

Psicose: representação do medo

Psycho: representation of fear

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RESUMO: *Psycho* (Psicose), é pensada como uma façanha do mestre do suspense, como foi reconhecido, Alfred Hitchcock (1899 – 1980). O que poucos sabem é que, na verdade, foi Robert Bloch (1917 – 1994), responsável pela criação da mente perturbada e misteriosa considerada atualmente como uma das mais famosas na literatura: Norman Bates. Neste sentido, o objetivo deste artigo é discutir os aspectos da literatura de horror, que permite ao leitor entrar em contato com o que não é convencional em narrativas, mas está presente em cada um de nós: o medo. Além disso, pretende-se delinear, tomando fundamentos teóricos como base, o surgimento e ascensão deste gênero, para assim, compreender o motivo pelo qual a literatura de horror, ao invés de causar repulsa devido aos seus aspectos, atrai ainda mais prestígio na contemporaneidade. Para realizar a análise comparativa entre obras homônimas, este estudo se apropria de base metodológica bibliográfica-documental, a partir leituras contextuais.

Palavras-chave: Psicose. Representação do Medo. Literatura de Horror.

ABSTRACT: *Psycho* is thought as being a great achievement produced by the master of thriller, as he was recognized, Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980). What a few people do know is that it was, indeed, Robert Bloch, the responsible for the creation of a distraught and mysterious mind considered nowadays as one of the most famous on literature: Norman Bates. In these terms, this article shall discuss the aspects of the horror literature that allows the reader to get in contact with what is not conventional on narratives, but it is part of each one of us: fear. Moreover, it is intended to outline, basing on theoretical foundations, the emergence and rise of this genre to, comprehend the reason why the horror literature, that should cause repulse, attracts thousands of readers and TV viewers, acquiring even more prestige nowadays. To perform a comparative analysis, between the homonyms constructions, this study appropriates itself on a methodological bibliographical documental basis, by contextual readings.

Keywords: Psycho. Representation of Fear. Horror Literature

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A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE HORROR LITERATURE

Horror literature has as its main goal to frighten the readers. It can be done in several ways, although the aspects of it varies from time to time, “em um mundo que é o nosso que conhecemos, sem diabos, sílfides, nem vampiros se produz um acontecimento impossível de explicar pelas leis desse mesmo mundo familiar².” (TODOROV, 1980, p.15) and the presence of horror elements, for example, monsters, violent deaths and supernatural events within the horror literature can be traced earlier than the first inquisition.

O horror tem sua origem muito antes desses escritos que conhecemos como gênese do gênero. Os povos da antiguidade, que possuíam um sistema politeísta de crença, tinham os deuses como seres onipotentes, não diferentes de hoje em dia, e acreditavam que através da oferta em forma de sacrifícios, os deuses os auxiliariam na colheita e em suas tarefas diárias.³ (SILVA, 2012, p.242).

Charges of heresy were mistaken for witchcraft, “[...] aqueles que diziam possuir poderes sobrenaturais, eram assassinados, por vezes de maneira sádica⁴”. Dante’s first volume of the Divine Comedy (1435) exposed the vision of Satan together with Shakespeare’s plays, like Titus Andronicus (1594), Hamlet (1600) and Macbeth (1605) that brought a different kind of horror, which centralized itself on death, to the stage.

Noel Carrol (1990), on his book *The Philosophy of Horror - Paradoxes of the heart*, narrated that he had presupposed that the genre emerges around the middle of the eighteenth century “[...] I believe accepted the prevailing view among literary historians of the matter, which sees the genre as a product of the English Gothic novel.” (CARROL, 1990, p. 54)

The first work that contributed to the evolution of the so-called Gothic Novel (a genre or mode of literature and film that mixed fiction, horror, death and occasionally romance) was *A Night-Piece on Death* (1714) produced by the Graveyard Poets, who were concerned about themes as mortality and death.

² “In our world, with no demons, sylphs or vampires, an event impossible to explain is produced and it cannot be explained by the laws of our world. **Translation mine.**

³ Horror has its origin far beyond those written that we know as genesis of genre. People of antiquity that had a polytheistic system of belief, had gods as omnipotent beings, not different from nowadays, and believed that through sacrifices, the gods would help on the crop and on their daily activities. **Translation mine.**

⁴ [...] those who were believed to have supernatural powers were murdered, sometimes, sadistically. **Translation mine.**

Notwithstanding, the flourish of horror stories emerged in 1765 by Horace Walpole's work, *Castle of Otranto*, "a tale of the supernatural which, though thoroughly unconvincing and mediocre in itself, was destined to exert and almost unparalleled influence on the literature of the weird." (LOVECRAFT, 1938, p. 14) That became known later as gothic horror or gothic romance.

