

"the devils castle" essay sample



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Horror films dates back to the 19 century. The first horror movie was released in 1896 called “ The Devils Castle”. Since way back before cinemas were invented, humans have always enjoyed the thrill that goes with sudden shock and the twist of supernatural at the end. For centuries horror had an appeal for our ancestors telling stories to entertain, frighten and stories that test our fears. By reading ghost stories and telling scary tales around campfire there seemed to be a strange pleasure from playing with each others fears.

Even today tales continue to inspire horror directors from allover the world, although social attitudes may change but people fears keep constant. Horror films come from a variety of different subgenres they are slasher, monster movies, chillers, scary movies and macabre. And also satanic horror it is usually very dramatic and it is rarely have to do with monsters or murderers. The themes of horror films are presence of threat to normalcy, murdering victims mainly women who are blonde, which is a convention of horror.

Horror movies are enjoyed by all age group but particularly teenagers because boys and girls between that ages liked the sudden suspense, role of supernatural in the film, they loved they way horror made them feel scared and frightened. Teens often dared each other to watch a horror film. Some teenagers admired it because of the sexuality and those sex scenes horrors contain. Genre simply classifies different types and styles of media texts. Genre is then divided into subgenres. Subgenres can be defined as sub-

category within a specific genre. For instance, romance is a genre and the subgenre of that is historical romance and classic romance.

Genre also helps the directors to make a particular type of film to entertain a specific age group or type of people. A film with two or more genre combined is called hybrid. An example of hybrid film is ' Star Wars' which combines Action and Sci-Fi. Examples of different genres are Horror, Romance, Comedy, Gangster, Sci - Fi, Adventure, Costume Drama, and many more. We can identify a genre by analysing the films, props, setting, characters, signifiers, sound, conventions, narratives This allows us to identify the genre because almost all the films have these things in common.

Code means a communication system that carries message to certain people. To understand codes you need know the way to take in the message. For instance a girl writes a message to a boy in a code language, the boy needs to know what the codes stands for so that he can work out what the message says. But for others the note is nothing but rubbish. But in media directors create codes that audiences are familiar with. An example of this is when the color film turns black and white, the code is to tell the viewers that this actual scene is flash back and the person is thinking about past.

A convention is things that you can expect in a certain genre. The media produces meaning by convention, and then the audiences understand the meaning from their own previous experiences on films. An example of convention is you will expect the victim of horror to be a girl and blonde. Another example is in a news program there is a clock beeping music which is to indicate that the words that we are about to hear are important. A

popular genre is Horror, a convention of horror is a blonde white girl who gets murdered. The girl usually enjoys herself before getting herself killed.

The convention of horror is the victim is not allowed to enjoy so she gets slaughtered. The setting is typically in isolated places. The setting is usually like this so that it helps create the mood and tension to put the audience in the situation. The victim always gets humiliated after getting murdered. For example hanging the dead body in a tree, or the victim in 'Psycho' where the body lies in the bath with contaminated blood and water. The victim always makes wrong decision that we expect the victim not to. For instance a girl who is being chased by a monster, she stops and looks back without running.

All of these are conventions of horror. There are lots of codes from horror; one of them is when the vicious killer stabs the victim. The camera shots the killer with low angle shot and the victim with high angle shot. The low angle shows the killer is enormous and scary and to be looked by the audience that he is in control. High angle shot on the victim shows that he or she is small and helpless. Before the victim gets stabbed or killed he or she enjoys herself. On way of this, is by sex. The director shows this sex scene by a code and not the actual sex. Man and woman in bed smoking together naked.

Dracula is a 1950's British horror film adapting Bram Stoker's classic tale. It is one of the best all-time classic story in the history of horror, seeing that it has traditional codes and conventions. As conventions and codes can be used to identify a film's genre, 'Dracula' is full of horror conventions and

codes. For example, at the start of the film, a stranger arrives in an isolated place by himself. It could have been a group of people arriving, but it's only a one man. This is a horror convention as it trying to show the lonely and solitary of the victim and, how helpless he is.

After the victim enters the castle, we hear and see the creaking doors. This is a tradition convention of horror which is almost used in all the horror movies, this is done to show that the place is haunted. After a while, the victim meets the vampires. There are three stages in horror movie, in the first stage the killer acts friendly, he then does something disturbing and finally kills him. Here the vampires acts friendly and asks him for help. Which then tells us that it is an horror convention. Genre is easily recognized and established very early on the 1950's film, ' Dracula'.

