

Primary Sources

1.) Horror movies, TV shows can have long-lasting effects. (1999). In *Media Report to Women* (Vol. 27, Issue 2, p. 8–). Communication Research Associates, Inc.

<https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.oswego.edu/docview/210159445?pq-origsite=primo>

- (1.) “While the short-term effects of watching horror movies or other films and television programs with disturbing content are well documented among children and teens, a new University of Michigan study shows that long term effects can actually linger into adulthood”. (P1)
- (2.) “[...]90% of the study’s participants (more than 150 students at Michigan and Wisconsin) reported a media fright reaction from childhood or adolescence. Moreover, about 26% still experience a residual anxiety today”. (P1)
- (3.) “This may not be surprising but the proportion of participants—one in four— who reported fright effects that they were still experiencing indicates that these responses should be of major concern.”(P1)
- (4.) “According to the study, a wide range of symptoms were reported [after viewing a scary movie], including crying or screaming, trembling or shaking, nausea or stomach pain, clinging to a companion, increased heart rate, freezing or feeling paralysis, and fear of losing control as well as sweating, chills or fever, fear of dying, shortness of breath, feeling of unreality, dizziness or faintness and numbness. (P2)

2.) Bartsch, A., Appel, M., & Storch, D. (2010). Predicting Emotions and Meta-Emotions at the Movies: The Role of the Need for Affect in Audiences’ Experience of Horror and Drama. *Communication Research*, 37(2), 167–190.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650209356441>

- (1.) “The NFA is defined as the “general motivation of people to approach or avoid situations and activities that are emotion inducing for themselves and others” (Maio & Esses, 2001, p. 585). The authors’ conceptualization of affect is broad and includes moods, emotions, preferences, and related evaluations. It is assumed that individuals with a strong NFA are motivated to approach affect-laden situations, and appreciate the experience of emotions, whereas individuals who are low in NFA tend to avoid and dismiss emotional experiences. Thus, the NFA recommends itself as a predictor of individuals’ motivation to engage in emotional media experiences, including those that are negative or ambivalent. (P4)
- (2.) “In recent research, the NFA has been applied to predict selective exposure to emotional media experiences. In a study of Maio and Esses (2001) participants read descriptions of films that included information about how interesting, happy, and sad each film was supposed to be and rated their willingness to see the film. These authors found that the willingness to watch emotional films (willingness to see happy

and sad films minus willingness to see films that were neither happy nor sad) was higher for individuals with a strong NFA.” (P4)

- (3.) “We expected that the NFA predicts individuals’ experience of emotions and meta-emotions in response to these movies. Specifically, we assumed that individuals high in NFA would experience higher levels of negative and ambivalent feelings and that they evaluate their emotions more positively in terms of meta-emotions” (P7)
- (4.) “Results support the notion that individuals with a strong NFA are motivated to respond in ways that amplify their experience of negative and ambivalent emotions and that they tend to evaluate their emotions more positively on the level of meta-emotion compared to individuals low in NFA. As expected, the NFA approach scale predicted all of our four emotion variables. Individuals high in NFA approach reported higher levels of discrete negative emotions and ambivalent emotions and experienced higher levels of emotional intensity and negative valence “ (P17)

3.) Walters, G. (2004). Understanding the Popular Appeal of Horror Cinema: An Integrated-Interactive Model. *Journal of Media Psychology*.

- (1.) “Both Freud and Jung offered explanations for the popularity of horror fiction. To Freud (1919/1955) horror was a manifestation of the “uncanny,” reoccurring thoughts and feelings that have been repressed by the ego but which seem vaguely familiar to the individual. Jung (1934/1968), on the other hand, argued that horror gained its popularity from the fact that it touched on important archetypes or primordial images that he said resided in the collective unconscious. Jungians contend that Analytic concepts like the shadow, mother, and anima/animus archetypes can be found in many works of horror fiction (Iaccino, 1994).”
- (2.) “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 snuggle theory in which horror films are viewed as a vehicle by which adolescents demonstrate gender role congruent behavior: mastery and fearlessness in boys and dependency and fearfulness in girls (Zillmann & Gibson, 1996).”
- 3.) “The arousal that horror pictures incite is well documented (Tannenbaum, 1980; Zillmann, 1984) and is generally thought to be a function of the atmosphere of suspense, visual stimulation, and, for males, an opportunity for mastery that movies in the horror genre provide viewers (Brosius & Schmitt, 1990). The musical score and sound track add to the tension by building suspense and supplying information about a character’s current emotional state (Cohen, 1990). Horror cinema’s ability to induce (curiosity/fascination) and relieve (catharsis) tension, and raise tension in anticipation of successful plot resolution (excitation transfer) is central to its appeal.”
- (4.) “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 slasher subgenre, movies which are made with teenage audiences in mind.”

