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The Impact of the MPAA Ratings System on the Depiction of

Violence in Horror Films From 1960-2009

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John Carpenter, a renowned horror filmmaker, once said that fear is “probably the most powerful emotion we all feel as humans” (*Nightmares in Red, White and Blue*, 2010). Horror films are one medium that really capitalizes on this fear, making it a genre that garners an extensive amount of criticism and intense emotional response. This is primarily because horror films are composed of our nightmares and reflect on our concerns within ourselves and with the Other that we do not understand. While some people turn away from this as entertainment, others are captivated by the thrill of being scared.

The horror film ranks, according to Douglas Gomery, as “one of the most popular and profitable of film genres” (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996, p. 49). From 2003-2008, 135 horror films grossed nearly \$3 billion at the box office (*Nightmares in Red, White and Blue*, 2010). The popularity of this genre normally brings about the question of why people enjoy this genre so much, which is one driving force behind this study. Some people enjoy being scared by horror films, and others do not understand that. The horror genre receives a lot of criticism for the gratuitous violence and sexuality that it shows. Gender representation is another issue that is brought up against the horror genre because of the brutality shown more specifically towards female victims.

Another common criticism of horror is if these viewers are exposed to horrific images so much that they are desensitized to violence. This idea of desensitization produces uneasiness over whether desensitization to gruesome images leads to a higher tolerance for violence and less compassion for victims of violent acts that happen in real life. Desensitization is also the other driving force behind this study. The horror genre is also subjected to ridicule and does not always receive serious criticism. But as Connelly (2007) indicates, “because these films are an enduring

feature of popular culture, they are worthy of more critical study than they have received” (p. 13).

With that in mind, a content analysis of 25 American horror films released from 1960-2009 was conducted to examine how this genre has capitalized on nightmares for over fifty years. The results suggest, however, that assumptions about films becoming more violent over time were unfounded. But before discussing the study in its entirety, it is first necessary to explore how the horror film genre was established and evolved over time, as well as the rating system since the films that were analyzed were made during the ratings period.

### **History of the Horror Film Genre**

The horror genre has been around long before the film genre itself arose because telling horrifying stories has always been a part of storytelling. Fables and primitive tales involving fictional horror have been part of “a tradition so primordial that it might be considered a part of human nature” (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996, p. 4). Tales involving certain aspects of horror such as witchcraft and monsters or graphic violence have always been around, but the ways in which these tales are told and how the audience perceives them are what has changed. As Zillmann and Gibson note in Tamborini and Weaver’s (1996) book *Horror Films: Current Research on Audience Preferences and Reactions*, telling horrifying tales expanded through the evolving stories of “hunters, reports from those who survived warfare, fairy tales, rites of passage, blood sports, horrified stage happenings, and lastly, films” (p. 15). So the horror genre began and developed as a way for humanity to tell the violence of everyday life.

Ancient Greek and Roman theater was also a place of entertainment that presented some gruesome and terrifying acts on the stage (Zillmann & Gibson, 1996). The 18th century saw the

development of graphic imagery through the works of William Horgarth that coincided with the technological developments in printing, which allowed his fictional literary works to also become more popular (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996, p. 6). Gothic horror arose soon after with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, which Tamborini and Weaver (1996) acknowledged as the first example of modern supernatural horror that allowed for the turn towards Gothic horror at the end of the 18th century (p. 7). But this was short lived and horror found a new place on the stage in the 19th century.

Other writers during the 19th century contributed to developing the horror genre through the ghost stories of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens, the focus on real-life crime with tales from Edgar Allan Poe, and even Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* that raised questions about a supernatural that was beyond reason (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996, p. 8-9). The classic literature of the 20th century helped horror become a legitimate genre with the writings of Bram Stoker, Henry James, Arthur Machen, and M.R. James (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996, p. 9).

Horror eventually made its way into film during the early 20th century. Notable films during this time were Thomas Edison's *Frankenstein* (1910), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), *Nosferatu* (1921), *Dracula* (1931), and *Frankenstein* (1931) that recycled horrid stories from previous centuries (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996; Sapolsky & Molitor, 1996). Pinedo (1996) mentions how these classic horror films tend to revolve around a monster interrupting the normal order while being set in an exotic time or place. This shows how horror films did not portray fears of the present, but instead illustrated the horrors of the past in a completely different environment.

