



Research Article

THE CONCEPT OF HORROR IN ARTISTIC LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The current article observes theoretical viewpoints of the concept of horror and devoted to the study of the concept and genre signs of horror in fiction. Throughout the work the notion of horror was investigated with the examples of wellknown writers, critics and scientists. It raises the question of the terminological status of the horror in modern literature, considers the points of view on the status of horror as a genre, and discusses the parameters that differentiate fantasy and horror. It is summarised that there are several subgenres and categories of the horror genre.

KEYWORDS

Horror, fantasy, genre, fear, terror, gothic, concept.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution and background of the "horror" genre are covered in this article. Most authors and readers associate horror with creatures, such as werewolves, vampires, ghosts, witches, and anything that occurs in the middle of the night. It is important to remember, though, that horror

encompasses anything that makes us feel afraid or disgusted. It is not just about supernatural creatures.

The idea of "horror" dates back to Aristotle's day, when he presented the terrible as the primary factor influencing the audience's emotional



condition in his writings. Thus, the philosopher believes that the primary causes of drama are emotions like dread and worry. "And since the poet's job is to arouse the pleasure that comes from both fear and compassion, it follows that the action of tragedy must be filled with these emotions." Horror is seen in contemporary horror philosophy as a response to the world's epistemic finitude: "...> our capacity to fully comprehend the world as a whole has an upper bound. This idea has evolved into the horror genre's leitmotif throughout time. For example, authors like H. F. Lovecraft and S. King, who made significant contributions to the development and growth of the horror genre as well as its theoretical understanding in fiction, are credited with producing well-known writers of the xx century. The works of Ts. Todorov, R. Lachmann, E. N. Kovtun, and D. Khapaeva provide an overview and study of the horror genre and classify it as a subgenre of fantasy literature. Thanks to contemporary philosophers and critics Noell Carroll and Heidi Sturgell, horror is likewise becoming more and more popular.

Author Jason Colavitt goes into great length on the idea of terror in a book he wrote, arguing that the origins of horror stories can be traced back to the oldest folktales and human stories. These origins are directly related to awareness, as horror is nothing more than the sensation of terror, fear, dread, and worry. It is a natural reaction to artistic creations, namely horror stories, and it comes from our most fundamental emotions. In actuality, horror elicits the most primal and visceral responses of all literary genres. This particular

horror subgenre is inherent to human nature. The determining of the horror genre has proven to be an issue for academics and the reviewers. In accordance to the commonly accepted definition, the main distinguishing feature of the horror genre is not its actual content, as is the case with most other genres, but rather its impact on the reader. Science fiction must make specific hypotheses about society and technology; Westerns must have a certain location; novels must have a specific emotional element; mysteries must have specific crimes; and so on. Nevertheless, the horror genre is unrestricted and has no content constraints because of its variety. Horror films can be realistic or fanciful, with any location serving as the backdrop for their action.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to Canadian-born author and critic John Clute, works intended to arouse fear, horror, and so forth "affective horror" in his book *The Darkening Garden*. He also claims that the theory of AFFECTED HORROR—which holds that texts are deemed horror if they arouse particular emotions—works better with non-fantastic horror than fantasy horror. This method enables us to concentrate on the distinctive qualities of fantastical terror, which confronts the world before affect and responds profoundly to the character of the world since 1750;

We wholeheartedly concur with Mr. Clute, but as he himself points out, he supports his definition in Western historical point of view: "Horror is (partially) a subversive response to the falsity of the Enlightenment's desire to detail knowledge



and the world into imperial harmony... Horror—and fiction in general—is conceived in opposition to the Western imperialism." The dark, mocking twin of the Enlightenment is fiction. As a result, as chapters x, xx, and xvii demonstrate, there has been, and still is, a great deal of horror produced outside of the west that is not based on enlightenment in both conception and production.

In modern literary studies, one theoretical issue is how to conceptualise the idea of the terrifying in literature. Many scholars remain concerned about the paucity of research on mass literature, which has a substantial readership and a vast quantity of works. We conclude that the subject of genre definitions for all other genres is unsolvable and has not received enough attention in the past due to the dearth of research on horror as a genre. This chapter examines at several genre definitions of horror, as well as the genre's evolution across time, including its emergence as a separate literary genre in literary studies and its appearance in other genres. As with manufactured mythology, the contemporary horror story is a direct product of Western civilization and the greatest cultural gift the West has ever given the globe. It emerged at the same time as modern science In the late eighteenth century in the West, horror stories began to symbolize how contemporary science's rapid progress was causing a rift with tradition, the past, and culture. The horror genre, as it exists today, originated in Western civilization but has expanded globally, with notable growth in Japan. Two reactions to scientific advancements are evident in literature: Science fiction serves as a

metaphor for the progress of the golden age, particularly human ambitions. In science fiction, our dreams are often influenced by various forms of horror, creating a sense of deep-seated unease. Even in science fiction, there was a subtle element of horror present, at times disguised as "fantasy literature" or later as "weird fairy tale."

