

# Death, violence and affect: the horror film (reflection paper+discussion)

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Running Head: DEATH, VIOLENCE AND THE AFFECT: THE HORROR FILM

Death, Violence and the Affect: The Horror Film [The of the will appear here]

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The genre of horror films is one of the most popular genres among both the males and the females. While both may have their own reasons for being attracted to horror films, they equally share a love for the violence and voyeurism shown in horror movies. The question that one asks is why are these young people attracted to horror films and violence?

One reason that I believe is the fact the horror films allow us to conquer our inner fears. In the modern society, man fears the unknown. With the rise of institutions and assembly line production, man has experienced a loss of control. This has given rise to a feeling of fear that horror movies appease in a twisted sort of way. Horror movies allow man to establish the fact that he is powerful and has the guts to watch the movie without flinching.

While watching horror movies, both men and women have different reactions. Men continue to stare even during the most gruesome scene to show that they are not affected by displays of violence and are strong enough to take it. Girls, on the other hand, turn their faces or cover them up as a violent scene nears (Zilmann, 1998). Girls continue to watch the movie till the end even if they miss out the most important parts. Why do they even watch it if they cannot stand the violent parts. The reason for this would be embedded in feminism where women stand next to men in every industry even if they cannot take it.

Another reason for watching horror movies is simple curiosity. We do not live in a world of aliens and the walking dead but the question in our mind remains whether the creatures in horror movies have any semblance to real life. Aliens, zombies and other creatures are employed in horror films as metaphors to address the issue of their existence in society. I may be compelled to watch a film on zombies so that I may be able to rationalize in my mind whether I could relate their existence in my own life. Similarly, haunted houses and unknown institutions have a special appeal since the viewer uses the movie to rationalize their existence.

According to Vicki, Goldberg, the popularity of horror films began at a time when the modern world began stressing on the civilized society. As the dead were shifted to the funeral parlor from the family parlor, a void was created where man's access to the dead was limited (Goldberg, 1998). Media also began a shift in its portrayal of the dead and this was a time when a need to establish the connection with the dead was felt and hence the popularity of the horror films. But media is only a reflection of what we want in our lives. The aim of today's media is to entertain the people even if it has to go away with information. In the same way, real violence has been replaced by horror movies because the public expect that to happen in the 'civilized world', not because the need of horror films was felt.

Horror Films allow us to develop a link with the dead but at the same time, this link is not real. It is merely a kind of reality that can never exist and this allows us to watch the movie till the end. Since horror movies are fictional, they appease our sense of morality (Goldstein, 1999). The good ones almost always win at the end but this does not necessary happen in the real world.

Since our sense of morality is not appeased in the real world, it is the fictional world that has gained immense popularity among both men and women.

Horror films are not popular for their violent themes but also the element of voyeurism present in these films. Consider the case of films such as Peeping Tom and Psycho. The film Peeping Tom was probably the first film to show the naked breast of a female and the use of the camera added to the power of voyeurism. It was the sexual appeal of the movie that added the attraction of the movie among the viewers. While viewers may be able to satisfy their voyeuristic natures by watching countless other movies, horror films employ the use of light and dark to add to the element of voyeurism.

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Publications