These films were fairly mild in their depictions of violence, which was partially due to the Production Code of 1930, so the novelty and popularity of these films eventually wore off. So audiences found more appealing, bloody horror through comic books in the 1940s and 1950s (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996, p. 11). The horror films of the 1940s were also set against the reality of genocide from the Holocaust, so the monsters became less terrifying (*Nightmares in Red, White and Blue*, 2010).

But Tamborini and Weaver (1996) note that when television arose after the *Paramount* decision of 1948, film producers discovered that they could profit from films that were directed at particular audiences, including teenagers who read horror comic books (p. 11). Sapolsky and Molitor also mention that a subgenre of science fiction horror resulted after World War II and the detonation of the A-bomb, replacing zombies, werewolves, and mummies (p. 34). Films such as Hammer's *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957) used Technicolor and close-ups of bloodshed, and the success of this with teenage audiences caught the eye of other film directors, including Alfred Hitchcock (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996, p. 11; *Nightmares in Red, White and Blue*, 2010).

The films of the 1960s became more explicit since this decade came after the end of the Production Code. Increasing levels of explicitness were carried out in sexual and violent content, and this was especially noteworthy in horror films. But Sapolsky and Molitor (1996) describe the one film that “singlehandedly launched a new subgenre of ‘gore’ horror movies appeared in 1960: Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*” (p. 35). *Psycho* made audiences aware that nothing was going to be off limits anymore and that anyone could die at any time (*Nightmares in Red, White and Blue*, 2010). As Tamborini and Weaver (1996) note, “although *Psycho* seems to culminate a general shift in scary fiction from the supernatural of the mid-18th century to the nonsupernatural

and quasi-science fiction, the most apparent development since the 1960s is the drive toward more graphic horror” (p. 11).

This graphic horror is seen in later films of the 1960s such as *Blood Feast* (1963) and *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), which were not major studio releases and had more freedom in content. But the drive towards more vivid and detailed horror is not the only recurring theme that has been noted. Robin Wood (1985) writes about five recurring motifs that have dominated horror films since the 1960s and help differentiate them from previous horror films. These five trends are the Monster as human psychotic or schizophrenic, the revenge of Nature; satanism, diabolic possession, the Antichrist; the Terrible Child, and Cannibalism (p. 207). The documentary *The American Nightmare* (2003) also shows how horror films of the late-1960s and 1970s were reflections of their time by focusing on the Civil Rights movement in *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), the Vietnam War in *The Last House on the Left* (1972), and the sexual revolution in *Shivers* (1975).

And even more graphic horror was depicted in horror films of the 1970s through special effects (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996; Sapolsky & Molitor, 1996). Trencansky (2001) regards horror films from the 1970s as a brief renaissance in horror, “where progressive films challenged societal norms and traditional depictions of female subjectivity” (p. 64). The 1970s was a decade of excessive sex and violence being shown in film, as well as people fighting for their own idea of the American Dream (*Nightmares in Red, White and Blue*, 2010). Sapolsky and Molitor (1996) attribute the 1974 film *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* as the film that “set the stage for an even more specialized subgenre of horror-the slasher film” (p. 36). Another film from the 1970s that is attributed to beginning the slasher film subgenre is 1978’s *Halloween* (Wee, 2006).

The slasher film really hit its prime during the 1980s. Sapolsky and Molitor (1996) observe the main characteristics of slasher films, which include a male psycho killer/superhuman monster that typically wields an axe, knife, chainsaw, or other weapon to kill a group of mostly female victims until he is subdued or killed by the one girl who survives (p. 36). The one girl who survives is a character that has been thoroughly studied by scholars and was named the Final Girl by Carol Clover (Trencansky, 2001; Clover, 1987; Connelly, 2007; Wee, 2006). “She is the one who encounters the mutilated bodies of her friends and perceives the full extent of the preceding horror and of her own peril...she is abject terror personified” (Clover, 1987, p. 201). The Final Girl adopts an active male gaze to defeat or escape from the monster because she exemplifies “intelligence, asexuality, and watchfulness” (Connelly, 2007, p. 15). This new character was important in horror because the Final Girl had more influence and power than previous female characters.

But another component of slasher films is what Sapolsky and Molitor refer to as “postcoital death” and instances of illicit sex (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996, p. 36). This element of female victims being brutally murdered, occasionally after scenes of sexual behavior, has made slasher films the target of harsh criticism from scholars and the popular media (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996; Mullin & Linz, 1995; Linz & Donnerstein, 1994). However, content analyses of slasher horror films have shown that the assumption that females are killed more than males and that violence is frequently linked to sex have consistently been shown to be unfounded (Tamborini & Weaver, 1996; Sapolsky & Molitor, 1993, 2003; Weaver, 1991).

