

Reasons for the Creation and Popularity of Horror Stories

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Introduction

What would it be like living in a world where no horror was imagined, written or read? People seek to read horror stories because they have an urge to be frightened and affected by the entertainment they choose. However, there are a number of people who do not read horror stories nor watch horror movies, as evidenced by Turan in this quote: The reason why some people choose to read horror stories or watch horror films while others stay away has been based on psychological factors that range from novelty, gender associations, to excitation transfer processes. This paper, therefore, seeks to engage the thoughts and arguments of various film scholars and writers in a bid to establish the reasons for the creation and readership of horror stories. (Kerr, 2021)

Commercial Popularity of Horror

Statistical data shows that Steven King's horror film titled "It" was able to make a total of 123 million dollars locally in its opening, which translated to 604 million dollars worldwide (Turan, 34). The amount made by the film in its opening week explains how much money is spent on horror films. This shows that there are a large number of horror audiences in the world despite the mixed reactions towards it. According to Paley, her reason for writing on horrific incidences and death is aimed at cheating death itself through the belief that if it happened in writing or in literature, it wouldn't happen in real life. She says that the same reason for writing about horror incidences and stories as a way of warding horror from real life can be said to be the reason why many writers and film creators delved into the horror genre. Paley's reason can still be attributed to the audience's act of reading and watching horror literature. People who have friends or relatives who have been subjected to horror or who died in horrific experiences tend to watch horror and read horror stories more as a way of empathizing with those victims. (Kiss et al., 2024)

Psychological Appeal of Horror

In his essay, *Why We Crave Horror Films*, Steven King argues that people reach out to horror literature because they need to make an establishment of their feelings about the importance of normality (124). This statement implies that humans read horror stories because they need something to remind them of the essence and need for normality in life. In this case, authors of horror stories produce their literary works in horror in a quest to remind society of the essence and value of

normality. Such reason is inclined to the assumption that humans tend to forget to appreciate normality and that creating a picture of abnormally disturbing scenes in their brains gives them this sense of appreciation. Stevenson King's arguments are almost in concurrence with Grace Paley's take on the reasons for writing horror. However, King's argument tends to reflect the entire popular culture and the themes in poems like *Lackawanna* and *The Broom: The New Wife's Tale* by Galway Kinnell and Charles Tomlinson, respectively. These poems, unlike Paley's works, are aimed at bringing out the 'dirty' uncommon ideas to readers and viewers. (Goel et al., 2022)

Critical Perspectives on Horror Stories

Kenneth Turan responds to King by challenging the idea of writing and reading horror based on his own experiences. He says that the world is already frightening, and it is frightening for him to think of watching or reading horror. Contrary to the idea of reading and watching horror as a way of understanding the essence of normality, Turan criticizes Steven King by offering that the world is not 'normal' and that the experiences are enough to make us appreciate the normal part of it. One can, therefore, use Turan's argument to understand the lot of movie and story fans who do not consider horror as their appropriate genre. Some people have been subjected to a more horrific reality than they would want to imagine. For this reason, they prefer to stay away from gothic and psychologically arousing literature. (Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, 2023)

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is therefore observed that writers and screen producers prefer to create horror stories basically because they want to cheat death, as seen in Grace Paley and her works, and to create an appreciation of the normal, as seen with Steven King. The purpose of creating horror stories is valid and can be used to validate the essence of the horror genre in literature. There is a part of society that has not been exposed to dirty and horrific scenes, and the works of horror serve to enable this group to appreciate and understand the essence of that normality. People, therefore, take into reading horror stories and films with differing intentions. These differing intentions fit the differing roles that writers assign horror literature. Analyzing the different reasons for the writing and reading of horror stories, therefore, shows that their roles in literature are to offer an essence of normality and to ward away the staged evil from being felt in real life.

References

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