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Understanding Objectification Theory in Horror Movies

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Abstract

Objectification Theory provides an important framework for understanding, research and action to improve female lives in an environment of socio-culture that aims sexually the female body and equates the value of a female with the appearance and sexual function of her body. This concept paper examines the need to understand one media representation theory which is Objectification Theory. The method used for this study therefore relies on extensive literature on objectification theory. The paper finds that objectification theory is relevant in the study of horror movies as it portrays the ways media sets the agenda on how women are to be portrayed to garner sales. This type of study could also be extended by future research into the social impact of stereotyping women on slashing movies. An expanded version of this study could contain the psychological and cognitive impacts of slash films on the viewers in a section within the literary review. In addition, actual surveys, interviews, and focus groups could be conducted in the form of a first-hand analysis of these cognitive effects.

Keyword: Objectification Theory, Mass Media, Women, Horror, Movies

Introduction

This concept paper examines media representation theory which is Objectification Theory. Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) provides a framework for analyzing the experience of being a woman in a society that sexualizes the female body. Objectification theory has been an essential organizational viewpoint for a lot of feminist and counseling psychology research, and it fits well with counseling psychology's multicultural-feminist and social justice objectives. This paper therefore is divided into four sections namely this Introduction, Overview of Objectification Theory, Objectification in Horror Movies and Conclusion.

Objectification Theory (OT)-Overview

Prior to the existence of television or mass media, women were objectified during the Cleopatra Era (Heru, 2003). Although men were remembered for their courage and military victories, the women were immortalized by the objectification of their bodies such as Cleopatra for their beauty and power over others. While their portrayals of dominant women are hardly ever in the media today without considering the likes of their beauty. Nevertheless,

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) come about Objectification Theory (OT) and proposed that many women are sexually objectified and treated as an object to be ogled at by the male gender and the media. The comprehension of OT is that the media plays a salient role in shaping women's thoughts on how they should or should not be looked upon in the public reality and not reality itself in the news media. However, those reflections provide the basis for viewer's perceptions about the world.

Objectification may come about in many ways varying from sexual violence to sexual evaluation (Fischer, Vidmar & Ellis, 1993). The most subtle and deniable way of objectification is through gaze or visual inspection of the body (Kaschak, 1992). Objectification also occurs when a woman's body part is separated from her as a person and contemplated as a mere object or which can represent her as a person (Bartky, 1990).

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) claimed that objectification occurs in three relevant arenas. First, it takes place within actual interpersonal and social encounters. Looking at a person as an object solely for sexual pleasure and as an object for use is classified objectification entangled with beauty and appearance. In the opinion of Cowan (1995), for women of color, objectifying gazes are usually immersed with racial slurs, for example, African American women are usually looked upon as animals whereas Asian women are seen as possessing more exotic and subservient sexuality.

Second, objectification also takes place in visual media that pictures social and interpersonal encounters. Goh-Mah (2013) argued the objectification of women in the media as the elephant in the room. Though this issue is seen as being too apparent to ignore, it does come as no surprise that the issue of objectification is often side swept by media experts. Goh-Mah further stated that because sexual objectification is so clear-cut in everyday lives, it has thus, become the most influential sector of objectification; however, other kinds of objectification should not be overlooked. Dichotomy and the distinction between object and subject status is used in the simplest lines of history, whereby men are the objects of status in a society highly gendered, whereas women are severely objective. This indicates that the sexual objection of women in the media is based on something much more systematic than the media photos every day. Men and women are depicted in different media in contradiction. In the media women are depicted in the utmost photoshop to match a certain image of the attractiveness of women as demonstrated by the media and that these women are experiencing drastic changes in the body to be accepted by society. In the world today, women are continually under great pressure to adhere to the perfectly fine image of 16 what culture tells viewers about the attractiveness of women (Goodstat, 2015). Research on mainstream movies (Kuhn, 1985), visual arts (Berger, 1972) and movies (Sommers-Flanagan, 1993) provide evidence that women's body is targeted for sexual objectification more habitually than men.

