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***UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLE***

*ENGL 1405-01 World Literature - AY2024-T2*

*Learning Journal Unit 3*

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As someone raised in Sweden, I tend to have a high tolerance for disturbing content in fiction. I appreciate horror that builds suspense and creepy atmosphere more than visceral gore. Tales of ghosts, haunted places, and occult mysteries have always fascinated me. Much of the Swedish public has a similar taste for the macabre, so horror films and books find devoted audiences here. “Folklore in the Scandinavian region experienced a surge of interest in the late 19th century, with those cultures beginning to look beyond their histories of Christianity and back to their mythological roots” (Norman, 2023).

That said, horror scenarios involving harm to children or sexual violence still provoke extremely strong reactions for me and others in my community. We see the innocence and vulnerability of children as something precious to safeguard, so their suffering strikes a nerve. Likewise, we prize mutual care and respect between partners in relationships, making exploitation exceptionally offensive. Tales depicting such violations push us to the limits of what we can stomach in horror before it feels gratuitous or morally questionable. They call the fundamental rightness of the fictional world into doubt.

For me, effective horror requires a moral framework where good still has power even in the face of mortal danger. Stories with bleak endings or absolutist violence often feel nihilistic in a way I find discomfiting rather than thrilling. I prefer horror balanced with redemption - evil exposed and overcome through courage, sacrifice, and the enduring strength of human bonds. This fits with a cultural preference for narratives affirming nobility and justice triumphing over wickedness. We enjoy the adrenaline of fear, but not at the cost of all hope.

So, to sum up, I and many Swedes have an avid enthusiasm for horror, but our experience remains bounded by ethical lines rooted in protecting innocence while upholding human dignity.

Locker, M. (2022, October 31). To Hear This Horror Story, You Have to Walk Through a Forest in Sweden. Outside Online; Outside Online. <https://www.outsideonline.com/adventure-travel/news-analysis/kiln-audio-horror-story-sweden-john-ajvide-lindqvist/>

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