The 1990s saw the rise of films about realistic serial killers and mainly the updated teen slasher through the commercially successful film franchises *Scream* (1996) and *I Know What*

*You Did Last Summer* (1997). The teen slasher genre fell to a point of exhaustion between the late 1980s and mid-1990s, so it was necessary to reinvent the genre, psychotic killer, and Final Girl (Wee, 2006). In these films, the monster is actually a troubled but normal human who is a member of the heroine's group of friends. The Final Girls also show "no special skills or strengths...they become the last survivor almost at random" (Trencansky, 2001, p. 71-72). The *Scream* trilogy was also a turning point in that it targeted adolescent females who were a demographic that had previously been ignored by the genre (Wee, 2006).

But the turn of the century once again marked a change in horror with the most notable variation being the rise of torture porn films. A term coined by film critic David Edelstein, torture porn films brought about a remarkable increase in lengthened scenes of graphic torture, rape, abduction, and dismemberment (Murray, 2008). Some torture porn films include *The Devil's Rejects* (2005), *Saw* (2004), *Wolf Creek* (2005), and *Hostel* (2005). These films are classified as torture porn because they contain "a strong element of one-upmanship, as steadily increased budgets permit the filmmakers to pursue more extravagant ways of destroying the human body" (Sharrett, 2009, p. 32). The rise of torture porn has been attributed to horrific news from the war in Iraq because these images may cause people to be less repulsed by violence, so filmmakers have to find new ways to shock them (*Nightmares in Red, White and Blue*, 2010; Murray, 2008). And it is important to note that as the horror genre changed, the MPAA rating system also developed and continuously transformed their standards for rating these films.

### **The MPAA Rating System**

The rating system will be discussed because it was established and developed during the time period in which the films chosen for this study were made. It will also be examined to see if



content in horror films shifted significantly during the ratings period. According to the Motion Picture Association of America's website (<http://mpaa.org>), the MPAA was formed in 1922 as a means for self-regulation and so American cinema would no longer be subject to censorship boards. The process of the film industry regulating itself began with the Hays Office Production Code, named after the first MPAA president Will Hays. The Production Code was seen as very strict because it only allowed for "morally correct" standards of life to be presented in films, and as society changed, the code became more anachronistic. So on November 1, 1968, former MPAA Chairman Jack Valenti established the voluntary movie ratings system (Mosk, 1997; <http://mpaa.org>; Thompson & Yokota, 2004).

Former Chairman of the Classification and Rating Administration (CARA) Richard Mosk (1997) writes that the whole idea behind the voluntary film rating system was "not to approve or disapprove a motion picture based on content, but to give advance guidance to parents so that they could make an informed decision about the movie-viewing of their children" (p. 136). Friedman (1973) also states that the second function of the rating system is that it "forestalled censorship by the federal and local governments" (p. 186). So while it prevents censorship, it also maintains the voluntary aspect that all films are not required to be rated.

Once a film is submitted to the MPAA for a rating, the CARA board members view a film and determine how parents would view a film and what the parents would want to know about it (Mosk, 1997; Friedman, 1973). Factors that are included when determining a rating for a film include theme, language, violence, drugs, nudity and sex (Mosk, 1997, p. 137). The members of the CARA board are generally parents, and they are kept anonymous to avoid being influenced by the public.

The current ratings symbols are either G, PG, PG-13 (added in 1984), R, and NC-17 (added in 1990). G ratings mean ‘General Audiences’ so all ages are admitted and there is nothing in the film that would offend parents for viewing by their children. A PG rating stands for ‘Parental Guidance Suggested’ and means some material may not be suitable for children so parents may not like their young children to see some of the material. PG-13 stands for ‘Parents Strongly Cautioned’ and shows that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13, so parents are urged to be cautious.

An R rating represents ‘Restricted’ and signifies that the film contains some adult material and anyone under 17 requires an accompanying parent or adult guardian. Parents are also urged to learn more about the film before taking young children with them. An NC-17 rating expresses that no one 17 and under will be admitted, not that the film is obscene or pornographic, and the film is patently for adult viewers because most parents would consider the film off-limits for their children to view (Mosk, 1997; mpaa.org). There is an “X” rating, but Mosk (1997) writes that this rating is no longer trademarked by the MPAA and is instead self-imposed to mark that the picture is not submitted for rating (p. 137).

