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Screaming for Love: An Analysis of the Horror Film Industry Through the
Lens of the Six Love Styles Theory

Honors Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the
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Lens of the Six Love Styles Theory

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Abstract

This research focuses on the influential nature of the horror film industry on its typical young viewers in the realm of romance. An analysis of five films was done through the lens of John Alan Lee's Six Love Styles theory. The results were used to determine if the typical horror films present healthy or unhealthy relationships. The importance of the findings is discussed, with an emphasis on the idea that parents and older viewers can use this study as a springboard to start typically difficult conversations about romance with teens and young adults.

Keywords: John Alan Lee, Horror, Media, Agape, Storge, Eros, Ludus, Mania, Pragma, Movie, Influence, Youth, Social Cognitive Theory, Six Love Styles Theory, Love

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Introduction

Without a doubt, films influence their viewers. It has been studied, noted, written, and published dozens and dozens of times. Dramatic films have taught teenagers about social interaction with adults, Cli-fi films have encouraged viewers to take action in their responsibility for Earth's ecological state, political based films have influenced political views and opinions of viewers, and so on (Kubrak, 2020). While the influence of films and media is great on all consumers, it has also been proven that younger audiences are more easily influenced in most situations (Pasupathi, 1999).

Acknowledging the influential nature of film on younger generations, what happens when these adolescents consume things that send messages about romantic relationships? Numerous scholars have investigated this question. In one study conducted by Bjarne M. Holmes (n.d.), a positive correlation was found between a high consumption of romance-oriented media and beliefs that there are predestined soul mates in undergraduate respondents (Holmes, n.d.). Another study also found that a large majority of young people reported to turn to media to learn about romantic relationships (Bachen & Eva, 1996).

With the understanding that younger audiences are more easily influenced by their surroundings including what media they consume, this study seeks to outline what messages the romance pictured in the horror film industry relays to viewers about the innerworkings and foundations of relationships as well as how these portrayals can help parents, peers, siblings, and more start difficult conversations. Considerations for the horror film industry and opportunities for future research are also included.

Review of the Literature

Influence of Film on Today's Youth

The extent to which a film influences viewers and the specific impact a film provides to its viewers depends on many factors, including age (Kubrak, 2020). In recent studies, television and other forms of media have been proven to have a profound impact on the psychosocial development of ~~today's~~ youth (Canadian Pediatric Society, 2003). In one study by the Canadian Pediatric Society, it was stated that the average child sees 12,000 acts of violence on television annually and that these heavy doses of violence increase aggressive behavior immensely (Canadian Pediatric Society, 2003). The study also discussed the extreme increase in sexual interactions on television and in films and how the sexual themes of carelessness and little to no talk on safety might lead to an increase in STD/STI's as well as unwanted/unplanned pregnancies. The study went as far as to mention just how influential advertisements for food are on younger populations. as well as the impact that drug and alcohol usage in film and television has on adolescents and teens (Canadian Pediatric Society, 2003).

In addition to the idea that media are already influential on its own, there is an important psychological theory that brings understanding to this phenomenon. This theory is titled "The Social Cognitive Theory" or SCT (Bandura, 1986). This theory, while in its most evolved form is extremely complex, basically states that we as humans are all active agents that can influence and are influenced by others (Nickerson, 2023). The theory mentions that individuals form beliefs and behaviors based on outcome expectancies, goals, self-efficacy, and socio-structural factors (Conner & Norman, 2015). The theory also states that we learn new behaviors by observing others and how the outcomes of their behaviors turned out. Many studies have used this theory to explain a variety of human behaviors, positive and negative (Nickerson, 2023).

It also important to note that, as stated in a report from a reporter at NPR (Knox, 2010), young brains are malleable due to the scientific fact that the brain is not mature. The report

mentioned multiple studies that backed the idea that teenagers and young people are “wired” in such a way that the reward systems develop quicker than self-control circuits. This is why teenagers and young people get the stereotype of doing impulsive things that do not always have the best end result. One of the studies that the report mentioned found that from the age of 7 through adolescence, a dramatic array of structural changes were recorded in the brains of 288 people. These changes occurred in the four regions of the brain that are used to “understand the intentions, beliefs and desires of others” (Hamilton, 2012, p. 1).

So, by looking at and understanding the past research of the SCT, the immaturity of the brain, and the influential nature of media including film, there is a visible and measurable impact on young viewers of adverts, television and film in many different categories, but what about in the realm of romance? How do media impact the view younger audiences have on romantic relationships as a whole? In one study, it was discovered that 90% of young people look to movies for information about love (Holmes, n.d.). It is logical to conclude that if there are such a large number of young people searching for information about love from films and are proven to be influenced by the media they consume, they are most likely learning and taking advice from what they see. In addition, there is evidence that films are the culprit of unrealistic expectations of relationships for some people. For example, it has been suggested that television and media consumption is negatively related to relationship satisfaction and happiness in romantic relationships (Reizer & Hetsroni, 2014). With the idea of the widespread influence that the film industry has added to the fact that media is strongly impactful on today’s youth along with the proven idea that we, as humans, learn from other humans, it is justifiable to say that the film industry plays a large role in the lives and ideals of our youth especially in the realm of romance and relationships.

The Horror Film Industry's Role

Recently, the horror film industry has had quite the revival. In the year 2020, the horror film industry took home its largest share of the box office in modern history (Scrivner, 2021). What hasn't changed is the average age of the typical horror movie goer. One study published in the New York Post had some shocking results. The average American, reports watching their very first horror film at the age of 10 years old with 52% of them stating that what frightened them then still has an effect on them today (Sandlier, 2019).

Overall, horror films have always been frequented by, as most studies suggest, the typical adrenaline-junkies, anxiety-havers, and young people for a very long time (Martin, 2019). According to data collected by the Statista Research Department (2023), the interest in horror films declines with age. To illustrate, 68% of the respondents aged 18-29 found horror films favorable, while only 30% of respondents aged 65 and over found horror films favorable. In addition, the majority of horror films are marketed and targeted towards audiences that are much younger than the typical moviegoer (Rubin, 2018). While the average age of moviegoers is generally between 25-39 (Movieguide, 2018), horror films are frequented by viewers that average about 21 years of age, although other research suggests ages 15 to 25 years of age as the typical range (Martin, 2019).

While most people are aware that horror films contain blood, gore, murder, monsters, demons, and other things that might not be ideal for some viewers, often the romance aspect gets overlooked. One report stated that romance plays one of the biggest roles in creating a good horror film because it "thickens the plot, increases the stakes, and adds to the drama and character development (Bastek, 2021, p. 7)."

However, there is a gap in the research. There has been little to no research about the portrayals of romantic relationships in horror films. Knowing that young people are easily influenced by what they see and have been influenced by romance in film before as they typically look to film for advice and understanding in relationships, it is important to apply these facts to the realm of horror films as they are the typical viewers of horror films. This research aims to discover how romantic relationships are being portrayed and how this might influence the typical horror moviegoer. This will be achieved by using a descriptive theory of love.

John Alan Lee.

John Alan Lee's Six Love Styles Theory

Dr. John Alan Lee, a doctor of sociology, molded the beginnings of an ideology in 1975 in a report titled "The Romantic Heresy" in which he took critical aspects of the way people choose romantic partners, the level of commitment people have towards their chosen partner, the importance of physical attractiveness when choosing a partner, and more and applied them to five specific styles of love he discovered in fictional and nonfictional literature. In this report, he stated, "There are more, but for present purposes *five* ideal types of love are sufficient: eros, ludus, mania, agape, and pragma (Lee, 1975, p. 515)." A couple years later in 1977, Lee wrote "A Typology of Styles of Loving" where he describes a study in which he interviewed several respondents and used their answers to further define his styles of love. Lee also adds a sixth love style he titles storge.

An overview of the inner workings of the theory were described simply in "A Typology of Styles of Loving". Lee clearly states that this theory does not involve the "love of God, love of children, or love of country," but that it refers to the love shared by adults (Lee, 1977, p. 173). It also clearly defined in this article that the love styles themselves are not strangers to overlap or

exist at the same time. Along with that, love styles also have the capability of changing over the duration of a relationship, lifetime, etc.

To explain Lee's six styles of love, a combined description from "The Romantic Heresy" and "A Typology of Styles of Loving" will be given. The first love style Lee describes was Eros.