4.) Fukumoto, M., Tsukino, Y. (2015). Relationship of Terror Feelings and Physiological Response During Watching Horror Movie. *IFIP International Conference on Computer Information Systems and Industrial Management*. Springer, 500-507.

- (1.) “This study aims to investigate the relationship of terror feeling and physiological indices. An experiment is conducted to investigate the relationship, and a Japanese horror movie is selected as a stimulus that affecting the subjects terror. Respiration, electrocardiogram, and skin conductance were measured as the physiological indices.”
- (2.) “Around the scene 7, the intensity respiration began to increase by comparing to prior to the scene 7. The increase continues to the end of the scene 8, and sometimes the rapid changes of the intensity were observed. “
- (3.) “During the scenes considered as affecting the subjects terror feeling, the intensity of respiration was increased in some samples of the subjects. Furthermore, the cycle of respiration was accelerated, and the cycle was statistically increased by comparing with prior to the scenes. The change in the cycle of respiration is considered as a result of change in autonomic nervous activity”
- (4.) “The cycle of respiration was accelerated in both of the subjects who felt terror and did not feel terror. If the subjects responded as felt no terror, the movie stimulus may affect to the subject. Moreover, there is a possibility that the subjects told a lie that they did not feel any terror although they felt terror. In such the case, pride of the subject must be a reason of the lie: feeling terror might be a shame feeling. This is a severe problem that makes difficult connecting the terror feeling and physiological information.”

5.) Sultana, I., et al. (2021). Effects of Horror Movies on Psychological Health of Youth. *Global Mass Communication Review* ,VI(I),1-11.

- (1.) “It is observed that watching Horror Movies cause long-lasting effects on young kids like nervousness, escapism, fascination, Nightmares. (NIMH: USA, 2005). Young people know that horror movies or characters of those movies do not exist in reality, but it is observed that youth are afraid of these movies.”
- (2.) “Horror movies affect mental health if it is assumed that real things can happen in the same way, so the movies with a tag that are extracted from real stories are more dangerous for the psychological health of young minds. Sometime young brain may ballpark figure the risk of damage and experience factual 'fear' while watching horror movies when this comes about; one can notice that the immature youngsters fit

tightly to a parent and weep, it is for sure that there is an exceptionally real chance of harm.”

- (3.) “Aluja-Fabregat A., Torrubia-Beltri R. (1998), did research on the effects of horror films on the psychology of young people. It shows that children and teens have to face the same consequences. Viewing a frightening film can create severe case of anxiety, horror of dying, dizziness, increased heartbeat, feeling of shortness of breath. Horror movies can produce nightmare in children.”
- (4.) “The finding of current research showed that the majority of respondents, who consisted of teenage male and females, love to watch horror and action movies(see table:1). Most of them watch movies through the internet for enjoyment and entertainment (see table:2 &3). The majority of the movie viewer feel fear during and after watching horror movies(see table:4&5). The respondents who watch horror films admitted that they have the feeling of fear during the normal course of life (see table: 6). Results of feeling in darkness at night are very interesting that male teenage respondents who feel horrified are almost double in number (see table: 7); it is also interesting that the majority of horror movies viewers did not like horror characters in movies.”

6.) Nummenmaa, L. (2021, March 4). Psychology and neurobiology of horror movies. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/b8tgs>

- (1.) “Some fears are nearly universal and thus powerful themes for horror movies. Fears of injury and illness as well as those pertaining to termination of social relationships are the most common ones in the general population. Similar fears are also sources of common clinical phobias, suggesting that that humans are genetically predisposed to fear specific life-threatening conditions and events. Survey data also show that scariest horror movies deal with this kind of universal themes.”
- (2.) “Fear is a protective mechanism that acts as “survival intelligence” in the brain, mind, and body. It has a strong and distinct evolutionary function as a response to acute threats to physical and psychological well-being. Fear is often equated with the subjective experience or feeling of dread. However, fear is a complex phenomenon that prepares the individual to meet the survival challenges by automatically adjusting cardiovascular, skeletomuscular and endocrine functions alongside actual behaviour and psychological processes including attention and memory 1,2. This complex cascade of changes has one goal: to recruit physical and psychological resources for avoiding the danger in the first place by freezing and remaining hidden when the predator is still far away, or initiating fight-or-flight response when the threat is already imminent.”
- (3.) “The “enjoyable fear” we experience during horror movies thus results from the interaction of the survival circuits that automatically respond to the threat cues such as sudden noises or predators, and the executive systems and long-term memory that evaluate the contextual information and confirm us constantly that we are safe. We would never go to see movies if we knew the killers would actually come after us or would never try a bungee jump if we knew the bungee rope would fail.”

