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Department Chair, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Selim Soner Sütçü
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Shared Themes of Halloween and All Souls' Day in Between Life and Death

All Souls' Day, a Christian holiday which comes two days after Halloween, takes us to an intense, deep reflection about the souls of the departed and the artisans of the realms of the living and the dead. Both are seen as forms of honoring the souls of the dead. In this context, while All Souls' Day involves solemn ceremonies, participation in rituals for the souls of the deceased, and the decorating of graves by Christian families with flowers, wreaths, and candles, Halloween reflects themes related to the dead and their spirits in the form of humorous horror. The theological foundation of All Souls' Day is based on the belief that the souls of those who have died are still impure or have not yet paid the price for their sins, thus being deprived of the beatific vision (the happiness that devout individuals will experience when they see God in heaven). Therefore, faithful people on earth believe they can help these souls through prayers, charity, and good deeds. This day also serves as a means of offering aid to those souls thought to have not yet entered heaven.

Another related narrative is the tale of *Stingy Jack* or the *Jack O'Lantern*, which originates from the ancient Celtic folklore of Ireland. Irish immigrants brought the tradition of pumpkin carving to America.

Behind this tradition lies an interesting story from centuries ago. Stingy Jack was an old and weary man who often drank alcohol and loved to joke. One day, while sitting in his favorite bar, the devil sat next to him and offered to buy him a drink in exchange for his soul. In order to pay, the devil transformed into a coin, which Jack stole, hiding a cross in it, preventing the devil from returning. Later, Jack tricked the devil into waiting before taking his soul and let him go free. Over the years, Jack continued to deceive and outwit the devil. When he died, Saint Peter told him he had lived a miserable and worthless life on earth, so he could not enter heaven. He was trapped in the dark world between heaven and hell. The devil threw him a piece of ember from hell to light his path, and Jack carved out a turnip to place the ember inside. From that day on, his path was lit only by the pale turnip. The Irish referred to this miserly man's spirit as "Stingy Jack," which later became "Jack O'Lantern." Irish immigrants discovered that pumpkins were easier to carve and began using them for Jack O'Lanterns.

These special days and traditions, shaped by different cultural and religious contexts, all share themes of spirits, purification, and elements of fear. Halloween, in this sense, has not only been a spiritual form of entertainment but also an important commercial opportunity for America and some Western countries, resulting in positive increases in annual revenues. Over time, Halloween has been affected by various cultures and evolved into its modern form today. Seen as one of the most beloved and spirited festivals of the year, it opens the door to the world of secrets and mysteries every year on October 31st.

Öykü DURMAZ



A Journey Through Halloween and Cultural Traditions

Halloween, the holiday of the dead and spirits is not a Christian holiday. Can you believe that? It is, in its core, a marketing strategy of the church to give an illusion of similarities between other cultures and Christian culture. The holiday has Aztec and Pagan origins as well as some plagiarism issues regarding the traditions of the Scottish Gaelic Samhain Holiday of the dead. Most of us think that it is Christian because that is how the churches marketed Christianity in good old days! It had plagiarism from the Scottish Gaelic holiday, Samhain that is celebrated around nearly the same date and marks the last day of harvest. On Samhain Celtic, gods play tricks to their worshippers; it is the holiday of sinister gods. What this plagiarism issue of the church makes me wonder is how people from various cultures honor their deceased loved ones. It is a great curiosity of mine. Quick research points out that the Chinese clean out their ancestors' graves and leave them pocket money, so their ancestors live in comfort in the afterlife. Even ghosts have financial concerns like us. It makes me realize the depths of the afterlife's depressing nature and once again i realized how much loyalty and gratuity this day includes at its core. Japan has Obon to honor their ancestors' spirits, and Italians celebrate Ognissanti; they gather for midday mass, commemorate the day, and leave food, candles and flowers. It also has Catholic roots, in Mexico they have Dia de Los Muertos it's legendary for its colorful costumes and famous iconic skull makeup, Scots and the Irish have Samhain which is actually the ancestor of Halloween on which it is said that the veil between the dead and living is at its thinnest.

Per my knowledge only Americans demand candy from their neighbors on a day that is originally for remembering the dead. You might ask do Turks have a Halloween equivalent in Turkic-Balkan culture and I might answer positively. We have something called Bocuk Night. Bocuk is the name of a ghost and if you do not honor it by going out to the street that night and roaming. If you do not participate in this tradition of scaring your neighbors, wearing white and hanging out around the block it will not stop burdening your pockets! How crazy. Assuming nobody is home on Bocuk Night, it's a great opportunity to visit somebody you don't know and get a share of their goods. Only candy right?

Esma Deniz ERKİ

Witch Trials

Imagine living in a world where a simple rumor could cost you your life. This was the terrifying reality for thousands during the dark era of the witch trials, where fear and superstition overpowered reason and justice.