"Eros is a notion that true love is a response to an ideal image of beauty with the lover already holds in mind," Lee (1975, p. 515) states. He mentions that an erotic lover, more so than others, places physical attractiveness and the ideal physical image above other characteristics that tend to be important to other love styles, such as mental and social qualities. He further relates his definition of an erotic lover to Plato's thoughts on eros stating that the erotic lover, in search of physical beauty and believing that other personal qualities will come with it, can easily self-destruct (Lee, 1975). Based on the interview results from 1977, Lee further describes an erotic lover as one who had a happy childhood with loving relationships with their family. Erotic lovers are also generally ready for love, but not searching for it. Lastly, he states that erotic lovers are quick to self-disclosure and want the same from their lover in all things including sexual intimacy (Lee, 1977).

Next, ludus, a conception of love that was first described by the Roman poet Ovid, is defined as playful love that should not be taken extremely seriously. Ludus differs from eros because, while it recognizes that some individuals are more attractive than others, it finds importance in enjoying a variety of partners versus one partner of the "ideal type." Lee takes time to describe the "rules of ludus" where he states that jealousy is avoided unless used as a chess piece in the game and a detached, noncommittal attitude as to avoid serious attachment from either party (Lee, 1975). Lee also states, "A certain degree of vanity is a great help" (1975, p. 516) in the success of ludic lovers. Based on the results of the interviews, Lee discovered that

the ludic lover finds their childhood was average, and, while they find their current life adequate, they are close to never enthusiastic about it. The ludic lover is also one to make it a point to not see their lover every day as to prevent attachment on either side. Lastly, Lee states that ludus can be “played as an open game, with fair warning to the partner, or with deception, leading the partner on (Lee, 1977, p. 178).”

Mania, once defined as madness from the gods, holds the idea that true love is characterized by an overwhelming obsession. “The lover who does not love too much does not love enough” (Lee, 1975, p. 516). Lee describes manic love as one to have symptoms including overwhelming mental preoccupation with the love while gaining little to no enjoyment from it, high levels of anxiety, and unreasonable jealousy. The manic lover typically is insecure and lonely with a lower social status. Mania is described different in the way that Lee mentions it is a blend of eros and ludus styles. It is also stated that mania can be entered directly by a lover or secondarily as an unsuccessful, unreciprocated ludic or erotic love (Lee, 1975). Interviewees further defined manic lovers as those who found their childhood unhappy, are lonely, lack friendships, and tend to hate their careers. They are also described as those who are “obsessively preoccupied with the beloved, imagines all manner of rivals and disasters, and ignores any warning signs of difficulty in the relationship until too late (Lee, 1977, p. 179).”

The agape love style is described by Lee as the “Christian love” (Lee, 1975). His reasoning for this definition is that he believes the agapeic love style was said best by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 in the Bible (Lee, 1977). The agapeic lover is one who is never anything but patient and kind, as they believe that is their duty to love all even if some deserve it more than others. They are also typically synonymous with adjectives such as selfless and altruistic. Lee also states that agape love typically involves celibacy on some level in order to reach its

highest level of success (Lee, 1975). Interviewees helped Lee describe the agapeic lover by resolving that they are typically older and more mature emotionally (Lee, 1977).

The pragma love style is described as an amiable affection that generally grows slowly out of long-term togetherness. The pragmatic lover generally selects a partner based on realistic and practical values such as property, inheritance, social status, education, religion, etc. Lee states that the majority of arranged marriages fall into the pragma style as parents make these estimations for them. Lee states that the pragmatic lover typically “combines the control and manipulation of ludus and the companionship of storge (Lee, 1977, p. 179).”

The storge lover was described as one who describes their life as good. They typically have a strong group of friends who are dependable. Lee states that they believe that love is an extension of a deeply rooted friendship that will lead to commitment and sexual intimacy (Lee, 1977). It also seems that these lovers find an extreme importance in the sharing of common interests and activities. The storgic lover also has a small amount of mental preoccupation and can go long periods of time without their partner without experiencing anxiety about the security of the relationship (Lee, 1977).

Method

For this study, five films of the horror genre were chosen based on the criteria of 1) time of debut, 2) popularity, and 3) the romantic relationships contained in the film. The films *Get Out*, *X*, *The Shining*, *Warm Bodies*, and *A Quiet Place* were chosen. The films were then analyzed using a coding method. In other words, each moment that fell into the characteristic category of one of the six love styles defined by Lee was recorded with a timestamp and a short description. A numerical table and graph depicting the presence of each love style were then

created for each film individually. Finally, a graph of all recorded moments throughout all five films was then created to provide an overall view of the love styles represented.

Films

Warm Bodies

The first popular film analyzed was *Warm Bodies*, a 2013 horror/romance film starring Nicholas Hoult and Teresa Palmer and directed by Jonathan Levine. The film, originally a book written by Isaac Marion, was a popular film in its time sitting at number one in box office its debut weekend earning about \$20 million. Particularly, the film was popular among young females with approximately 60% of viewers female and 65% of females under 25 years of age (Brodesser-Akner, 2013). This follows the previous statistics that most horror movie-goers are young adults.

Warm Bodies, set in a post-apocalyptic future scattered with zombies and few humans who especially hate zombies, follows a male zombie who goes by "R." R isn't capable of remembering his past or anything about his life prior to his death and reanimation. However, R is an unusual undead character. One day, the female protagonist in the film, Julie, travels with her group of survivors to find supplies for their community. R and a large group of hungry zombies attack the survivor group. R, also hungry, takes down a man by the name of Perry who is later revealed to be Julie's boyfriend. R then sees Julie and makes the decision to rescue her and take her to safety. The two spend some days together in R's renovated airplane listening to records, driving about the airport, going on adventures, and learning to understand one another. Soon, it becomes obvious to viewers that R is in love with Julie. The two become separated when Julie runs away after R reveals he murdered Perry, Julie's boyfriend. Later they are reunited and R's love for Julie becomes obviously mutual. The love the couple shares brings R back to life, and he

becomes human once again. Their inspirational story helps other zombies and humans see that love and coexistence is possible, and the world changes for the good.

Throughout this film, there is a clear theme and lesson for viewers to recognize and understand. The idea that love heals is, quite literally, the entire agenda of the movie. R and many of his other zombie friends and enemies were quite literally brought back to life and/or transformed to become part of the human world again thanks to love. This makes the film easy to view, heart-warming, and something that just might be easy to learn from, especially for young viewers who seemed to be the target audience. Along with that, it represents a very healthy relationship statistically based on the recordings taken and presented below.

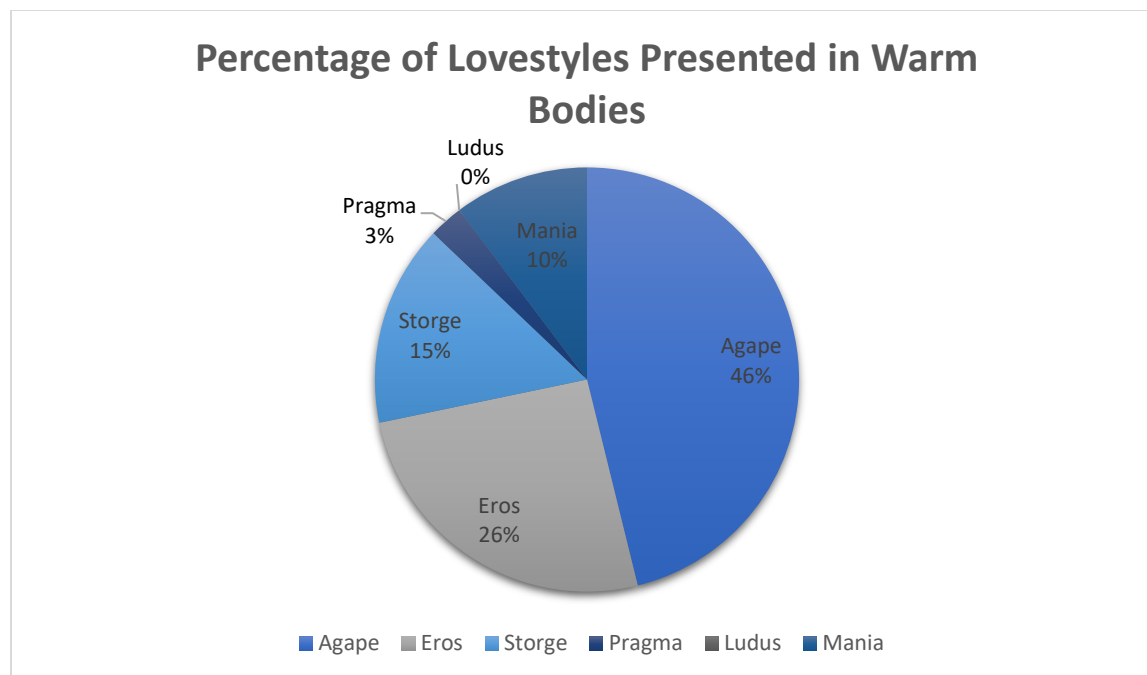


Figure 1. Percentage of representation of 6 love styles throughout *Warm Bodies*.