- (4.) “The fear system operates at multiple timescales. Distance from the threat is a major determinant for the intensity of fear and the corresponding protective response. When the potential threats are far away, humans rely on thinking, reasoning and other cognitive strategies for planning escape. However when the threat becomes so close that it seems unavoidable, there is a sudden shift towards automatic fight-or-flight circuitry in the midbrain structures 10,16. This means that in movies fear can be manipulated in two major ways: by inducing a slow phasic suspense that leads to anxiety-like state, as well as sudden, immediate shocks such as canonical “jump scares” when the fears may realize almost literally in the front of the viewers’ eyes.”

Secondary Sources

1.) Antunes, F. (2017). Rethinking PG-13: Ratings and the Boundaries of Childhood and Horror. *Journal of Film and Video*, 69(1), 27–43.

<https://doi.org/10.5406/jfilmvideo.69.1.0027>

- (1.) “Vaughn does subtly hint at why PG-13 may be important on its own: the violence and horror in Spielberg’s family films such as *Poltergeist* (1982, dir. Tobe Hooper) and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984, dir. Steven Spielberg), which were awarded the PG rating with minor struggle; the films were key to the creation of PG-13 (Vaughn 114–15) and prompted debates around the distinction “between teenagers and preteens” (Vaughn 117).”
- (2.) “*Poltergeist* caused trouble before its release; the film’s innovative use of sound intensified scary moments beyond what the Classification and Ratings Administration (CARA) committee felt was appropriate for young children. *Poltergeist* thus received an R classification—for terror—which was quickly and successfully appealed to a PG on the grounds of the film being family-friendly (Vaughn 114). Free from restrictions, *Poltergeist* went on to become a box office triumph, now remembered as a classic.”
- (3.) “This family ideal is an intrinsic part of American identity. As Ronald Reagan famously said, lesson number one about America is that all great change begins at the dinner table (“Reagan’s Farewell Speech”). For this president, the family was “the basic unit of religious and moral values that hold our society together” (“Radio Address to the Nation on Domestic Social Issues”), and he encouraged Americans to teach family values to their children and “to have the courage to defend those values and virtues and the willingness to sacrifice for them” (“Acceptance of the Republican Nomination for President”). It is no surprise then that films that affirm these values could be more easily accepted than films that do not, irrespective of their violent content.”
- 4.) “I remember calling Jack Valenti and suggesting to him that we need a rating between R and PG, because so many films were falling into a netherworld, you know, of unfairness. Unfair that certain kids were exposed to *Jaws*, but also unfair that certain films were restricted, that kids who were 13, 14, 15 should be allowed to see” (qtd. in Windolf). [...] Spielberg set a clear distinction between early childhood and late childhood, or adolescence, arguing that different levels of violence and intensity

could be appropriate for each group, while still respecting the frontier set by the R classification. There appears to have been consensus about the existence of this division, even if the exact moment of transition was debatable, varying from as young as seven to thirteen years old. Therefore, the anxiety, struggle, and controversy can be traced back to a gradually intensified clash between social attitudes and social structures, affecting the rating system. PG-13 responded to these problems in a simple yet majorly impactful way: it established a tangible middle ground, an “official” separation between entertainment suitable for all children and features suitable only for older children and teenagers.”

2.) Martin G. N. (2019). (Why) Do You Like Scary Movies? A Review of the Empirical Research on Psychological Responses to Horror Films. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 2298. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02298>