The opening of the film has the red blood title in gothic script of the film and dramatic music that signifies that the horror is about to rise and the music creates tension and pushes the audiences to their feet. At the start, pure blood splashes on Dracula's coffin to signify death and to show that it is horror. Another signifier is that the red diary the victim carries which also signifies blood and horror. There are no birds or animals when the victim goes towards the castle; this is done to show that everything is dead. This signifies that there is evil out there and the place is haunted.

When the victim enters into the castle, there is no natural lighting. This signifies lack of life. At the point when Dracula is about to attack his face turns pale and white, this is deliberately done to show there is very little blood running through him, and he is very dangerous. Light also brings out

truth, in this case he is dangerous. This happens when he comes through the window and about to do something disturbing. From the beginning of the 1950's film ' Dracula' we easily recognize from its codes, conventions and signifiers that this film is definitely from the horror genre.

But we can also use audio and camera angle to recognize a genre. At the start when the victim enters the castle we can hear his footsteps which emphasis his loneliness and also to show the isolation. In the film we can hear a repeated violin all the way through until the action starts. This is done to show that there is something bad is going to happen. The drum music in the film is to show heart beat and by doing that it creates tension. Camera shots in unique angles to bring out the horror in the characters, for instance low angle shot on Dracula to show his power and influence.

After the victim enters into the castle he looks around, the camera shoots him traveling which creates an atmosphere to audience that he is been watched. This travelling shot is a classic horror shot. The codes, conventions, signifiers, audio and camera angle in ' Dracula' all lead us to the conclusion that this is indeed a horror film. As we know horror charters have special characteristics like an attractive women but she later turns dangerous, for example the vampress. Another example is when the vampire locks him in the room; horror characters easily follow the trap.

In this case the vampire sets Jonathan Harker a trap by locking him in, and Jonathan does not even realize that he is dangerous. It's like him walking into a grave with his eyes wide open. This film follows the horror narrative, as the stranger firstly appears helpful and kind. At the very start of the film

Dracula acts friendly and nice but as the movie moves on the evil inside him comes out. After the victim meets the vampire, he takes him to a room and locks him in. this is a horror narrative as all victim will become a prisoner.

The victim makes crucial mistakes that audiences don't want him to do.

For instance when the victim goes into the castle and walks around inside, as audience we want him not to but he does it. The setting also gives us a clue that this film is indeed horror because when the victim walks to the castle, the place open space, solitary and isolated location. Not only that, as the victim enters the castle, we can see high sealing, gothic archers and shadows all telling us the lack of life in the castle. The opening of AWIL has a very distinct style to ' Dracula' as it starts with a calm, slow and romantic music.

Compared to Dracula the music absolutely differs in many ways like tempo. Dracula start starts of violently, scary and raw, and we know that this is completely different. This film uses sciences in many places to create tension over tension. One example is at the pub, as every one enjoys themselves there is a sudden silence which stops the comedy and creates tension heavily. This is different because normally in horror tension creates slowly and little by little, but here science helps to create a serious tension quickly.

AWIL is classic horror film but one whose defies the traditional codes and conventions of the genre. It achieves this by firstly, the victims making wrong decision at the signpost. This is a horror convention as we know from before victims always make wrong choices and dig their own grave by missing out these crucial signs. A very old and traditional sign is the mist

turning into rain and thunder. This clearly shows the change in mood. It creates the perfect setting for horror to cat. This happens when Jack and David struggle to escape from the noise of the wolf.

This also can be counted as a code because change in weather and especially to bad weather, shows and gives a clue that evil is on its way. When the wind howls it shows that the howling wolf is on its way. Another traditional convention is when the boys run, and suddenly David trips over, we could mention this as a traditional convention because mostly all horror film follows this convention over and over again. You can even expect this sort of scene to happen in 3 out of 4 horror movies. The props of the film can also give us an idea to figure out the genre.

Such as pentacle in front of the pub, representing there is no evil around the place. The moon is used as a prop to show that the horror is rising. Blood is used on Jack's face to show death and pain, this prop is almost used in every horror film. Guns, dead body and monsters are also classical horror props. We can use narrative and character from horror category to recognise and prove this film is horror. The narrative follows the horror by firstly, the boys path into the woods. They were not supposed to go in to the woods but they do.

When the boys go in to the pub, the communities have a secret, which the strangers i. e. (victims) stumble across. As this is horror there is always someone who knows the truth about what the monster or the evil, and they never warn the victims about it. In this case the community is hiding a secret which they don't want the strangers to know. In the pub the director uses

silence to create tension and uses comedy to lower the tension, which straightway reflects to the audience as creates an atmosphere where the audience build up their anxiety little by little.