Agape Love Style

In this film, there were 18 separate, specific agape-style moments that were shared between Julie and R as well as during flashbacks between Perry, Julie's previous boyfriend, and Julie.

Throughout the movie, this was, by quite a large margin, the most popular love style represented by the couples. The majority of the 18 moments of agape style love were held between R and Julie. There are a few very important examples that seemed to really define the love Julie and R held for one another and how it developed. There were also a few important moments that helped viewers understand Perry and Julie's relationship before Perry became emotionless. Some of these moments that present that selfless, willing-to-make-sacrifices type of love include:

- 1) At 21 minutes and 45 seconds, Julie shoots Perry's dad because Perry couldn't bring himself to do, and it nearly cost him his life. This moment represents the lengths and sacrifices Julie was willing to make for her beloved, Perry (Levine, 2013, 00:21:45).
- 2) At 22 minutes and 35 seconds, R places a blanket over Julie and begins playing music on his record player to make her feel more comfortable (Levine, 2013, 00:22:35). This act of kindness performed by R presents the "gift love" that agape stands for (Lee, 1977).
- 3) At 53 minutes and 25 seconds, R tells Julie the truth about Perry's death stating that he killed him because he loved her too much to keep the truth from her any longer. This is also a moment of pure selflessness and sacrifice. R was willing to risk the bond he had worked so hard to form because he wanted Julie to know the truth (Levine, 2013, 00:53:25).
- 4) At 1 hour and 3 minutes, R uses his memories of Perry's memories to find Julie's home so that he can tell her that the zombies are changing and becoming more human like. In doing this, he risks his life to find her again. Risking one's life to save their beloved very well might be the definition of selflessness and sacrifice (Levine, 2013, 01:03:00).
- 5) At 1:25:45, Julie stands in front of R to block her father, Mr. Grigio, from killing him. Once again, Julie is willing to sacrifice her very existence to save R which, as stated above, might

be the very definition of selflessness and sacrifice in the name of love (Levine, 2013, 01:25:45).

These five moments of the eighteen are textbook examples of the agape love style as they represent defined sacrifice as well as the selflessness an agape lover brings to the table according to John Alan Lee (Lee, 1977). Lee also states that these lovers believe that everyone deserves love while no one should have to earn it (Lee, 1977). These moments in particular were also defining to the development and creation of the relationships between the characters. With all of the agape moments taken into consideration, Julie and R are nearly perfect examples of agape lovers.

Eros Love Style

In *Warm Bodies*, the second most popular love style was Eros. This love style was represented throughout the movie by many different characters including R, R's zombie friend, Marcus, Julie, and Perry. The recorded eros moments represent the "head over heels" strong physical attraction, and emotional need that the typical eros love style constitutes (Grieve, 2017). These moments also represent the ease eros lovers tend to have when it comes to describing their physical type and their physical attraction to that type (Lee, 1977). The following are examples of the ten eros love style moments:

1. At 11 minutes and 25 seconds, R sees Julie for the first time. The way he looks at her, talks about her, as well as his body language when she's visible clearly represents a strong physical attraction and a need for her attention (Levine, 2013, 00:11:25).
2. At 50 minutes and 51 seconds, Julie undresses and lays her clothes out to dry as they had traveled in the rain that day. R voices his nervousness and attraction to her multiple times as he stares at her body (Levine, 2013, 00:50:51).

3. At 1 hour, R tells M, his zombie friend, that he misses Julie so much. He tells M that he isn't okay. This represents his need for her presence and affection (Levine, 2013, 01:00:00).

Of the ten eros moments throughout the film, these are the most important to the development of the relationship that R and Julie form.

Mania Love Style

During the film, there were only 4 moments that would classify as manic. The majority of these moments were in the very beginning of Julie and R's relationship. R had not yet started his transformation from zombie to human, and this seemed to cloud his love styles. R's nature seemed to change from extremely possessive and a demand for companionship (Grieve, 2017), to a much healthier codependency presenting as more eros and agape. All four moments were in the first 40 minutes of the film and were set during R's first few days with Julie. In all of these moments, R refused to let Julie leave him and mentioned multiple times that it was for her safety. He seemed to reassure viewers and himself that his possessiveness over Julie was for the better (Levine, 2013).

Storge Love Style

There were six moments that stood out to represent the storge love style. In these moments, R and Julie share bits and pieces of beautiful platonic love. They have great conversations which push the creation of a friendship before they inevitably become more. The following moments were impertinent to the development of their relationship:

1. At 29 minutes and 42 seconds, Julie and R have a sweet "conversation" of sorts where she attempts to figure out his name. R can't speak much do to his inhabiting zombie-ness, but his mumbling and grumbling leads Julie to call him "R". This conversation was very much platonic and seemed to be the beginning of their friendship (Levine, 2013, 00:29:42).

2. At 34 minutes and 17 seconds, R and Julie spend time with one another in the plane playing games, joking, listening to music, dancing, looking at photos, and having great conversation.

This quality time was very genuine and friendly in nature (Levine, 2013, 00:34:17).

Ludus and Pragma Love Styles

While there were a few moments throughout the film that might've possibly fit under the love styles of pragma and ludus, the moments classified through the analysis were dominated by their chosen categories. With this caveat, it is important to note that the ludus and pragma love styles did not dominate any time in the film.

A Quiet Place

Another film that was analyzed was *A Quiet Place* directed by John Krasinski. This film, starring John Krasinski and Emily Blunt, debuted in 2018 (IMDb, 2018). The film topped out at \$50 million domestically in its opening weekend, making it the third horror film ever to rake in that much during its debut (Bitette, 2018). In contrast to the other 4 films analyzed in this project, the average age of viewers was 34.8 (Bitette, 2018). This age gap was mostly thanks to large portion of females aged 50+ that came out for this widely marketed horror film (Bitette, 2018).

A Quiet Place focuses on a small family in a post-apocalyptic world, controlled by blind monsters with ultra-sensitive hearing, which forces the family to live in complete silence. The family consists of Evelyn and Lee Abbot and their three children, Marcus, Beau, and Regan. The movie opens with the family on a small trip to the abandoned pharmacy to get Marcus, the middle child, some medicine as he isn't feeling well. During this excursion, the youngest boy, Beau, finds a toy rocket. The rocket has a slot for batteries, and big sister Regan carefully removes them as to make no noise. Here, viewers are made aware that Regan is actually deaf, so the family knows sign language, which is how they communicate in this silent world. Regan

gives the now silenced toy to little Beau to play with, but Beau finds the batteries and replaces them. On their trek back to their home, Beau's toy sounds off sending the monsters into a fury. Lee, the father, takes off into a sprint to save little Beau, but he isn't quick enough. Following this, the film skips time to find the family in their home. Evelyn is pregnant. Lee and Marcus go on an excursion to find supplies for the birth and the baby. Lee refuses to let Regan go, and in her anger, she storms away leaving her pregnant mother alone. Evelyn goes into labor, and while she attempts to go downstairs to turn the farm lights red so that everyone would be made aware of her situation, she steps on a nail. Her scream brings the monsters too close for comfort. When Lee and Marcus return, they see the red lights immediately realizing that Evelyn has gone into labor. Marcus sounds off some fireworks to assist in his mother's anguish, and Lee runs to his wife. Lee enters the house and finds Evelyn and the newborn baby. After getting them to safety, he goes to find his other children. To save their lives, he sacrifices his own (Krasinski, 2018).