Gregory Lewis (1775-1818), changed, then, terror in more violent ways and, consequently, produced a masterpiece of active nightmare combined with stores of ghoulishness, "horror in literature attains a new malignity in the work of Matthew Gregory Lewis whose novel *The Monk* (1796) achieved marvelous popularity" (LOVECRAFT, 1938, p. 19) and conceived him, later, as "Monk" Lewis.

Besides what most people think, it was not Edgar Allan Poe, who "created" the horror tales but he, indeed, contributed tons to the development of the genre. He is studied for such considerable achievements and his works are used as reference to many writers, such as H.P Lovecraft, Anne Rice, and Stephen King.

Moving forward, the Great Depression only enhanced the interest in supernatural and, although some significant authors as Ray Bradbury (1920-2012) kept publishing horror or science fiction stories, the real horror of the Second World War (1939-1945) overshadowed the fictional ones.

It was not until the 50s that horror again hit a stride, with a modern story of the horror genre itself: Edward Theodore Gein, a homicide, guilty for the murder of two women (that technically does not fit him as a serial killer), a thief and a suspect on the disappearance of five others. He was the "insight" Robert needed to create the character known as Norman Bates.

Fear is universal; however, some are "saved" from the confusion for being able to establish a relationship between the real and the imaginary. Todorov (1980) stated that the reader has three options when in contact with a supernatural event: 1) to admit that it is just the imagination, 2) the illusion of senses or 3) that the event actually happened and that it cannot be explained, experiencing then, the phenomenon entitled the fantastic, "O fantástico é a vacilação experimentada por um ser que não conhece mais que as leis naturais, frente a um acontecimento apare ntemente sobrenatural⁵" (TODOROV, 1980, p.15).

⁵ The fantastic is a phenomenon that someone, who does not know anything beyond the natural laws of their

The “vacillating” phenomenon is the primary condition essential to the fantastic to exist. Thus, the reader has to consider the world in which the characters live, as being real and, be “neutral” between the “vacillating” process and a supernatural explanation of the events, which, at some point, is going to be threatened once the reader goes back to the “real world” where the interpretation takes place.

PSYCHO: LITERATURE X CINEMA

Adaptations have become even more popular nowadays and the relationship between literature along with cinematography have developed a bond stronger than it was ever seen before. Therefore, it became common to listen or read the expectations of the audience, which are, basically, to watch the same message that is written in the books, on the movies, “as adaptações são frequentemente comparadas a traduções. “[...] Assim como não há tradução literal, não pode haver uma adaptação literal⁶.” (HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 39). In other words, the relation between literature and cinematography “é um processo dialógico contínuo⁷[...]” (STAM, 200, p. 64 apud HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 45) between the works involved.

To begin with, the adaptation is a record, “[...] para o leitor, espectador ou ouvinte, a adaptação é inevitavelmente um tipo de intertextualidade⁸[...]” (HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 45). According to Kristeva (1974) the term intertextuality, designates a transposition of one or many symbols to another. (KRISTEVA, 1974, p. 60, apud NITRINI, 1997).

In fact, the director is mainly an interpreter, furthermore, there are some reasons involved in choosing a book and then, to adapt it, “qualquer que seja o motivo, a adaptação do ponto de vista do adaptador, é um ato de apropriação ou recuperação⁹” (HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 45).

In Hitchcock’s work, “os motivos para a escolha da história, em cada caso, também foram intensamente pessoais¹⁰.” (HUTCHEON, 2013, p. 150) the romance itself attracted

real world, experiences when facing an event apparently supernatural. **Translation mine.**

⁶ Adaptations are frequently compared to translations [...] as well as there are no literal translations it cannot exist a literal adaptation. **Translation mine.**

⁷ It is a continued dialogic process. **Translation mine.**

⁸ To the reader, spectator or listener, the adaptation is inevitably a kind of intertextuality. **Translation mine.**

⁹ It does not matter the reason a director had to adapt a work, but by his/her view it is an act of appropriation or recovery. **Translation mine.**

¹⁰ The reasons to choose a story, in each case, are also extremely personal. **Translation mine.**

him in so many ways that made him buy, compulsively, all the copies of the book (anonymously) so no one would be able to uncover the end of the story.