The most notorious event occurred in 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts. It began with whispers— young girls claiming to be cursed by witches. Relentless gossip and slander condemned innocents, and soon neighbors turned against each other. A cold glance, a strange illness, or even a bad harvest became "proof" of dark magic. You may think, "What a foolish thing to do," but the power of fear is beyond comprehension. Fueled by such accusations, 20 innocent people were hanged, crushed, or left to rot in prison, branded as witches. But Salem was only the tip of the iceberg. Tens of thousands of people were killed during the centuries-long witch hunts that spread across Europe. Most were women, scapegoated for society's ills—blamed for storms, plagues, or misfortunes they could never control. The trials were crueler than you might think: suspects were dunked in icy water, pressed under heavy stones, or forced to confess under excruciating torture. The very idea that such gruesome methods could have been conceived by human beings is appalling. And yes, the minds of people ruled by dread are truly frightening.

The true tragedy? These victims were often the most vulnerable—widows, healers, or those who simply didn't fit the mold. Their deaths served no purpose other than to feed paranoia and consolidate power for the accusers.

Let's not dwell on the sorrow too much and conclude. Today, we look back on these trials with horror—a reminder of how dangerous fear can become when left unchecked. The witch trials aren't just stories of the past; they're warnings for the future. If we let fear and ignorance rule, who will be next to burn at the stake?

Elif Şahika ARICI





Is It Just Horror?

As someone who dislikes horror movies, I think it's right to start by saying this: Horror movies have the potential to be so much more than they seem. There are a lot of different genres of horror movies, but I would like to focus on three of them which catch my interest: supernatural, psychological, and thriller horror movies. These three genres affect us humans all differently, giving us a feeling of alternative aspects of fear. Supernatural horror scares us with things that aren't able to be explained with logic, focusing on the unknown. One of the biggest human fears, as we all know, is unpredictability. I, for one, hate supernatural horror movies. I'm more affected by things I can't wrap my head around. I can deal with a killer following me with a knife in their hand. After all, I know they are human, and if I can run away from them or somehow beat them, I'll be able to escape. However, if there's a ghost lurking in the shadows, an evil spirit, or a possessed teddy bear, there's no way I could ensure my safety using my reasoning in a scenario like that. That is the place where the fear of the unknown starts to scare us in supernatural horror movies. Meanwhile, psychological horror manipulates our minds, making us question reality and perception. Thriller horror enhances suspense and revolves around mysteries—things that spike our curiosity, even though we are scared of the truth we might face.

I know I said I dislike horror movies, but the truth is, my favorite movie of all time is a horror movie—a psychological horror thriller, to be exact. Let me explain what I love about *The Silence of the Lambs*, and with that, dive into why we love and watch horror movies, even though fear is considered an unpleasant feeling.

If you are a horror movie lover and still haven't seen *The Silence of the Lambs*, I highly recommend you go and watch it after you read this. After all there's a reason why it was the first and only horror movie to win Best Picture to this date. *The Silence of the Lambs* is a movie you must watch if you're into movies that keep you on the edge of your seat. The performances of Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins are absolutely captivating, and they make the entire movie feel like a psychological rollercoaster. With its perfect mix of suspense, eerie atmosphere, and clever writing, it's the kind of film that makes you feel this weird sense of discomfort throughout the whole thing, which is exactly what makes it so remarkable.

It stars Jodie Foster as Clarice Starling, a young FBI trainee who is hunting a serial killer named "Buffalo Bill" (Ted Levine), who skins his female victims. To catch him, she seeks the advice of the imprisoned Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), a brilliant psychiatrist and cannibalistic serial killer.

Let's set a basic example using this movie, Jodie is very nervous and uneasy while talking to Dr. Lecter and if you think about it, who wouldn't be scared while talking to a cannibalistic serial killer? But she keeps at it because to solve the case she knows Dr. Lecter's help is crucial. Things like this one in horror movies teach us courage, feeding the voice in the back of our minds that says "Keep going! You can do this." But us humans, we don't like to be scared or be brave, we want comfort more than anything. In his speech that I watched in a video Dr. Steven Schlozman stated this one sentence that is a perfect explanation for why humans enjoy watching horror movies: "We don't like difficult questions, unless somebody poses it in displacement." He also says that horror is a mirror, but it's a distorted mirror. Horror displays our hidden fears by hiding them under the mask of a monster, in the garden of a haunted mansion. Horror uses patterns like this perfectly to play with human emotions, teaching so much about ourselves to us. That is why even though at that moment we feel like we are just being scared, in the back of our minds we are actually discovering a new truth.

Lastly, I would like to point out a few other aspects of horror movies, like the fact that some people who seek adrenaline enjoy movies just because they find being scared exciting. A study shows that seeking adrenaline- the desire for varied, unusual and intense experiences - is a crucial personality trait associated with the enjoyment of horror.