A Quiet Place as a whole is slightly different than the other films analyzed in this project. First, the film follows a stable married couple with children who are stuck in silence in a home together. On top of that, Evelyn is pregnant, and to survive in a world where one can't speak without being slaughtered, family must be willing to help family. With that being said, the film was entirely the agape love style.

Agape Love Style

This film was very different from the others analyzed due to its overwhelming containment of agapeic moments and themes. The love style was so popular throughout the film that it was the only one that was recorded at any given time. The entire theme behind the love that Evelyn and Lee shared was categorized as agapeic. Some of the moments that really exemplified the agape love style are:

1. At 15 minutes and 20 seconds, Evelyn is back home preparing things for the coming baby while Lee lights the fire on the silo to let others know that they're still there. While on the surface, this moment seems like steps to survival. However, the body language and the feeling of the moment really pointed to the idea that Lee and Evelyn do things for each other and expect nothing in return which represents the selflessness of an agape love style (Krasinski, 2018, 00:15:20).
2. From 23 minutes and 10 seconds to 25 minutes and 6 seconds, Evelyn and Lee have an intimate moment where they dance to music in their headphones and hold each other close. This beautiful moment strongly represents the bond that the two hold. It speaks to the fact that their love isn't just based on physical attraction, sensibility, friendship or otherwise. Their love is mature, altruistic, and given without expectation of reciprocity (Krasinski, 2018, 00:23:10-00:25:06).
3. At 52 minutes and 13 seconds, Lee sprints for the house, shotgun in hand, ready to help Evelyn as he knows she is in labor and in trouble (Krasinski, 2018, 00:52:13).
4. From 54 minutes and 58 seconds to 55 minutes and 30 seconds, Lee scoops Evelyn and the newborn baby into his arms and carries them to the soundproof, safe room that he designed for them. Once their inside, Lee lays Evelyn safely on the bed designed for her, and he holds the baby tight (Krasinski, 2018, 00:54:58-00:55:30).
5. Starting at 59:50, Evelyn and Lee have a conversation about Marcus and Regan. Evelyn begs Lee to find them and protect them. Lee promises that he will do whatever it takes to find the kids and get them back safely. Lee leaves the safe room and goes to find the children. This promise and willingness to leave the safe room shows how far he'd go to make sure Evelyn is happy and fulfilled in this world of misfortune and death (Krasinski, 2018, 00:59:50).

6. At 1 hour and 15 minutes, Lee does the unthinkable to save his children. The kids are stuck in an old car with nowhere to go while a monster attacks the vehicle. Lee watches from afar. He makes eye contact with Regan, tell her he loves her, and screams at the top of his lungs. The monster immediately switches focus to Lee and kills him. This sacrifice fulfilled his promise to Evelyn no matter the cost (Krasinski, 2018, 01:15:00).

Get Out

One of the films analyzed was *Get Out* directed and written by Jordan Peele (IMDB, 2017). This film debuted in 2017 and earned \$33,377,060 in the box office during opening weekend in the US and Canada (IMDB, 2017) with the majority of viewers between the ages on 15 and 24 (Statista Research Department, 2023). This film had a “healthy demographic” with 39% black, 36% white, and 17% Latino, while sales were split evenly among men and women at the film’s debut (Faughnder, 2017).

Get Out follows a young black man named Chris, portrayed by Daniel Kaluuya, who travels with his girlfriend, Rose, portrayed by Allison Williams, upstate to visit her parents for the weekend. This is the first time that Chris has met Rose’s parents, and he seems very anxious as Rose mentions he is the first black man she’s ever dated. Upon arrival, strange behaviors from the parents and Rose’s brother are excused by the idea that they are nervous attempts to deal with and understand Rose’s interracial relationship. With Rose’s mother hypnotizing Chris to get him to “stop smoking” and Rose’s brother, Jeremy, sizing Chris up for a fight, the environment becomes increasingly disturbing. Soon, after Rose’s father brings to their attention that “the party” is happening this weekend and visitors begin arriving, things get even stranger. All of the visitors who were white, older, and interested in Chris, seem to be analyzing Chris’s physical capabilities. Chris soon realizes that these folks aren’t here for a party at all, but they’re here for

him. During a silent auction in Chris and Rose's absence, Chris is sold to a blind art dealer. Chris is then hypnotized and put through psychological pre-op before Rose's father is set to perform an operation that would replace a portion of his brain with the art dealer's brain so that Chris could no longer control his own body. Chris makes an escape, murders the Armitage family, and is rescued by his friend, Rod.

While the focal message for the viewers isn't solely about Chris and Rose's relationship, the film undoubtedly sends a message about intimacy, trustworthiness, and openness within the relationship. The focal message is very much about the subtle and not-so-subtle racism that unfortunately rules a portion of our world (Arogundade, 2017), but the underlying message tells a story to viewers about the trust and communication necessary to build a relationship that is beneficial, especially when it is challenged by outside sources such as unsupportive family. However, the film also presents the issue of how that trust and genuine relationship can be turned on its head and used as a manipulation tactic. This can be seen as a good representation in the way that viewers see that not all relationships end as well as they seem to develop. It could also be seen as an extremely bad thing, as it may teach viewers to trust no one.

Upon analysis of the film, 39 moments were recorded that represented one of the six love styles. It was apparent that, for most of the film, the relationship between Chris and Rose was agapeic, accounting for 41% of the recorded moments. Meanwhile, the storge love style took precedence at second place with 28% of the recorded moments. Following with small amounts of screen time were ludus and eros (10%), mania (8%), and pragma (3%).

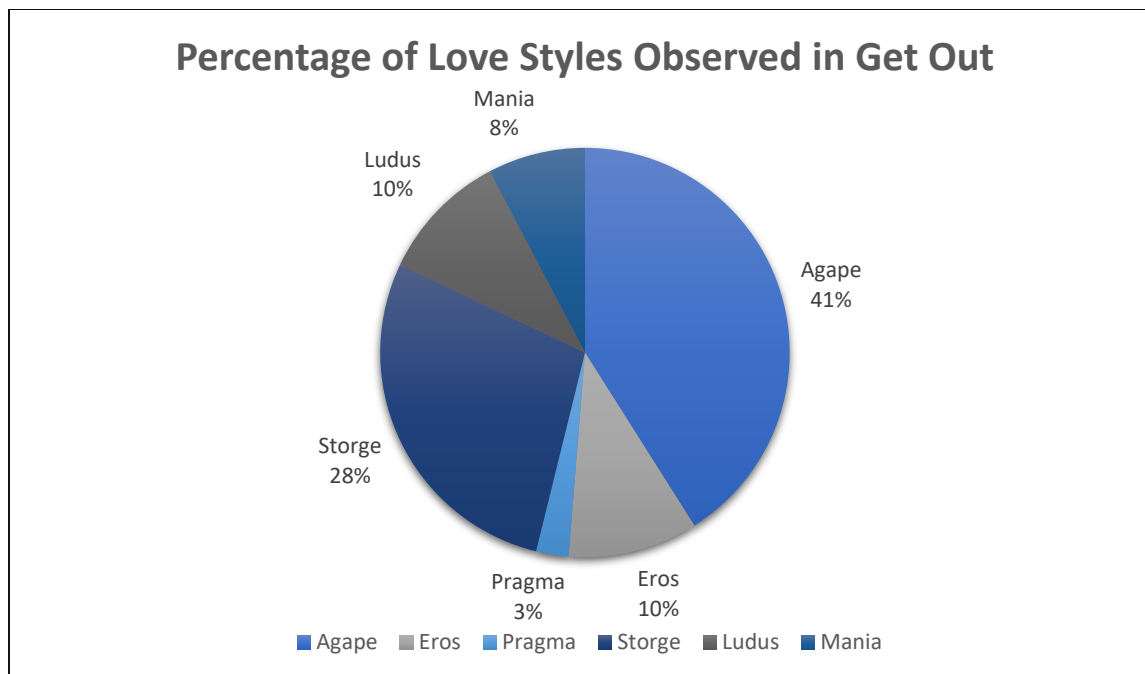


Figure 2. Percentage of Loves tyles observed in *Get Out*

Agape Love Style

There were sixteen recorded agapeic moments throughout the duration of the film. This was the most populous of the love styles. Throughout the film, the agape love style was very apparent between characters Chris and Rose. There was very much a theme of the love style present as it seemed the characters would do anything for one another no matter the cost. This was clear when they were together and when they were separate from one another. This theme seemed to stick around until the plot twist toward the end of the film that showed the family, including Rose, for what they really were. Some of the moments that aided in the creation of the theme and agapeic feeling surrounding the relationship are:

1. At 20 minutes and 10 seconds, Dean, Rose's father, pushes that Chris should let Missy hypnotize him to help him quit smoking. Rose defends Chris to her father and states, "Some people do not want strangers messing around in their heads guys." This defensive nature of Rose shows that she would rather Chris feel comfortable and safe than her parents get what

they want which is a perfect example of the sacrifice and unconditional love agape stands for (Peele, 2017, 00:20:10).