When the boys leave the pub the, the community advises them to stay in the course and not to go into the moors. But the boys do not stick to the rules and go of course and into the moors. This is narrative, as it shows that victims never follow advises. After the boys go off course into the moors, the wolf attacks them and then the rescuers come just too late or after to help them. In this film the rescuers came and shoot the wolf even though it did not die, but it left Jack dead and David injured. The two main characters can be tagged as classic horror characters by the things they do.

Firstly they don't take advises given by the farmer, and also advises given by the community. It is very noticeable when these characters just miss those signs and head into trouble. For instance when they see the wolf's head chopped off near the sign, they don't realize that there is something bad that is out there. And they move on without any fear. When they are been told to stick with roads they purposely go into the moors, when they have been advised. As we know from previously, in a horror movie the victim trips and falls down for the murderer to kill.

Here we can recognize this when David trips over and the wolf attacks Jack. Horror narrative and characters evince that AWIL is indeed a horror film; we can use other categories from horror to examine. For instance we can analyse the films signifiers and camera angles to prove strongly that this film is horror. Camera angles and signifiers play a major part in making a horror

movie because the correct sort of signifiers should be chosen. And the angle the camera is moved in a film can easily be suggested to what genre it is from.

At the very start of the film the boys arrive in a van full of sheep's which are being taken to be slaughtered. This signifier signifies that the boys are going to be slaughtered like the sheep. As the boys move on they see a dead wolf's head lying, this signifies that the people killed the wolf for eating their sheep. By the time the boys arrive and walk more into the woods, to the pub it gets dark. This signifies loneliness, spooky and almost setting that correct mood for the horror to begin. When the boys enter the pub, there is a pentangle sign of Jesus, this signifies Jesus and to keep the evil away from this place.

This suggests that there is something wrong about this place, and as an audience it will be worrying them. A very traditional signifier that is very old and associates with almost every horror movies, is when the full moon appears as the clouds move away. This signifies that a living thing is physically and mentally being affected and we know it's the 'werewolf'. When clouds move apart leaving the moon clear, it reveals the truth. We can describe many camera angles that can establish AWIL is horror, but I want analyse the angle of the camera when the horror acts.

When the boys get scared and they decide to get back to the Slaughtered lamb, we can get a view from the werewolf as the camera shots the boys travelling. Which makes it view to the audience, like they are being followed. This is a horror shot because in Dracula the travelling shot is most likely the same, and also the same atmosphere. Another classical horror shot is when

the wolf attacks the camera shots it low angle and the victim high angle. This is done to show the superior power of the wolf and the poor weak helpless victim.

This kind of shot is done on almost all horror killing scenes, which makes it classical. A good example of camera shots is the medium close up as the horror approaches. 'AWIL' all leads us to a conclusion that this is indeed horror film. Genre identification is important because it allows people to watch a particular type of film. For instance they can decide on a genre to watch in the middle of going to cinema. This allows them to select a film from a certain genre suiting their mood. Genre identification also helps directors to create a certain type of film to entertain the specific group or type of people.

For example horror can be suitable for teens and early adults and so on. There are many different styles of films, which have many different styles of genre. Being able to recognise the genre helps us to categorise the films according to their genre. It also helps us to understand what a film is about what you may expect from a film before watching it. This gives a profit to the audience because once they bought a new film and then they don't like it, it makes a waste of money. Using genre theory allows to recognise a genre of the film by analysing the films categorise.

Such as character, narrative, props, setting, audio, lighting + colour, conventions, signs, signifiers and signified. And these categorise almost fit together with other same generic films. For example the conventions in most of the horror films are similar and been copied. In my opinions both films

establish genre in different ways but they have similarities like blood as prop. A main character gets killed in both films, in Dracula its Jonathan Harker who brutally gets murdered and in AWIL Jack gets slaughtered by the werewolf.

This sort of narrative, props and characters brings these films together. As horror charaters from both films, they literally do the same sort of mistakes go in the wrong direction and fall into traps. Whilst Dracula is a very different film from AWIL both films follow a recognizable generic model. Firstly the murderer acts friendly and the does something disturbing. Finally kills the victim. In Dracula the vampire acts friendly, then he does some thing wrong by making the victim as a prisoner. And finally kills him.

Though AWIL is a bit different, as there is no human sort of murderer and a werewolf makes all the killing. In AWIL they community acts friendly and they hide a secret. The boys off, they get disturbed by the sound from the werewolf and then Jack dies. I believe that audiences easily recognize the genres of both Dracula and AWIL by the first scene. The first scene strongly brings out horror, as in Dracula dramatic music creates tension and the slow scary light dimming scenery from AWIL will defiantly proves the film is indeed horror.

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