The person struggles to preserve their unique identity by seeing the Media take the stage in establishing their view of themselves. The person dives the media's performance as the way of life and thus sees those sexes, cultures and understandings forming a perception. The media feeds these individuals to the degree that their thought and their lives are affected. Many people feel that they are resistant to the media. Scholars studying the media however claim that most people rely on the media to establish their viewpoints, identities, and lives (Calvert, 1999). A media scholar, Kellner (1995) claimed media culture conveys the values of men or women to the public. The media create the ideas of what is appealing for women and

men by providing audiences with representations of women and men. In return, this produces a stereotyping individual who, for example, disregards the opposite sex based on media perception. Kellner also argued that gender cannot be analyzed and that in the end it is difficult to determine oneself. One explanation is that the objectification of gender is virtually inseparable from daily life. The role of men and women in society is regulated by their economic and social position, and the ties of power within these frameworks. It can be regarded as a personal or public distress.

It is therefore befitting to link OT to studying the effects it has on horror movies to this study will attempt to apply objectification demonstrate the important role that entertainment news plays in the generation of today's news agenda.

Objectification Theory in Horror Movie- An Overview

The horror genre has a long history of portraying the female body as abject. 'Woman are especially connected to contaminating things, which fall into two categories: excremental and menstrual,' according to Kristeva. As a result, women have a unique connection with the abject. Sexist stereotypes abound throughout the horror genre. It frequently engages in objectification and, on occasion, blatant sexism. Slasher flicks' harsh moral code is so antagonistic to women that it's become a cliché.

The theoretical framework for this study uses Laura Mulvey's Male Gaze Theory (1975). This study aims to look at the way Mulvey has explained how women are objectified and portrayed through the camera lens according to a man's perspective. As stated by Muvley (1975), women are frequently being the object of the male gaze's endless entrenched habit in the perspective of the heterosexual male. Mulvey categorizes women as 'the bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning. In addition, the quotation of Mulvey notes that unlike men, women seldom are the role of observers, but preferably the object, whereas men are mainly the subjects or the strong character. The principle of Male Gaze was used in filmmaking. In some cultural studies, theory was used to see how women often target themselves in other types of media.

The female spectator, according to Linda Williams, is a passive creature that refuses to return the masculine gaze and so refuses to look. A lack of identifiable onscreen representation and her unwillingness to bear witness to violence and humiliation perpetrated against women, according to Williams, are two variables that drive the woman to look away.

Women, according to Williams, cannot find pleasure in spectatorship since they are the target of male gaze and so exist as an object to be gazed at, incapable of reciprocating the attention. Women are horrified when they are penalized for staring. The gaze that objectifies the female is likewise directed towards the monster, and Williams believes that with this motive, female viewers may feel empathy and sympathy for the monster. This viewpoint allows female viewers to enjoy the film in the same way that male viewers do, without fear of punishment, vengeance, or objectification. Rather than becoming the object of the gaze, the female observer might embrace and welcome it.

Conclusion

As a result, female horror lovers are sure to be disappointed by the lack of suspense in many slasher flicks. Half-naked women scream and fear about a masked killer with a phallic

weapon who never appears to die in these films. The movies regularly gratify the masculine gaze, pausing to objectify an attractive woman's half naked body seconds before her gruesome demise. Based on the discussion, it is palpable that objectification theory is embedded in media theories and studies. Objectification theory was created to media and its role in creating an image for the public. This theory is also relevant for this study as it able to research women and how media representation affects their physical health and wellbeing. When the media objectifies on the representation of women, viewers or researchers alike at times demand for equal rights and representation, but though numerous studies have pointed out this issue, media still underrepresents women as the notion has been embedded in the minds of the viewers for a long period of time. It will take a long time to fully comprehend the intricacies of the female horror fan. Given the fundamental dearth of knowledge regarding consenting female spectators, it is critical that study in this field continues and advances. The literature reviewed for this study painted a picture of horror fandom as a male-dominated activity that actively and brutally opposes female input. Previous literature ignored the female horror watcher (and especially the female horror lover) and regarded her as an improbable anomaly, unworthy of investigation, based on societal preconceptions that women are incapable of getting enjoyment from horror films. This type of study could also be extended by future research into the social impact of stereotyping women on horror movies. An expanded version of this study could contain the psychological and cognitive impacts of slash films on the viewers in a section within the literary review. In addition, actual surveys, interviews, and focus groups could be conducted in the form of a first-hand analysis of these cognitive effects.

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