2. At 28 minutes and 10 seconds, Chris and Rose lie in bed. Rose rests peacefully, but Chris can't sleep. Instead of waking her, he lets her rest and goes to explore the land. This is a representation of the emotional maturity Chris has in his relationship with Rose. It also shows that he would do anything for Rose as he is already in an uncomfortable situation at her parent's house, but he refused to wake her despite the comfort he visibly feels with her (Peele, 2017, 00:28:10).
3. At 41 minutes and 59 seconds, Rose offers to talk to her father about the groundskeeper's behavior after he sprinted at Chris in the night and made Chris feel as though he was angry that Rose loved Chris instead of him, but Chris denies. This moment was an agapeic style moment from both Chris and Rose. Rose wanted to defend Chris and her love for him by having a difficult conversation with her father, but Chris felt like putting her through that distress was not worth it. Both parties represented the selfless love that agape stands for (Peele, 2017, 00:41:59).
4. From 1 hour through 1 hour and 3 minutes, 5 separate agapeic moments were recorded. First, Rose and Chris have a conversation about Chris's past with his deceased mother. Rose listens intently and responds with care. Second, Chris cries and Rose holds him and comforts him. Third, Chris jumps to the fact that he wants to leave the parents home, but Rose isn't happy about that idea at first. After seeing her reaction, despite his extreme discomfort around the family, Chris tells Rose he won't leave without her and they share a passionate kiss. Next, after some consideration, Rose decides it is best for them to go because she knows how hard it has been for him. She states she'll make something up to her parents. They share an "I love

you.” Lastly, they walk back to the home to prepare their things to leave hand in hand (Peele, 2017, 01:00:00).

Up to this point, the relationship between the two was highly agapeic overall. Even in moments where other love styles were recorded, there was an overlying theme that they would do anything for each other.

Storge Love Style

The second most populous love style throughout *Get Out* was the storge style. This love style represented 31% of the recorded moments. These moments were characterized by strong, friendly, genuine conversations, body language, and desire and effort towards a stable, committed, and emotionally intimate relationships (Psych2Go, 2021). The storgic moments that were recorded were affiliated with and aided in the development of the healthy relationship that was first presented by Chris and Rose. Some of these moments include:

1. At 8 minutes and 13 seconds, Chris and Rose have a very platonic and genuine conversation about whether Rose’s parents are aware that Chris is black. This conversation is very friendly, but also has elements of an eagerness of commitment and deep emotional connection (Peele, 2017,00:08:13).
2. At 16 minutes and 52 seconds, Rose’s father is taking Chris for a tour of the house and the property. At this moment during the tour, the two share a sweet look in which Rose checks in with Chris to see how he is feeling. The kindness and intent behind the look was clear, and it symbolized that platonic but intimate kind of love they shared (Peele, 2017, 00:16:52).
3. At 42 minutes and 31 seconds, Rose and Chris prepare for the party with a hug and a kiss. They hold each other tight as they watch the visitors roll in. Rose tells Chris to smile the whole time and they share a laugh. This moment is very much a representation of the deep

connection the two share on a friendship and romantic relationship level (Peele, 2017,00:42:31).

Along with the clear agapeic theme, storge seemed to be very apparent as well. The selflessness and sacrifice the two represented in the agape section seemed to also involve that deep friendly relationship that storge stands for.

Ludus Love style

There were four moments of the ludus love style throughout the film. These four moments were either characterized by a playful, flirty attitude or an emotionally distant conversation (Lee, 1977). These moments really seemed to play a strong role in the discovery that Chris made about Rose and the family. The most important and the most ludic of these moments include:

1. At 1 hour, 10 minutes, and 38 seconds, Rose looks at Chris while he falls into the hypnotic state that Rose's mother put him in and says "You were one of my favorites." This statement was said in a very manipulative, flirty tone. It also alluded to the fact that Rose isn't one to get attached to the partners she brings home to her family (Peele, 2017, 01:10:38).
2. At 1 hour, 21 minutes, and 10 seconds, Rose calls Rod back and tries to seduce him. She uses strong language, and a strong flirty attitude. Rod talks about how good she is at talking people into things. This also shows just how far she was from truly committing to Chris (Peele, 2017, 01:21:10).

This love style only really came out when the plot twist occurred and the family took Chris as a puppet. Rose was then revealed to be their "net" who caught and brought people back to the family over and over again. This role gave her a very ludic appearance as she was then seen as one who seduced anyone she could and did not commit for any reason other than to bring the person back home to the family.

Eros Love Style

There were four moments of the eros love style that were recorded in *Get Out*. These four moments were characterized by comments related to attractiveness and sexual intimacy (Lee, 1977). While eros only manifested itself in four moments, the sexual and physical attraction between Chris and Rose was evident throughout the film in shared looks and body language. The most important eros love style moments include:

1. At 6 minutes and 35 seconds, Rose goes to a coffee shop and buys Chris breakfast. Upon her arrival to Chris's place, they share a lustful look and he sweeps her inside with a kiss (Peele, 2017,).
2. At 8 minutes and 13 seconds, Chris and Rose share a sexual moment where he pins him to the bed.

The eros love style was important to round out Rose's ability to manipulate others into bringing them back to her family. Otherwise, it was not as important to the bond that Chris and Rose shared.

Mania Love Style

There were three manic moments in *Get Out*. All 3 recorded moments were after the plot twist in the film, and all three were related to Rose's role in the "family business" and her mother's hypnotic nature. These moments were characterized by obsessiveness, emotional volatility, and manipulation (Lee, 1977). These moments were vital to the plot and Rose's character as a whole.

The most important manic moment was recorded at 1:09:16 (Peele, 2017, 01:09:16). In this moment, Chris is begging that Rose give him the keys to the car so that they can leave as the family slowly closes in on him. Rose quickly changes her facial expression from scared and

confused to emotionless and almost rageful. She says, “You know I can’t give you the keys, right, babe?” The tone change, the refusal to let him leave, and her insistent nature to call him babe gives off the obsessive and manipulatory nature of the mania love style.

Pragma Love style

Throughout the film, there was only one recorded moment that represented the pragma love style, but this single moment was arguably the most important in defining the actuality of Chris and Rose’s relationship. At 1 hour, 6 minutes and 20 seconds, Chris is waiting on Rose in the bedroom when he notices a small door open in the edge of the bedroom. He walks to the door and discovers a small box. He opens it. Inside are dozens of pictures, each of Rose with a different black person. Chris was told in the beginning of the film that Rose had never brought home a black person to her parents before. This reveals to the viewers that Chris and Rose’s relationship was for nothing more than practical use for her and her family (Peele, 2017, 01:06:20).

The Shining

One of the films analyzed was *The Shining*, directed by Stanley Kubrick and based on the novel by Stephen King (IMDb, n.d). The film debuted in 1980 and has earned \$44,568,631 in the all-time Domestic Box Office (Nash Information Services, 2023). The film hasn’t lost any fame in its 43 years of existence and is still being viewed today by people everywhere by all generations (YouGov, n.d.). It has always been, and will remain, a cultural influence (Baptiste, 2020).