Many academics of science fiction contend that horror is primarily emotional, suggesting that science fiction is a genre of thought and philosophy and that horror is a lower condition. This view is only partially true, as the emotion of horror best represents what we mean when we discuss "horror" stories. However, what will become clear in our study is that horror has its own philosophy and its own pleasures for the mind. We shall now examine the many conceptions of terror.

Horror is a genre of fiction that is intended to terrify, frighten, shock, or disgust its readers or viewers by evoking feelings of horror and shock. Horror- an extremely strong sense of fear and shock or the frightening and shocking nature of something.

Although gothic fantasy and science fiction were influenced by horror, many academics categorize all three as "speculative fiction." American philosopher Noel Carroll defines the horror genre as a collection of stories centered around a "monster" that challenges established scientific knowledge and demands scrutiny. That instance, the researcher claims that there is a distinction made between the concepts of terror in myth and fairy tales. For instance, the wolf that speaks in the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" cannot be



considered an example of the horror genre because it is a common element used in fairy tale construction and does not come as much of a surprise. Tales of psychological terror, eeriness, or brutality are not appropriate to the academic because they go beyond the real goal of horror, which is to create monsters who are unnatural and beyond human comprehension.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The American horror writer G.F. Lovecraft, who asserts in his book "Supernatural Horror in Literature" (1927) that dread is an innate emotion and that the terror of the unknown is the strongest, supports this viewpoint. The author contends that the main objective of the horror genre is to evoke fear of the unfamiliar and unexplainable. Otherwise, there would be no differentiation between the detective and horror genres, as both include themes of murder and violence.

However, the famous literary critic Edmund Wilson in his article written in 1940 denies all notions of horror and severely criticizes the genres of horror about the supernatural and notes that the horrors focused on the appearance of monsters and spirits are simply juvenile, and that only psychological horror is truly acceptable horror fiction. It is also worth noting that the works of horror by the great writers Edgar Allan Poe and Gogol, whose works dealt with the psyche of humanity, were important to this critic. We believe it is beneficial to expand the boundaries of the horror genre by recognizing its various origins, ranging from familiar to obscure

elements such as monsters, mental illness, and serial killers, all of which are intertwined with knowledge and science. Horror is a potent emotion that merges terror and revulsion, akin to dread and anxiety. It is strongly associated with fear. When we refer to a genre as "horror," we frequently imply the entire spectrum of feelings connected to the experience of horror, such as uneasiness, revulsion, terror, and panic. This emotional reaction is akin to the response elicited by laughter or tears in comedy or tragedy, indicating it is distinct from real-life anxiety. Fear is a visceral response portrayed in horror films. Common sense reasoning is required in order to research and comprehend the actual meaning of the modern horror genre. The words of well-known American author and literary critic Deshil Hemmet represent this viewpoint. "If you want to really enjoy these stories, you need approach them with common sense and at least a basic understanding of the truth of reality as it is now seen by us, if not the so-called laws of nature. Superstitious people will only see something deadly in these tales as "that's just the way it is," rather than anything "strange." In the foreword to the anthology "Creeps by Night,"

Although the horror genre does not necessarily have a stable cast of characters, Noel Carroll divides psychopaths into two categories: those who are pathological but human, such as Thomas Harris's Hannibal Lecter from *The Red Dragon*, and those who are human but pathological. This is a genre in itself, where the primary element is terror rather than location, storyline, or even the presence of an enigmatic creature.



Based on information and the viewpoint of renowned horror author Stephen King—who proposed that there exist three distinct tiers of "horror"—let us investigate the notion of horror.

- Terror, a mixture of mental anxiety and visceral revulsion at knowing evil;

- Horror, a pure mental state of anticipatory terror of unknown or unseen evil;

- Completely revulsion at the bottom of the totem pole over an odious or disgusting incident

Terror literature explores emotions such as fear, revulsion, and terror. Determining the precise boundaries of horror fiction can be a challenging task that requires thorough discussion and clear definitions. Here are summaries of several main subgenres within the horror genre:

1. Paranormal fear

Noel Carroll suggested that the most common type of traditional horror narrative typically includes a supernatural threat like a vampire, ghost, or monster. The protagonist experiences panic due to their anxiety and loathing when encountering the unearthly. This is the domain of the witch, werewolf, ghost, and vampire. Prominent instances of this category include Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting at Hill House*, both of which revolve around vampires.