But we should keep in mind that what makes horror movies so exciting is that we are affected by them not only psychologically but also physiologically. There is research showing that horror movies trigger a "fight-flight" response in us. This can initiate reactions such as trembling, shuddering, screaming, jumping up and down, or even closing your eyes to avoid seeing a bloody scene. However, some people are more likely to watch horror movies, as found in some studies individuals with low levels of empathy are more likely to enjoy fear.

So, they tend to enjoy movies more than empathic viewers who often relate to the characters' fears and pain, making the experience more unsettling. On the other hand, horror movies actually help us with that as well. In his TEDx speech, Mark Gunnells talks about how horror movies teach empathy by making us relate to the people in the movies, whether it's the villain or the innocent character. We do that by putting ourselves in their places and caring for them when they get hurt, Mark says this is a way of forming empathy. He also points out that horror movies show us that even if people are bad, they don't deserve some horrible fate as punishment. To wrap everything up in one sentence, it's clear that horror movies change us, teach us, and affect us in many different ways, and sometimes it's good to be a little scared.

Ayla BİRANT



The Power of Tandem Events in Breaking Language Barriers

When learning a language, it might seem scary to communicate with people in that language rather than focusing on grammar. This fear might arise from various factors, such as not being able to find someone who speaks that language. Luckily, there is a solution for this: the Tandem Event. Tandem is a speaking-based event that gathers people who speak various languages and language learners, facilitating communication and interaction through different channels. Let's delve into how the process works.

Firstly, we need to determine a large venue and recruit competent people who can use the target languages effectively. These individuals should not only be proficient in the languages but also knowledgeable about their cultures.

Therefore, preferring native speakers of the language is much more effective and beneficial for language learners to adapt. Tables are set up in accordance with the number of languages spoken, and flags are placed on each table to represent the language, enabling participants to easily find their language partners. Competent speakers sit at the tables and wait for language learners.

On the other hand, the process for language learners is much more interactive. Before entering the event area, empty stickers are provided for participants to write down the languages they can speak and those they wish to learn. This allows participants to easily find partners to converse with. Afterward, language learners enter the event area and visit the tables corresponding to the languages they are interested in. Additionally, they can find each other easily thanks to the stickers. Thus, the language learning process becomes not only enjoyable but also effective.

Questions might arise about how a time-limited speaking event can positively affect language learning. Tandem is not confined to a specific time or place. Through the friendships and connections made at the event, individuals can arrange meetings at any time and place to practice with their Tandem partners beyond the event itself. These friendships, formed during the event, are referred to as Tandem Partners.

Tandem is an important event for improving language skills and gaining insights into the culture of the language. Participating in Tandem is a great opportunity to learn a language and make friends from different cultures.

Sevil Sıla KÖRALIOĞLU



ELECTRONIC RESOURCES:

All Souls' Day

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All Souls%27 Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_Souls%27_Day)

Beatific vision

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatific vision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatific_vision)

BBC- Why The Silence of the Lambs is a Feminist Fable

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20170307-why-the-silence-of-the-lambs-is-a-feminist-fable>

Chinese Death Traditions- Marie

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/talkabout/articles/chinese-death-traditions/358268#:~:text=During%20this%20period%2C%20it's%20traditional,the%20spirit%20in%20the%20afterlife.>

Exploring Italian Holidays and Traditions

<https://theworldoverload.com/exploring-italian-holidays-and-traditions/>

Halloween like Traditions Around the World- Travel Channel

<https://www.travelchannel.com/interests/haunted/photos/halloween-like-traditions-around-the-world>

Jack O'Lantern- Pumpkin Nook

<https://www.pumpkinnook.com/facts/jack.htm>

Photo 1

<https://www.sewingpartsonline.com/products/tis-the-spooky-season-fabric-panel>

Salem Witch Museum Online Exhibit

<https://salemwitchmuseum.com/online-exhibit/>

Salem Witch Trials – Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_witch_trials

Samhain – Wikipedia

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samhain#:~:text=Most%20American%20Halloween%20traditions%20were,it%2C%20as%20a%20religious%20holiday>

The Silence of the Lambs – Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Silence_of_the_Lambs_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Silence_of_the_Lambs_(film))

The Psychology of Horror Films

<https://kurious.ku.edu.tr/korku-filmlerinin-psikolojisi/>

Times of India - Festivals Like Halloween Celebrated Around the World

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/etimes/trending/festivals-like-halloween-celebrated-around-the-world/articleshow/114464812.cms>

Travel Channel - Halloween-Like Traditions Around the World

<https://www.travelchannel.com/interests/haunted/photos/halloween-like-traditions-around-the-world>

YouTube Video 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoYrpA3v-38&t=41s>

YouTube Video 2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=153CT_xwJNA



Contact Info: ssoner@baskent.edu.tr

Web: <https://mtb.baskent.edu.tr/kw/?dil=EN>

Writers: Öykü Durmaz, Esmâ Deniz Erki, Ayla Birant, Sevil Sıla Köralioğlu, Elif Şahika Arıcı

Editors: Ceylin Özen, Öykü Durmaz, Selen Bike Önder