horror movies appealing, and because the researcher's prime audience focus are adolescents and young adults, this would aid in analyzing adolescent reactions to horror media. And so, these literary sources give excellent evidence for explaining why people respond to horror tropes unique to its genre.

An additional category was made to differentiate the source that explained horror tropes and themes often seen in the horror genre. This literary source is actually an online slideshow called *The Horror Genre – Media Studies* by Rachel Wood, in which certain stereotypical situations and characters are described with mentioned movie titles to illustrate these stereotypes. The source helps the researcher discern the several tropes frequently used in the horror genre, and will use this to relate it to other sources in order to prove a relationship between cliches and effective horror portrayal in the genre.

Fear is biologically imprinted in humans so that we react similarly to the same concepts, which horror media makers know and exploit frequently, thus creating certain cliches. All of the reviewed literature mentioned agrees to this. The researcher has reviewed several academic and non-academic sources online and divided them into two groups: how people have reacted to horror media and why they react the way they do. And with the sufficient support from these academic articles, infographic, and other online articles, the researcher can analyze horror media and their effects upon people. Furthermore, these sources help determine the reason for their popularity and effectiveness for scaring people despite obvious cliches contained in the horror

genre. With these sources and the researcher's studies, it is anticipated that the researcher's findings will provide the research already done in the horror genre field with a focused perspective on the adolescent age audience. Psychological factors that attract adolescents to the horror genre and the perception of overused themes in horror are the key concepts being explored in this research.

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