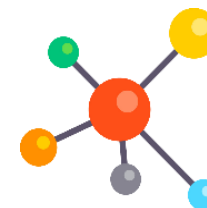
2. The Strange Narrative The strange tale, a subgenre of horror fiction, draws inspiration from dark fantasy and supernatural horror to evoke a sense of gloomy anxiety. The tale is disturbing because the protagonist or reader realizes that incomprehensible forces are at play and natural laws have been violated. H. P. Lovecraft, a

renowned writer of bizarre tales, believed that a sense of mysterious and inexplicable dread emanating from external, unfamiliar forces is essential. The most frightening concept in the human mind is the idea of the suspension or violation of the unchanging laws of nature, which serve as our only protection against the chaos and unknown forces of the cosmos. This must be conveyed with seriousness and a sense of impending doom.

2. Contes cruelles are direct narratives of physical suffering, cruelty, fear, and torment. They derive their horror not from supernatural elements but from the harshness of the punishments inflicted on its main characters, often psychopaths or serial killers, and the psychological impact on both the viewers and the victims. Examples include multiple film adaptations of the *Saw* and *Hostel* series, along with Edgar Allan Poe's *The Pit* and the *Pendulum*.

3. Psychological horror Psychological horror, like physical horror, tends to avoid the supernatural and instead focuses on horrors rooted in reality. Psychological horror focuses on the fear that arises from the psyche of a psychopath, serial killer, or other adversary, rather than on harsh tales. The villain's motivation to instill fear triggers the fear reaction. This horror genre was influenced by the film "*Psycho*" directed by Alfred Hitchcock and the novel "*Psycho*" written by Robert Bloch.

4-Dark fantasy Dark fantasy is a term that refers to horror stories set in a world of sword and sorcery, often associated with fantasy literature such to the *Lord of the Rings*. Dark fantasy is a word used to describe works that blend elements of science



fiction, high fantasy, and supernatural horror, however it is considered imprecise. Each genre is somewhat integrated, and legendary stories and creatures may also be featured. This genre typically encompasses the works of H. P. Lovecraft, Anne Rice, and Poppy Z. Bright from The Vampire Chronicles.

5. Science fiction terror sometimes incorporates aspects of science fiction, while dark science fiction frequently involves terror. As such, it can be challenging to discern between science fiction and horror because works like Philip K. Dick's dystopian novels and John Campbell's "Who Walks There?"—the basis for the films "Something from Another World" and "The Thing"—can be found in both genres. Alien is a horror film even if the most of the action takes place in space.

Gothic horror literature from 1750 to 1845. This era encompasses the late 18th and early 19th century horror genre, characterized by a transition to a mystical historical setting featuring castles and monsters. During the Romantic era, horror literature aimed to explore the negative consequences of Enlightenment principles that emphasized materialism and rationality. Notable authors in this genre include Edgar Allan Poe, as well as Gothic pioneers like Wallpole and Radcliffe.

7. Horror Biological (1885–19000) Nineteenth-century "biological" horror genre originated with Shelley's Frankenstein and featured works such as Stoker's Dracula, Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and H.G. Wells' "The Island of Dr. Moreau." The rise of the life sciences in the nineteenth century, especially the concepts of evolution and the development of psychoanalysis, was met with

horror. The most influential period in horror literature took place throughout this century, as scientific breakthroughs were anticipated, absorbed, and transformed into horror fiction.

8. Supernatural Terror (1865–1920) Before World War I, the rapid growth of pseudoscience and the subsequent increase in scientific progress influenced the horror genre's focus on ghosts and hauntings. This theme expressed dissatisfaction with the progress of science and the adverse consequences of acquiring "forbidden" and "unnatural" knowledge. Spiritualism and photography influenced the development of horror during this period, as the genre incorporated and utilized the new sciences to create its own art. The ninth period is known as Cosmic Horror, spanning from 1895 to 1945.