The plot, that he found, particularly, too obvious, and, probably, the response of the audience to the scene of the murder in the bathroom, which became very popular in the cinema, "é referência do diretor no mundo das artes e ficou eternizada no cinema. É considerada uma das mais elaboradas da história.¹¹" (ALFRED..., s/d, p. 3). And on Hitchcock's opinion "Acho que a única coisa que me agradou e me fez decidir fazer o filme foi o caráter repentino do assassinato no chuveiro; é completamente inesperado.¹²" (TRUFFAUT, 1983, p. 270, apud SILVA, s/d).

Hitchcock's and Bloch's work have different points of view. Whereas the book was written on behalf of Norman, the movie, on the other hand, was produced on behalf of Marion Crane. So, from this moment on, the following lines are reserved to expose such comparisons between them.

Norman is an overweight, 40-year-old man with yellow sparse hair, a book lover with a peculiar taste to the grotesque in the book, while in the movie, he looks younger, good-looking, talkative, and at the same time sinister. Both characters are interested in taxidermy¹³ as a hobby. The dinner that he had invited Marion Crane in the book, was fixed in his house, while in the movie, they had it in the office. Moreover, instead of staying in the office to spy on her through a whole in a wall like he did in the book, he went back home, in the movie. In both happenings, he had a simple routine of taking care of his mother, Norma, reading books that she did not approve and running the hotel.

Differently from what happened in the book, that Norman just realizes that Marion is dead at the following day, he knew that his mother had done something wrong and almost at the same time, he goes straight away to get rid of Marion's body and starts cleaning up his mother's mess, instead of calling the police (what was expected). By doing so, he forgets to take the newspaper, in which contains the stolen money that in the book is kept in the trunk of Marion's car that, submerges in the swamp, event that happens in both works.

¹¹ It is reference of the director in the art world and it has been eternalized on the cinema. It is considered one of the most well elaborated in history. **Translation mine.**

¹² The only thing that pleased me and made me decide to produce the movie was the suddenly murder on the bathroom: it is completely unexpected. **Translation mine.**

¹³ Is the preserving of an animal's body via stuffing or mounting for the purpose of display or study.

Marion Crane is a 27-year-old woman who had just stolen 40 thousand dollars from her boss to pay the debt of her beloved one, Sam, who is deeply in love with her in the book and in the movie, does not seem too interested in a serious relationship. After the theft, she ran away without previous hesitation in the book, and in the movie, she basically turned herself in by the way she behaves (suspiciously), practically, showing signs that she had done something she was not supposed to and wonders about the consequences that she would face either if she comes back or when someone notices that she had gone for good.

After changing cars and driving into the wrong highway, she gets to the Bates Motel. She did not dance in front of the mirror while taking her clothes off in the movie, as she did in the book. In both works, she was brutally murdered by a weird figure that she could not recognize.

Norma, Norman's mother, is introduced in the book right in the first chapter. She seems to be a sick, elderly, manipulator and demanding lady that Norman had difficulties on dealing with. She argues with him, questions his sexuality and treats him as if he was a child all the time, but still, she is capable of doing anything to protect him.

Essa é a verdadeira razão por que você continua plantado neste lado da estrada, não é, Norman? A verdade é que lhe falta iniciativa. Nunca teve a menor iniciativa, não é, garoto? Nunca teve a iniciativa de sair de casa. Nunca teve a iniciativa de arranjar um emprego, ou de se alistar no exército. Nem mesmo de arranjar uma namorada..."

"A senhora é que não deixou!" "Está certo, Norman: fui eu que não deixei... Mas se você fosse homem, teria feito o que queria¹⁴." (BLOCH, 1959, p. 19).

There are a lot of dialogues between Norma and Norman in the book, especially when they become the primarily suspects on the investigation of Marion Crane's disappearance but, in the movie, she is almost never seen, although, when Norma is told that her son is going to have dinner with a stranger, that allowed Marion Crane to hear from her room, Norma yelling at him; or when the private investigator, Arbogast, decided to look for signs of the stay of Marion Crane in all the rooms available in the motel, and suddenly, he noticed a figure on the window that Norman claimed to be his mother.

¹⁴ "This is the true reason why you are still here, at this side of the road, isn't it, Norman? The truth is that you don't have initiative. You never had initiative, isn't it, boy? Never had initiative to get out of home. Never had initiative of getting a job or to enlist in the army. Not even to find yourself a girlfriend ..." "You didn't let me!" "Yes, you are right Norman: I didn't... But if you were truly a man, you would have done what you've wanted." **Translation mine.**

Concerning to the other characters of the movie, they played their “role”, apparently, as it was written: Sam, was the worried boyfriend, Lila Crane, the sister who had just come back home from her trip and spent a week without news from Marion and the private investigator, Milton Arbogast, who does everything on his power to get to the truth.