The Shining follows Jack and Wendy Torrance and their child, Danny Torrance. Jack gets a job at a hotel in the hills of Colorado to take care of the hotel over the winter during its closing. Jack decides it best to take his family with him. He wants to use this time to do some writing,

unwind, and spend time with his family. During his job interview, the owner of the establishment informs Jack that, in the past, the isolation of the hotel during the winter had driven one caretaker to a psychotic break which caused him to murder his wife and twin girls with an axe. Jack doesn't seem to mind and takes the job anyways. Meanwhile, viewers learn that Danny, the son, has some psychic tendencies and sees many disturbing things, past and future. Danny's visions continue throughout the film, while Jack's inability to see his lack of stability and tendency to make bad decisions only worsens. During their stay at the hotel, a horrible winter storm hits and leaving the hotel doesn't seem to be an option at all. Jack tries to use this time to write, and Wendy does everything she can to help him. Slowly, Jack begins to break. Quickly, the hotel becomes alive with parties, past residents, the murdered, the dead, and the spooky. Jack begins screaming at Wendy, not sleeping, not eating, wishing for alcohol, being aggressive towards Danny, and writing all the time. Jack's writing becomes obsessive just like his hatred for Wendy. Soon, it is clear that Jack has reached a psychotic break. He attempts to murder Wendy and Danny with an axe, just like the caretaker before him. With Danny's ability and Wendy's swiftness, they skim by and escape Jack's murderous tendencies and the horrible, haunted hotel (Kubrick, 1980).

Throughout this film, the mania love style was the most recorded. The best way to describe the numerical analysis of this film is to view it as an argument between Jack and Wendy's love styles. Jack was very manic in the way that he obsessively did not want Wendy and Danny to leave the hotel. He was also extremely anxious about his relationship with Wendy, and he seemed highly insecure in himself as a writer, a lover, and a father. Meanwhile, Wendy would've done anything and everything for Jack. She was selfless, but also genuine and seemed to view Jack as her closest friend but also her greatest love.

This film presented a lesson to viewers. It spoke out to say that it is important to understand that the monster is within oneself at times. However, the film also presented themes such as domestic violence, mental illness, aggression, manipulation, and cheating. There were 17 recorded moments characteristic of the six love styles in this film.

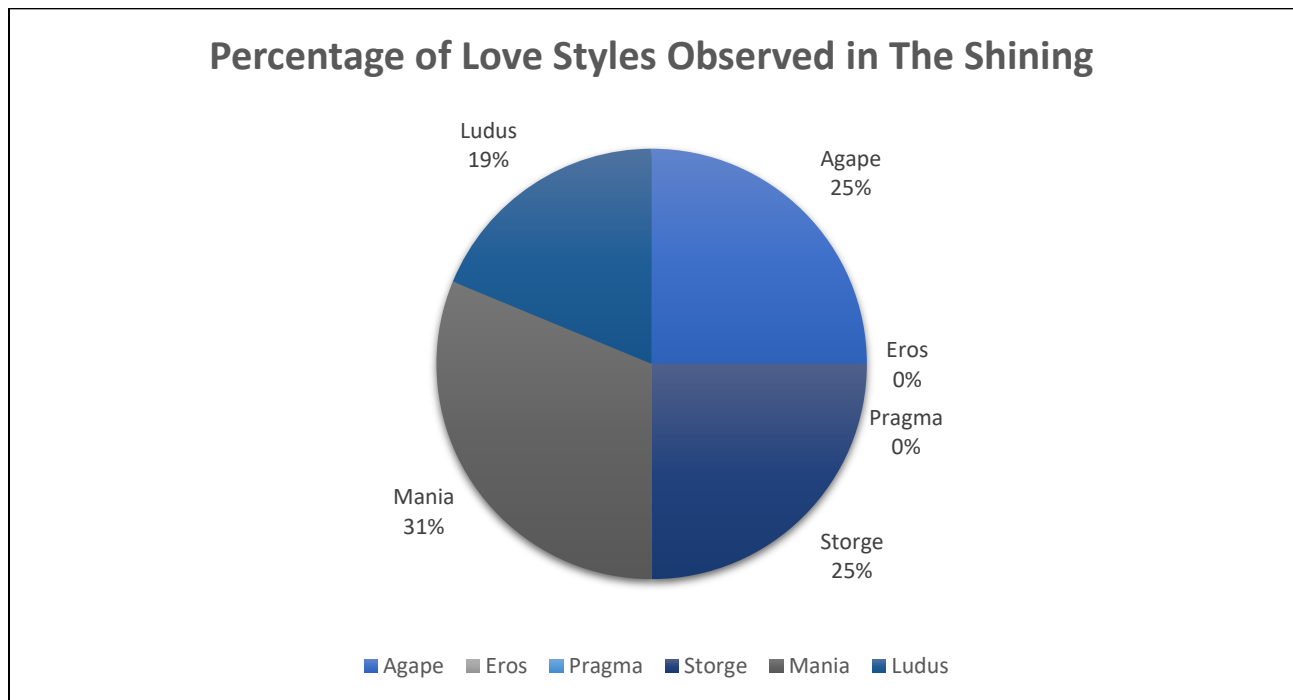


Figure 3. The percentage of love styles recorded in *The Shining*.

Agape Love Style

The agape love style was recorded four times in *The Shining*. All four recorded moments were Wendy caring for and being selfless towards Jack. The following are examples of the four moments and Wendy's loving character:

1. At 36 minutes, Wendy brings Jack breakfast in bed. This act of service is very characteristic of the agapeic love style and represents that biblical description that Lee speaks of in his definition. It was also characteristic of agape in the way that Wendy did this act of love out of the kindness of her heart and did not expect anything in return (Kubrick, 1980, 0:36:00).

2. From 59 minutes and 11 seconds through 1 hour and 1 minute, Wendy, while checking on the broilers and heating systems of the hotel, hears Jack screaming. She drops what she is doing and runs to him. While keeping in mind that Jack had recently yelled at her and told her she was useless and an inconvenience in a number of words, Jack is highly undeserving of this help and care that he receives from Wendy here. Wendy was willing to be there for him anyways (Kubrick, 1980, 0:59:11-1:01:10).

Storge Love Style

The storge love style was recorded four times throughout the film. Three of the recorded moments were moments that were shared between Wendy and Jack while the final moment was very much just Wendy. The following are the two most important storge love style moments in application to the development of their relationship:

1. At 11 minutes and 19 seconds, Wendy and Jack share a conversation over the phone. Wendy calls Jack to check in on him while he is at the job interview. Jack refers to her as “babe” and lets her know that he got the job. He also makes sure to let her know when to expect him home. This moment represented a very friendly, genuine conversation that is highly characteristic of storge (Kubrick, 1980, 0:11:19).
2. Beginning at 36 minutes, as previously mentioned in the agape category, Jack and Wendy together are representative of the storge love style in a very well-articulated, sweet, and emotionally stable conversation. They check in on each other, and it is clearly genuine interest in one another’s well being (Kubrick, 1980, 00:36:00-00:37:34).

Mania Love Style

There were five moments that were characteristic of the manic loves tyle. All five moments were presented by Jack. Jack's psychotic break led him to be manipulative, aggressive, obsessive, and possessive of Wendy. Some of the examples include:

1. Beginning at 43 minutes and 50 seconds, Jack and Wendy have a moment that doesn't end well for Wendy. Wendy, being the agapeic lover she is, comes in to check on Jack while he is writing and to offer him something to eat. Jack becomes extremely angry with her. His insecurities in his writing become visible and he yells and Wendy and blames her for his inability to write. He curses at her and tells her to leave and never come back in his writing room while he is working. This anger and extreme control he wants over Wendy represents his insecurity in himself as a love as well as the possessiveness he has over her (Kubrick, 1980, 00:43:50-00:45:56).
2. At 1 hour, 30 minutes, and 51 seconds, Jack has a conversation with the bartender who appears during Jack's psychotic episodes. He tells the bartender that he loves Danny, but Wendy causes him so much anguish. He states that Wendy "interferes" with his love for Danny. This statement also shows his insecurities in his relationship with Wendy, while still representing the emotional volatility that he possesses (Kubrick, 1980, 1:30:51).
3. At 1 hour and 51 minutes, Jack reveals to Wendy that he removed the engine from the snowcat so that she and Danny couldn't leave the hotel. This is representative of Jack's possessive nature (Kubrick, 1980, 1:51:00).

Ludus Love Style

There were three ludus love style moments recorded throughout the film. All three moments belong to Jack. These moments were characterized by Jack's ability to manipulate Wendy as well as his willingness to be sexually intimate with another woman. These moments include:

1. At 1 hour and 13 minutes, Jack witnesses a naked lady who is definitely part of his psychotic episode. He approaches her and kisses her passionately despite his marriage with Wendy. This shows that commitment is not important to him (Kubrick, 1980, 1:13:00-1:15:00)
2. At 1 hour and 51 minutes, Wendy locks Jack in the pantry out of her and Danny's safety. Jack, still ready to kill her and Danny, plays to her emotions and love for him to try and get her to release him. This manipulation represents the deception that is a crucial characteristic of a ludic lover (Kubrick, 1980, 1:51:00).