However, Thompson and Yokota (2004) found that the rating system does not properly identify all types of content found in films, especially the depiction of substances such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Friedman (1973) also notes that “parents are not being provided meaningful information about the suitability of particular films for children” (p. 198). Another concern is that the rating system is not concerned enough about violence. The documentary *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* (2006) quotes the MPAA.org website stating that “nearly four times as many films received an NC-17 for sex as opposed to violence.” Darren Aronofsky, director of

*Requiem for a Dream* (2000), also mentioned in the documentary that a film could depict shooting multiple bodies but still get a PG-13 rating if no blood is shown. In relation to the horror genre, this also makes it difficult for viewers to know what violence they can expect in a horror film. This is because horror films show more innovative and cruel ways of killing people in comparison to other genres, so it is hard for a parent to tell if their child will be exposed to graphic violence if the rating does not adequately inform them.

Film directors can decide whether or not to submit a film for a rating, and some motion pictures are released without ratings (Mosk, 1997). George Romero even released *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) and *Day of the Dead* (1985) as unrated, and a few films on the sample list for this study are also unrated. However, advertising budgeters and distributors are more hesitant about wanting a movie if it has an NC-17 rating or doesn't have a rating at all (*This Film Is Not Yet Rated*, 2006). Box office analyst Paul Dergarabedian also claims that "the difference between an NC-17 and an R rating could be millions of dollars...because it definitely limits your ability to market the film. If you're limited on your ability to market a film, people aren't aware of it- they're not going to know to even go to the theater to see it" (*This Film Is Not Yet Rated*, 2006).

### **Content Analysis of Horror Films**

Multiple content analyses have been done on horror films and provide evidence that mostly disproves common assumptions made about the horror genre. The belief that females are always the targets of slasher films that frequently contain a mixture of sex and violence was disproved in a content analysis of 1980s slasher films by Molitor and Sapolsky (1993) and Weaver (1991). Linz and Donnerstein (1994) challenged these findings by offering a reinterpretation of the research results to suggest a gender bias is present in slasher films because the scenes of women

being tortured last longer than scenes in which male characters are tortured. So Sapolsky, Molitor, and Luque (2003) conducted a second content analysis of slasher films in the 1990s and found that more violence was found in slasher films made in the 1990s compared to 1980s slasher films, and slasher films from the 1990s reduce sexual displays before and after violent acts.

Mullin and Linz (1995) also conducted a study which found that viewers of horror films experienced desensitization and a low amount of sympathy for female sexual assault victims. This study addresses the common expectation that viewing horror films leads to desensitization. Research has also been conducted in Goldstein's book *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment* (1998) to show that males are more attracted to violence than females, people can feel disgust and anxiety while viewing violence on a screen, and the meaning of the violence is more important to the audience than the violence itself.

This content analysis was conducted to investigate if the rating system impacted the depictions of violence in horror films from 1960-2009. Here are the following research questions of the study:

RQ1: Does the amount of violence depicted in the highest-grossing and the lowest-grossing horror films increase in films starting with release dates in the 1960s to films released in the 2000s?

RQ2: Do scenes of violent acts last for a longer amount of time in horror films as they progress from the 1960s to the 2000s?

RQ3: Are there significant differences in the content of films released from 1960-2009 that are rated R, PG-13, and PG?

## Method

### Sample

The content analysis included 25 horror films from 1960-2009. For each decade, the first three films selected were the highest grossing horror films of the decade according to their gross in millions of U.S. dollars on WorldwideBoxOffice.com. The last two films of each decade were the lowest grossing films, which led to five films for each decade. Each decade, including the highest and lowest grossing films, were analyzed to determine if there were any significant differences in the depictions of violence. The highest and lowest grossing films were selected to broaden the sample beyond just films that were popular.

Films were also chosen if their classification on the Internet Movie Database, or IMDB.com, included the term 'Horror.' IMDB.com can give one single film multiple classifications, so films were eliminated from the sample if their classification also included 'Drama' and 'Comedy.' The films also had to be American because the guidelines for this project did not allow enough time to thoroughly examine the horror film genres of other countries, so the sample was limited to American films.

Another factor in selecting the films involved the availability of the least commercially successful films. Since these films were ranked to be the lowest grossing, they were not necessarily easy to find. However, only one film had to be taken off the list because it could not be found. This film is titled *La Femme Vampir* (2009), and it was replaced on the film selection list by *House of Usher* (2008) because this film was accessible. The ratings for each film were also found through IMDB.com and mainly from FilmRatings.com, which is the Classification and Rating Administration (CARA)'s website.