- (1.) “Given the longevity of horror as a genre and its history in cinema, what is it that draws people to this particular genre and how does the genre create the psychological effects that it does? The study of individuals’ response to horror can be illuminating for several reasons. It may help us understand why people are attracted to a very commercially successful genre of film making but one which is seen as very distinctive and highly specialized. It may also help us to explain why some material that is perceived as being unpleasant and disgusting is appealing to some people more than it is to others. The study of horror film may also help us understand how emotions are generated and processed and may help us understand elements of fear (and the attraction of fear).”
- (2.) “To this end, some authors have argued that “horror is primarily a sound-based medium” (Kawin, 2012): The creaking door, the scream, the shriek of an owl, the hiss of a cat, the squelching of a head as it meets a sledgehammer, the ringing of a phone, the bang of a falling object, and the crack of a branch in an otherwise quiet forest at night are all auditory devices deigned to make viewers and listeners afraid and to create suspense.”
- (3.) “It has been proposed that arousal itself might be self-rewarding – the act of watching horror provides us with a thrill regardless of the resolution and we like and enjoy the film for this reason (Tamborini, 1991). The pleasurable experience of arousal motivates us to continue watching in order to sustain that level of arousal, as Berlyne (1967) suggests. Sparks and Spirek (1988), for example, found a positive correlation between skin conductance (a physiological measure of emotional arousal) and self-reported arousal in people who watched a clip of *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, suggesting that the arousal we report also correlates at the physiological level, although whether the psychophysiological changes determine the arousal or [vise-versa].”
- (4.) “The most widely studied trait in the research on horror is sensation seeking. According to Zuckerman (1994), sensation seeking is the “seeking of varied, novel, complex and intense sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical, social, legal and financial risks for the sake of such experiences” (p. 27). It peaks in the teenage years and declines thereafter (Zuckerman, 1988). Zuckerman’s

measure of sensation seeking describes four related but different factors: (1) thrill and adventure seeking; (2) experience seeking; (3) disinhibition; and (4) boredom susceptibility.”

3.) King, S. (1981). Why we crave horror movies. *Playboy*, pp. 152-154, 237-246.

- (1.) “When we pay our four or five bucks and seat ourselves at tenth-row 2 center in a theater showing a horror movie, we are daring the nightmare. Why? Some of the reasons are simple and obvious. To show that we can, that we are not afraid, that we can ride this roller coaster. Which is not to say that a really good horror movie may not surprise a scream out of us at some point, the way we may scream when a roller coaster twists through a complete 360 or plows through a lake at the bottom of the drop. And horror movies, like roller coasters, have always been the special province of the young; by the time one turns forty or fifty, one’s appetite for double twists or 360-degree loops may be considerably depleted.”
- (2.) “It may be that horror movies provide psychic relief on this level because this invitation to lapse into simplicity, irrationality, and even outright madness is extended so rarely. We are told we may allow our emotions a free rein . . . or no rein at all.”
- (3.) “Our emotions and our fears form their own body, and we recognize that it demands its own exercise to maintain proper muscle tone. Certain of these emotional muscles are accepted — even exalted — in civilized society; they are, of course, the emotions that tend to maintain the status quo of civilization itself.”
- (4.) “But anticivilization emotions don’t go away, and they demand 11 periodic exercise. We have such “sick” jokes as, “What’s the difference between a truckload of bowling balls and a truckload of dead babies?” (You can’t unload a truckload of bowling balls with a pitchfork . . . a joke, by the way, that I heard originally from a ten-year-old.) Such a joke may surprise a laugh or a grin out of us even as we recoil, a possibility that confirms the thesis: if we share a brotherhood of man, then we also share an insanity of man.”

4.) van Diemen, J. J. et al. (2019). The viewing of a “Bloodcurdling” horror movie increases platelet reactivity: A randomized cross-over study in healthy volunteers. *Thrombosis Research*, 182, 27–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.thromres.2019.07.028>

- (1.) “The viewing of a horror movie has been proven to induce a [physiological stress](#) response [9]. Consequently, the viewing of a horror movie can be used to simulate psychological stress in a research setting. Interestingly, a recent study demonstrated an increase in [factor VIII](#) after watching a horror movie, suggesting an effect of acute fear on the [coagulation system](#) [10]. However, primary [hemostasis](#) is thought to play a more prominent role in the etiology of CVE than secondary hemostasis [11].
- (2.) “All experiments were performed in a secluded room between 2 and 4 PM. Participants were sequentially allocated to watch 24 min (beginning of fragment at 34 min. and 56 s.) of the horror movie *Grave Encounters II* (Twin Engine Films; Pink

Buffalo Films, Canada 2012) [13], and 24 min of the episode “Mystic Mountain” by The joy of painting with Bob Ross (2015) [14].”

- (3.) “A major player inducing increased platelet reactivity during stress is the [sympathetic nervous system](#) (SNS). The SNS exerts physiological effects at times of [acute stress](#), for example an increase in heartrate, blood pressure, and [bronchodilation](#). Furthermore, the SNS induces adrenomedullary release of [catecholamines](#), particularly epinephrine [20]. Catecholamines, are known to potentiate [platelet activation](#) [21]. Hence, it is likely that stress induces increased platelet activity.”
- (4.) “To estimate the level of stress, we measured heart rate, blood pressure (beat-to-beat measurement; Nexfin, BMYE Amsterdam, The Netherlands.) and skin conduction (eSense skin response app from Apple®) before and 24 min into both movies.”