Eros and Pragma Love Styles

There were no eros or pragma love style moments recorded in this film. While there were hints of physical attraction and small moments that seemed like Jack was with Wendy because of specific characteristics she held, there were no definite times that stood out as either style. There were also no themes that pointed to these two styles.

X

The final film that was analyzed for this research was the film *X*, directed by Ti West and released in 2022 (West, 2022). *X* debuted in March of 2022 and earned about \$4.4 million on opening weekend. While the demographics of viewers of this film were very mixed, almost 73% of viewers were between the ages of 18 and 34 years old (D'Allesandro, 2022). While this age range is slightly older than the normal targeted range of 15-24 years of age (Martin, 2019), that can be accounted for by acknowledging the extreme sexual themes contained in this film.

X follows a group of young people including Maxine (Mia Goth), Wayne (Martin Henderson), Jackson (Kid Cudi), Bobby-Lynne (Brittany Snow), Lorraine (Jenna Ortega), and RJ (Owen Campbell) who are working together to film the best pornographic film Hollywood has ever seen. Wayne and Maxine, engaged, have many quiet conversations about how important

Maxine's role will be in the film and just how famous she will be after. Bobby-Lynne is a seemingly experienced actress and claims strongly through her words and her attitude that she knows exactly what she's doing. RJ, an experienced cameraman, brings along his girlfriend, Lorraine, who clearly doesn't feel comfortable. Jackson is the attractive actor who will play the male figure in the film. The group travels to a boarding house in the middle of nowhere that is owned by an elderly couple, Howard and Pearl. The boarding house sits on the edge of Howard and Pearl's property. As the film develops Pearl's obsession with Maxine is revealed. Towards the end of the film, Howard and Pearl murder the entire crew except Maxine, as she escapes.

This film had 23 recorded moments that were characteristic of Lee's six love styles. Of the 23 moments, the ludus love style was the most prominent. With that being said, the film does present many sexual themes, ideas that sex is nothing but fun and has no repercussions, ideas that relationships and commitment aren't important, and ideas that defying your partner's wishes to stay exclusive is a bold and prideful decision. There are also suggestions of sexual assault, loads of blood and gore, and many uncensored sexual interactions among characters.

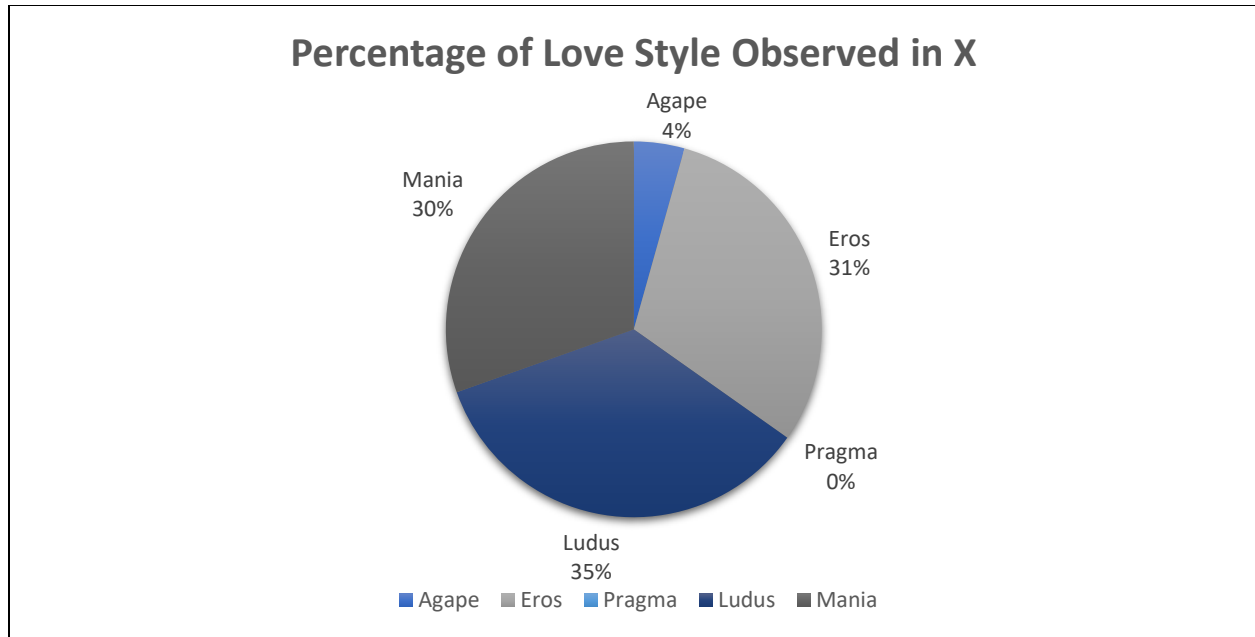


Figure 4. Percentage of Love styles Present in X.

Ludus Love Style

This film contained 8 ludic moments that were characterized by noncommittal opinions, flirty interactions, extremely sexual interactions without care of others opinions or feelings, and cheating on partners (Lee, 1977). Some of these moments include:

1. At 7 minutes and 9 seconds, Bobby-Lynne and Jackson have a sexual, flirty conversation about breasts. This conversation really gave an insight into their opinions about sexual encounters. They did not seem to be interested in having sexual intimacy with a single partner but just having sexual intimacy in general (West, 2022, 00:07:09).
2. At 9 minutes and 43 seconds, Lorraine asks Bobby-Lynne if Jackson is her boyfriend. Bobby-Lynne replies, “Sometimes, yeah.” This response is the epitome of the ludus love style (West, 2022, 00:09:43).
3. Beginning at 27 minutes and 43 seconds, Jackson and Bobby-Lynne have a conversation during a sexual encounter. Jackson pauses and looks into Bobby-Lynne’s eyes and says, “I

think I love you.” Bobby-Lynne, being the extreme ludic lover she is, responds with, “Bless your heart.” This conversation once again points to the fact that Bobby-Lynne does her best to keep herself and Jackson from getting too involved with one another. Her extreme noncommittal attitude is very apparent in this moment (West, 2022, 00:27:43).

4. Beginning at 50 minutes and 27 seconds, Lorraine, RJ’s girlfriend, decides that she wants to be a part of the film. RJ gets very angry and tells her that she can’t. Lorraine does it anyways. This is very much a ludic characteristic on Lorraine’s part because she, against the opinion of her partner, decides to have sexual interactions with another man (West, 2022, 00:50:27-00:52:27).

Mania Love Style

This movie had 7 recorded manic moments. All moments were characteristic of the obsessive, possessive and insecure nature of the typical mania love style described by Lee (Lee, 1977). Some of these moments included:

1. At 3 minutes and 51 seconds, we are introduced to Maxine and Wayne’s relationship with a manic-like moment. Wayne walks into Maxine’s dressing room. He grabs her up off of her stool and pulls her close. He says, “Gimme some sugar.” This moment, while Maxine doesn’t seem bothered by Wayne’s nature, is very possessive. It also felt very lustful and controlling on Wayne’s part. His body language signaled that Maxine was his possession (West, 2022, 00:03:51-00:04:12).
2. At 34 minutes and 20 seconds, Maxine makes a statement to Pearl that Wayne gets fussy when he doesn’t know where she is. This, once again, shows that Wayne is very possessive over Maxine (West, 2022, 00:34:20).

3. At 41 minutes and 9 seconds, Pearl sits at her vanity and puts eye makeup on that matches Maxine's. This moment is representative of the obsession that Pearl has with Maxine. This theme continues throughout the film as well (West, 2022, 00:41:09).

Eros Love Style

X contained 7 erotic moments throughout the film. All of these moments were characterized by physical intimacy, attraction, and the need for physical intimacy (Lee, 1977). These moments include:

1. At 38 minutes and 52 seconds, Wayne and Maxine share a genuine physical moment that presents the actual love and care they have for one another while also representing the physical attraction they share toward one another (West, 2022, 00:38:52).
2. At 44 minutes and 27 seconds, Pearl tries to seduce Howard. In this moment, they mention how attracted they are to one another (West, 2022, 00:44:27).
3. At 1 hour, 12 minutes, and 27 seconds, Bobby-Lynne and Jackson are cuddling in bed. Jackson hears something and raises up which catches Bobby-Lynne's attention. She wakes up, places her hand on his back, and says, "What is it baby?" Jackson tells her to go back to sleep. The body language present in this moment made it clear that the cuddling and the slight touches were related to the physical attraction that Bobby-Lynne and Jackson share (West, 2022, 01:12:27).