## **Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis for this study is violent behavior. Previous content analyses of horror films by Molitor and Sapolsky (1993, 2003) provided a model that was utilized for this study. Incidents of violent behavior taken from the Molitor and Sapolsky model were verbal abuse, beating, kicking, strangling, burning, beheading, bludgeoning, hanging, dismembering, stabbing, shooting, rape, sexual assault, drowning, electrocuting, poisoning, and other. The “Other” category was added after training to classify any violent behavior that could not be described by the previous categories.

The outcome of each violent attack was recorded as either escape, minor injury, major injury, or death. “Major” injuries were distinguished from “minor” injuries if the injury required hospitalization, and this was also provided by the Molitor and Sapolsky model. All of the violent behaviors were coded within the scenes during which they occurred. The definition of the scene was borrowed from Weaver’s (1991) content analysis of slasher films. According to the Weaver model, a scene is defined as “an uninterrupted sequence of behaviors occurring within a given physical context” (Weaver, 1991, p. 3). Any transitions between two physical contexts, such as walking outdoors to indoors, functioned as the beginning and end of a scene. The duration of each scene was timed with a stopwatch and recorded in seconds.

## **Coding**

Three coders assisted the author in coding the 25 horror films: two fellow undergraduate students and the author’s sister, a recent college graduate who graduated in December 2010. The four coders ensured that every film had at least two people who coded it. Following extensive

training, a film classified by the Internet Movie Database that was not on the film selection list was coded to test intercoder reliability. This test produced an intercoder reliability of 96.6%.

## **Results**

A total of 239 violent incidents were coded across the 25 horror films. Of these incidents, the most frequently occurring violent behaviors were beating (25.9% of total violent acts) and stabbing (18.4%). Violent behaviors coded as 'Other' (13.8%), which included acts such as biting and disemboweling, were the next most frequently appearing behavior. This was followed by shooting (7.9%), bludgeoning (7.5%), and burning (6.7%).

These results were also fairly similar with the most frequent violent behaviors of each decade. The films from the 1960s had beating (22.2%) and stabbing (20%) occurring most frequently. Beating (28%) and stabbing (24%) were also the most common violent behaviors in the horror films of the 1970s. The films released during the 1980s also had stabbing (32.2%) as a common occurrence, followed by behaviors marked as 'Other' (23.7%). The 1990s saw the similar pattern of beating (22.6%) and stabbing (20.9%) occurring most frequently. And while beating (21.7%) was still the most common act of violence in the 2000s, strangling (17.4%) was the next recurring violent behavior of this decade.

The films released from 2000-2009 are also distinctly different from the other four decades. The 2000s decade had significantly fewer violent acts (9.6% of total violent acts) than the 1960s (18.8%), 1970s (20.9%), 1980s (24.7%), and 1990s (25.9%). So while a gradual increase can be seen in the percentage of total violent acts from the 1960s-1990s, this percentage significantly drops in the 2000s. The chi square test indicates that this change is not random and is there because of a pattern.

Outcomes of violence were also coded, and the results only seem to indicate that the most common outcomes were minor injury or death. There was also no statistical significance in the durations of the scenes. No statistically significant differences between the highest grossing films and the lowest grossing films were found.

Another component of this study is the rating system. Out of the selected sample of films, 13 out of 25 of them (52%) are rated R. A rating of PG-13 was given to 16% of the films, while 8% of films received a PG rating. Since the films of the 1960s were made before the rating system was put in place, those films and *Eraserhead* (1977) were unrated (24%). It is also important to note that three of the films rated PG-13 were in the 2000s decade. The two films with a PG rating were also from the 1980s.

## **Discussion**

The first research question asked if the amount of violence depicted in the horror films increased starting from those with release dates in the 1960s to those released in the 2000s. The data of this study revealed that while the amount of violence started to increase from the 1960s to the 1990s, this percentage sharply declined in the 2000s. So this content analysis disproves the assumption that prompted RQ1, which is that horror films have become progressively more violent over time. This also opens up a question of further research regarding the genre becoming more psychological, especially with torture porn becoming the domain of ultraviolence.