PSYCHO: THE HORROR ASPECTS

In the end, even though Norman is revealed as being the responsible for all their deaths (Marion’s, Arbogast’s and Norma’s) he is sent to a psychological center and not condemned, as it was expected, since, he is not a monster.

He is a schizophrenic [...] He is Nor-man: neither man nor woman but both. He is son and mother. He is the living and the dead. He is both victim and victimizer. He is two person in one. He is abnormal [...] (CARROL, 1990, p. 39).

That is the reason why Psycho is not considered a horror movie due to Norman himself. He is the result of a paranoid woman raising her children alone, after being a victim, for some years, of physical and mental abuse. Norman, suffered from dissociate identity disorder, “sua ocorrência se associa a algum acontecimento traumático¹⁵” (COSTA, 2011, p. 2) that started when his father died¹⁶. Norman had at least three different personalities: 1) Norman, a grown-up man that had responsibilities, 2) a child that needed the protection of his mother and 3) Norma, his mother that took place whenever he was in trouble.

O indivíduo com personalidade múltipla é muito mais extremista. Ele ou ela tem pelo menos duas personalidades distintas, bem-desenvolvidas (frequentemente mais). Cada personalidade tende a ser coerente e digna de crédito, com o próprio conjunto de vieses perceptivos, expectativas, memórias, objetivos, valores, motivos, humores e outros. As personalidades mudam imprevisivelmente.¹⁷” (DAVIDOFF, 2001 p. 568).

¹⁵ Its occurrence is associated to a traumatic event. **Translation mine.**

¹⁶ Norman killed his own father and he does not remember it because at that moment Norman was no longer himself. When he saw his mother being beaten by his father, he faint and another personality, took in.

¹⁷ The person that has more than a personality is more than extreme. He or she has at least two or more different personalities developed. Each one of them is a personality that pretends to be coherent and true, within its own set of perceptual prejudices, expectations, memories, goals, values, motives, state of mind and so on. The personalities change impressively. **Translation mine.**

As stated by Carrol (1990), *Psycho* is a horror movie by cause of the imagery of the antiquated dark house, the drama of corridors, the beaten tracks, altogether with Norman as being a powerful icon of impurity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study had as its goal, to compare *Psycho* on Hitchcock's and Bloch's point of view. In order to do that, a brief summary of the horror literature, a rich genre that allows readers to get in contact with fear which is a feeling of intimidation or insecurity about a situation, emotion or object that varies from person to person, ought to be done, to explore the horror aspects within it.

Even though, along with the advance of technology, horror movies, being adapted or not, are becoming more repulsive and real than ever and, despite the fact that they are predictable, since the objective is always the same (to scare the audience) it keeps on attracting thousands of people all over the world.

On balance, *Psycho*, being more popular on Hitchcock's version, is a 57-year-old production that remains attracting spectators and readers till nowadays, for the reason that it is a real masterpiece, besides being different and audacious from all the other works from the 60s seeing that most of the movies, retracted romances, the possibility of extraterrestrial life or musicals, while *Psycho*, highlighted the psychological thriller, discussing themes that were not common during that time, such as incest, serial killers and mental issues, not to mention the surprise of the audience when a woman (Marion) appeared wearing just a skirt and a bra, lying on a bed with a man (Sam) what led to: moralist protests, spectators fainting during the movie exhibition and there were also polemic opinions around whether the movie should be censored.

All the aspects mentioned, contributed, willingly or not, to the fact that *Psycho* has become important not only to the horror genre, as well as to the fantastic genre itself, and it remains popular because, since its release, new versions of the book and movie have been introduced, so, the new generations are able to be acquainted to a classical, and yet, modern work like it.

Finally, the reason why horror genre has being gaining continued popularity at the moment, is understood here as being by virtue of the sentiment itself, fear, that can be produced in so many ways and is consumed by all means, such as video games, comic

strips, books and movies, because humanity is afraid, and it is fed day by day, by the unknown, persistence on ignorance, by living traumatic experiences or through fear from people.

It is not intended here to generalize, of course, since it is evident that there are some people that are more sensitive than others, but the fact is, that the horror genre is becoming more popular nowadays thanks to the audience, who are aware that, although the monster seems to be frighten, it is not real and he/she is safe.

This phenomenon that allows people to feel safe when reading or watching a horror production is named fictional pact that takes place when the spectator has a relationship with the work and does not ask questions about it. The events being written or transmitted are accepted and the audience is not afraid of the story or plot, they are afraid of its content, and the supernatural attraction, comes from the natural curiosity of the human being who wishes to experience fear being secure.

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