The Cthulhu Mythos by H. P. Lovecraft and the War of the Worlds by H. G. Wells exemplify the evolution of "cosmic horror" in response to advancements in scientific understanding due to the emergence of Einstein's theory of relativity. Victorian supernatural horror gave rise to the concept of extraterrestrial and transdimensional cosmic fear, which involves imagined alien invasions and powers beyond physical space. This facilitated the creation of a nightmare language to explore the consequences of a relativistic and atheistic existence. 10. Atomic Horror Psycho-Atomic (1940–1975) After World War II, science became established and gradually expanded into various facets of society. The portrayals of terror in literature, comic books, movies, and television reflected a society increasingly dependent on science. This led to the rise of the 1950s mutant



monster film genre, the integration of extraterrestrial invasion into popular culture, and the psychological exploration of horror in films such as Robert Bloch's and Hitchcock's Psycho, which aimed to interpret horror using modern scientific perspectives. Simply put, it included using logic to justify irrational fear. Body horror, spanning from 1965 to 2000. In the 1960s, there was a trend towards "body horror," which involved the ritualistic mutilation of the human body. This was influenced by greater reproductive autonomy and advancements in biotechnology. Examples of this genre include slasher movies, splatterpunk, and vampires. The body began to evoke fear simultaneously with progress in biotechnology, medicine, fertility treatment, and contraception. Key features of this period include The Omen, The Exorcist, Alien, slasher films from the 1970s, and the emergence of horror in video games and the Internet.

12. Persistent anxiety related to feelings of helplessness (1990–present) The Cold War era of the twentieth century transitioned into a turbulent, fragmented, postmodern period where alternative knowledge, revealing hidden facts, and challenging absolute truth were sources of fear instead of institutional science. Horror represented the unpredictable future of free will during a time when science had minimized the human mind and soul to a set of neurological and genetic commands that humans had minimal influence over. Works such as Elizabeth Kostova's The Historian and Buffy the Vampire Slayer illustrate how possessing knowledge can serve as a powerful tool in protecting one's convictions.

Extreme and brutal violence has supplanted fatalism in the "Saw" series and its associated flicks.

CONCLUSION

This work examines concepts both historical and contemporary, where it was addressed to the statements and views of famous scientists, writers and critics. This ranges from Aristotle, the great philosopher and thinker, to the current scientists Noel Carroll, John Clause, and the horror eorologist Stephen King. In addition, you can see the results of the analysis, where there is a reasoning about the genres and categories of the genre of horror. In the work you can see how there are several versatile concepts of horror. For example, according to some thinkers, a horror genre is just something that gives a sense of fear of the unknown, which has no explanation. However, other scientists and writers are convinced that fear has a broader meaning and it is worth considering those subgenres of horror, from which it was created as a separate modern direction.

The concept of horror in literature is a topic of debate in modern literary studies, with many scholars arguing that genre definitions for other genres are unsolvable due to the lack of research on horror. This chapter examines various genre definitions of horror and its evolution across time. The contemporary horror story is a direct product of Western civilization and the greatest cultural gift the West has ever given the globe. It emerged at the same time as modern science, and has grown significantly outside of the West, particularly in Japan. Science fiction functions as a



metaphor for the advancement of the golden era, while horror is a subtle aspect that pervades even science fiction. Many academics argue that horror is primarily emotional, but this view is only partially true, as the emotion of horror best represents what horror stories mean. Horror is a genre of fiction intended to terrify, frighten, shock, or disgust its readers or viewers by evoking feelings of horror and shock. American horror writer G.F. Lovecraft supports this viewpoint, arguing that the primary goal of the horror genre is to arouse dread of the unknown and inexplicable. However, literary critic Edmund Wilson denies all notions of horror and only considers psychological horror as acceptable horror fiction. The horror genre encompasses a wide range of experiences, from the known to the unknown, from monsters to mental illness to serial murderers. It is closely connected to knowledge and science, and is often associated with fear, anxiety, and panic. Noel Carroll divides psychopaths into two categories: pathological but human and human but pathological. Stephen King proposed three distinct tiers of horror: terror, a mixture of mental anxiety and visceral revulsion at knowing evil; horror, a pure mental state of anticipatory terror of unknown or unseen evil; and completely revulsion at the bottom of the totem pole over an odious or disgusting incident. There are several subgenres within the horror genre, including supernatural terror, the weird tale, contes cruelles, psychological horror, dark fantasy, and science fiction. Supernatural terror features supernatural menaces like vampires, ghosts, or monsters, while the weird tale explores more

sombre terror, inspired by dark fantasy and supernatural horror. Contes cruelles account for physical pain, brutality, terror, and torture, while psychological horror focuses on the terror emanating from the mind of a psychopath or antagonist. Dark fantasy blurs the boundaries between science fiction, high fantasy, and supernatural horror, and includes mythological tales and animals. Science fiction often incorporates terror, making it difficult to distinguish between the two genres. Overall, the horror genre encompasses various emotions and themes, making it a complex and multifaceted genre.

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