However, one possible shortcoming is that the film sample does not include any torture porn films. While torture porn films do not necessarily define all horror films made in the 2000s, they are an integral part of the horror genre, yet did not have enough commercial success to be included in this study's sample. And if people want to watch torture porn, they have other options



to view these kinds of works through the Internet and websites that allow users to stream film and television shows like Netflix. These two options became widespread in the mid-1990s and 2000s, so people did not necessarily have to go to the movie theater anymore to see these films.

The trend of viewing films through other outlets is also an area for further research. Movie rentals, downloads, and internet streaming were not taken into account when the sample for this study was formed, which was one limitation of the analysis. The film sample was relatively small and arbitrarily relied on the highest and lowest grossing sales in movie theater tickets to see if there were any differences in violent content of the most popular and least popular horror films of the decade. But it should be taken into consideration that while the horror films may have showed less violence over time, television has gone in the other direction. The explosion of cable outlets, pay-cable, and satellite for television gave people more options to watch, and the Parent Television Council found in 2007 that portrayals of violence on broadcast television increased 75 percent since 1998 (Fyfe, 2007; Teinowitz, 2007). The Kaiser Family Foundation also found that television had twice as many sex scenes in 2005 than in 1998 (Moraes, 2005).

RQ2 asked if scenes of violence lasted for longer amounts of time in horror films as they progressed from the 1960s to the 2000s. Since the data did not reveal any significant evidence to support this, the expectation that acts of violence have longer durations over time is disproved. A reason for this could be that shots and scenes in film have been shortened over time. The cutting rate has increased from the 1980s to the 2000s, which David Bordwell explains in his book *The Way Hollywood Tells It* (Nothelfer, DeLong, & Cutting, 2009).

The final research question inquired if there were any significant differences in the content of films rated PG, PG-13, and R. The data indicates that the decade with the most films rated

PG-13, which was 2000-2009, statistically had the least amount of violence. This could quite possibly indicate a shift in the genre towards a wider audience because more teenagers are allowed to view horror films in theaters, as well as a shift in the definitions of what the ratings mean throughout the different decades.

An adjustment in the amount of violent content is also evidence of a change in the type of horror presented onscreen. The three highest-grossing films of the 2000s were *The Ring* (2002), *The Grudge* (2004), and *Paranormal Activity* (2007). *The Ring* and *The Grudge* are also adaptations of Japanese films, so this also indicates a difference in cultural depictions of horror. These films did not contain a lot of violence, but as noted through observation, used suspense rather than gore to scare the audience. And although films with gratuitous violence such as torture porn films were not part of the study, the change towards scaring an audience through tension and suspense rather than blood and gore is demonstrated with this thesis.

## Tables

**Table 1: Horror Films Selected for Analysis from 1960-2009**

Decade	Films	Rating
1960s	Psycho (1960)	TV-14
	Night of the Living Dead (1968)	Unrated
	The Birds (1963)	TV-PG
	Blood Feast (1963)	Unrated
	Pit and the Pendulum (1961)	Unrated
1970s	The Exorcist (1973)	R
	The Amityville Horror (1979)	R
	Alien (1979)	R
	Eraserhead (1977)	Unrated

Decade	Films	Rating
	Last House on the Left (1972)	R
1980s	Poltergeist (1982)	PG
	A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master (1988)	R
	Jaws 3-D (1983)	PG
	Zombie High (1987)	R
	Creepozoids (1987)	R
1990s	The Blair Witch Project (1999)	R
	Godzilla (1998)	PG-13
	Scream (1996)	R
	The Pit and the Pendulum (1991)	R
	Kill by Inches (1999)	R
2000s	The Ring (2002)	PG-13
	The Grudge (2004)	PG-13
	Paranormal Activity (2007)	R
	House of Usher (2008)	R
	Exorcism (2003)	PG-13

**Table 2: Number of Incidents of Violent Behavior Occurring Within Each Decade**

Violent Behavior	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	Total
Verbal abuse	1	4	0	1	1	7
Beating	10	14	19	14	5	62
Kicking	0	1	1	3	0	5
Strangling	0	0	1	3	4	8

<b>Violent Behavior</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Total</b>
Burning	5	0	3	6	2	16
Beheading	0	3	1	0	0	4
Bludgeoning	4	2	3	5	4	18
Dismembering	2	1	3	2	1	9
Stabbing	9	12	9	13	1	44
Shooting	7	4	2	6	0	19
Rape	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sexual assault	0	2	0	0	0	2
Drowning	0	0	1	2	3	6
Electrocuting	0	1	1	0	1	3
Poisoning	0	0	1	0	1	2
Other	7	5	14	7	0	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>239</b>

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