5.) Clasen, et, al. (2018). Horror, Personality, and Threat Simulation: A Survey on the Psychology of Scary Media. *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*. 14. 10.1037/ebs0000152.

- (1.) “If we want to understand the appeal of horror, it is reasonable to ask who enjoys the genre. Despite some early studies into the personality characteristics of horror consumers (reviewed in Hoffner & Levine, 2005)—mainly focusing on thrill-seeking, age, and gender differences in response—the personality profile of horror fans has not yet been adequately investigated. Nobody has rigorously investigated horror media consumption from the perspective of Big-Five personality traits, and researchers have neglected to integrate their findings within the powerfully explanatory matrix of evolutionary social science.”
- (2.) “We agree with the adaptive logic proposed by Pinker. In the case of horror media, we argue that the attraction of horror is explicable in terms of an evolved pleasure response to threat simulations. Horror media tend to imaginatively transport consumers into fictional universes that brim with danger, e.g. in the form of simulated monsters or fictional villains. Through such imaginative absorption, people get to experience strong, predominantly negative emotions within a safe context. This experience, which serves as a way of preparing for real-world threat situations, may be biologically adaptive in terms of improving the odds of survival in a potentially hostile world (Clasen, 2017).”
- (3.) “In response to the statement “I generally prefer horror media that I find ...,” respondents answered as follows: 3.9% “Not at all frightening,” 17.2% “Mildly frightening,” 37.7 “Moderately frightening,” 25.2% “Highly frightening,” and 16% “Extremely frightening.” The bulk of responses (78.9%), then, were in the moderately-to-highly frightening range.”
- (4.) “Four independent, uncorrelated factors can account for a significant proportion of the variance of horror use and experience. The first, Enthusiastic Horror Use, describes enjoyment and frequent use of horror media, a preference for intense horror because the horror enthusiast is not easily scared, and expectation of positive feelings from using horror.[...] The second factor, Social Horror Use, describes a

preference for using horror with others. Interestingly, this preference is accompanied by both a tendency to enjoy horror with others and to be more scared when using horror with others. [...] The third factor, Supernatural Horror Use, represents both a preference for supernatural over natural horror and a tendency to be more scared by supernatural horror. [...] And the fourth factor, Fearful Horror Use, indicates a proclivity toward being easily scared, especially when alone, and to be more scared after using horror. Persons high on this factor tend to be female, agreeable, and lower in Emotional Stability.”

6.) Hoffner, A. C. & Levine, J. K. (2004). Enjoyment of Mediated Fright and Violence: A Meta-Analysis. *MEDIA PSYCHOLOGY*, 7, 207–237.

- (1.) “A common element in horror films and other genres that feature threatening situations or events is suspense, which arouses fear in audience members about potentially disturbing outcomes (e.g., Mikos, 1996). One explanation for why people enjoy such presentations relies on the conversion of negative affect to euphoria following a satisfying resolution to a threat. According to Zillmann (1996), suspenseful drama, in which liked characters experience or are threatened with victimization, arouses dysphoric emotional reactions or empathic distress.”
- (2.) “Tamborini (1996) proposed a model of how individual differences in empathy are related to people’s emotional responses to horror, although his model is relevant to any media presentation in which characters are threatened or victimized. He contended that cognitive components of empathy precede affective components, which directly impact on viewers’ emotional reactions. The more the viewers tend to emotionally respond to or share the responses of others, the more negative affect they should experience while viewing horrifying presentations. Tamborini speculated that viewers who are highly empathic should dislike horror films as a result of their strong negative reactions to the pain and suffering of others.”
- (3.) “It is often suggested that aggressive individuals are attracted to entertainment that features violence and brutality. [...] In addition, aggressive individuals may like violent content because it enables them to justify their own behavior and feel less guilt about their actions (Atkin, 1985). In this meta-analysis, we examined the evidence that aggressiveness is associated with greater enjoyment of fright and violence.”
- (4.) “Research suggests that boys are socialized to avoid the outward expression of fear and distress and may experience social disapproval for doing so, whereas girls are permitted or even encouraged to express these emotions (e.g., Saarni, 1989; Zaslow & Hayes, 1986). Zillmann and Weaver contended that in today’s society, there are few circumstances where youth can develop and demonstrate mastery of gender-appropriate emotional behaviors. They suggested that horror films provide such a context for adolescents, in which boys can “prove to their peers, and ultimately to themselves, that they are unperturbed, calm, and collected in the face of terror,” and girls can “demonstrate their sensitivity by being appropriately disturbed, dismayed, and disgusted.”