Agape Love Style

This film contained 1 moment that was characteristic of the agape love style. This moment was shared between Pearl and Howard. Throughout the film, anytime Pearl attempted to seduce Howard, Howard told her they couldn't because of his heart condition. However, at the

end of the film, Pearl and Howard finally have sex. This moment is agapeic as Howard does whatever it takes to make Pearl happy (West, 2022, 01:29:35).

Pragma and Storge Love Styles

There were no recorded moments that were characteristic of a pragmatic lover. There were also no moments characterized by the traits of a storgic lover.

Findings

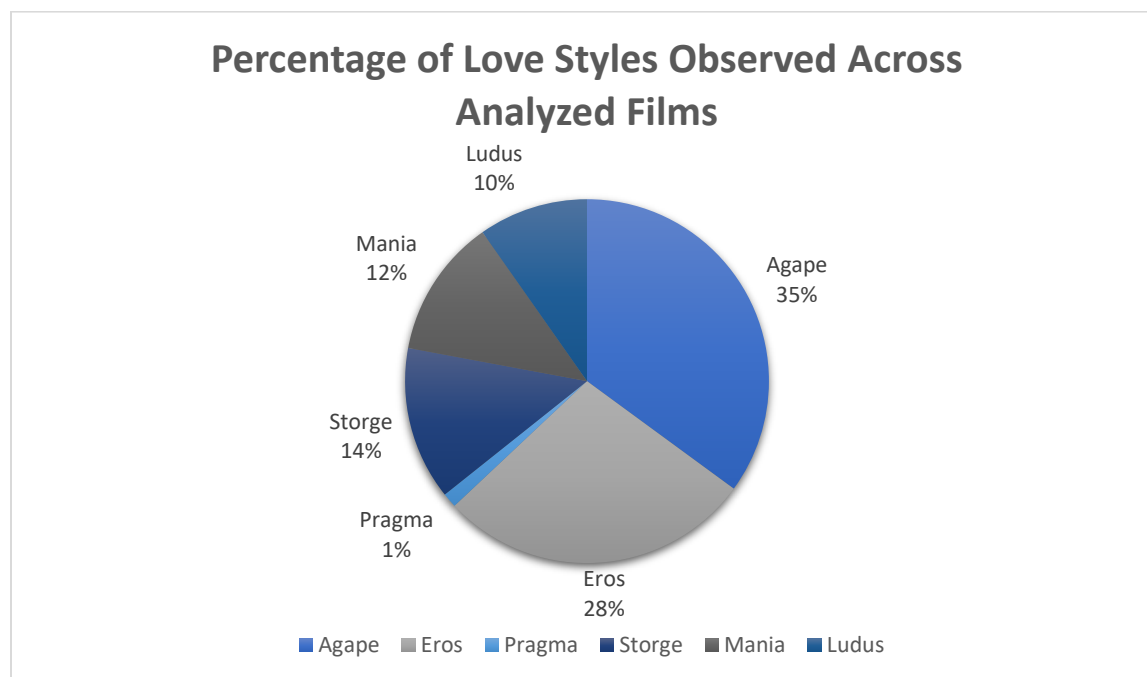


Figure 5. Percentage of all love styles observed in the 5 films.

As can be seen in Figure 5 above, the most recorded love style was agape. All five films varied in the extent to which the agape love style was present as demonstrated by the difference in *X* (4% of recorded moments) and *A Quiet Place* (100% of recorded moments).

While a beautiful style of love stands at the forefront of this numerical analysis, a lot of darkness surrounds these films in overarching themes. Some of these themes include domestic violence, misogyny, trust issues, cheating on a partner, manipulation, and more. It is important to

note these things as, by the recordings given above, screen time of these love styles is not equal to quality of the relationship.

Discussion

As stated previously, film and the media influence its viewers. Based on age, biology, and psychology, it is known to have an extreme impact on young viewers. It seems to have an impact in all regions from nutrition, violence, sexuality, and even views on romantic relationships. These young people are also the ones who are generally consuming horror films. This study aimed to discover how romantic relationships were typically portrayed in horror films. Findings stated that the agape love style was the most prominent love style in the five chosen films overall. With that being said, both healthy and unhealthy relationships were present in these films. These data, however, were not capable of presenting the themes that were either present in part of the film or only became apparent later in the film such as plot twists or quick changes in character.

The finding of this research could be used by parents, peers, siblings, and viewers alike in many different ways. First, it presents the idea that these films and their relationships could be used to start normally difficult conversations to ensure that there is a defined idea of what a healthy relationship looks like and what an unhealthy relationship looks like. Secondly, it is important because it creates a simpler way for viewers, parents, siblings, and others have awareness of the relationship portrayals they will witness in films. Lastly, the findings help the viewer define the line between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Despite the conversational possibilities offered by horror films, some changes in the industry are recommended because of the observed themes of unhealthy love styles in this analysis.

Considerations for the Horror Film Industry

In the future, the horror film industry has the opportunity to make some changes to make their films less shocking or harsh to young viewers. First, the industry could make disclaimers to every film, especially on streaming platforms and advertisements. These disclaimers should be as detailed as possible without giving too much away for viewers about the plot of the film. A suggested statement would be, “The romantic and intimate relationships depicted in this film are 100% fictional and should never be replicated in real life.” This statement is a heads up to viewers, and, when presented at the forefront of the film, allows viewers to have that thought in the back of their minds while still enjoying the film.

Another suggestion would be to place more intense age restrictions on films that present unhealthy relationships and other content not suitable to young people. The suggested age according to this study would be 18 years and older in cinemas. To account for the availability of films on streaming platforms, it is also suggested that age restriction tools should be made more available to parents and older people of the household. The tools should also be advertised so that their use is more well known.

Lastly, horror films with unhealthy relationships and other unsuitable content should be marketed to individuals of 21 years of age and older. In order to do this, it would be important for marketing teams to target platforms that are frequented by older users. For example, as of March 2023 (Dixon, 2023), the average Facebook user ages between 25 and 34 years old. Meanwhile, Snapchat users are typically aged 18 to 24 (Dixon, 2022). Therefore, advertisements and trailers for the films should be more populous on Facebook versus Snapchat.

Limitations

While this research offered meaningful findings, a few limitations of the study are noted. First, this is the first content analysis I have ever done. Learning to analyze films can take time, so there is space for improvement.

Second, the numerical analysis used for this study did not account for quick plot twists and/or unexpected theme changes. As stated earlier, the amount of screen time for each love style is not equal to the quality of the relationship present in the film.

Lastly, only five films were chosen for this analysis. There are hundreds of horror films that include different kinds of horror such as paranormal, slasher, monsters, etc. While specific criteria were used to identify the films, there is always the potential for bias in the selection process.

Opportunities for Future Research

While this research lays out great groundwork for the romance involved in horror films and how these portrayals are important to the formations of romantic ideals in young viewers, there is still room for more information. First and foremost, while there have been many scholarly articles and studies completed on the horror film industries influence on young viewers, there is little to no development in the realm of streaming services and how this availability might change the influential nature of film due to accessibility. In compliance with this research, a study conducted on the romantic relationships in the most popular horror films on separate streaming services would also fill a gap.

Conclusion

This research focused on the influential nature of the horror film industry on its typical young viewers in the realm of romance. A numerical analysis of five films was done through the lens of John Alan Lee's Six Love Styles theory. In this analysis, agape was the most recorded

lovestyle, but the numbers did not account for sudden plot twists or theme changes. Findings reported that both healthy and unhealthy relationships can be found in horror films. The importance of this research's findings is that parents and older viewers can use this study as a springboard to start typically difficult conversations about romance with teens and young adults. This research also created a more defined idea between healthy and unhealthy relationships so that viewers can recognize the difference easier. While there are limitations in this research, this only creates room for more research to be done so that the deeper the dive, the more our youth and young people know the difference between what is healthy and what is not in a romantic relationship.

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