UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN
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Florida International University
University Graduate School

Master’s Thesis Defense

Abstract

Celluloid Subversion: A Queer Reading of 1980s Teen Slasher Cinema

by

Yates Diaz

“Celluloid Subversion” examines the slasher film genre, specifically how it came to prominence in the early 1980s at the dawn of Ronald Reagan and the New Right’s takeover of American political and social life. With its violence against women and individuals who engage in allegedly immoral acts, the genre is commonly perceived as a cinematic representation of patriarchal values writ large on screen. However, its propensity for challenging gender norms and its adherence to tropes such as that of the Final Girl — where a woman survives the killer’s carnage before defeating him — imbue it with subversively queer qualities that are at odds with the ultra-conservatism of the era. Close readings of The Slumber Party Massacre (1982), Sleepaway Camp (1983), and A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy’s Revenge (1985) will illustrate how queer elements exist within slasher cinema while also defining it.

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Place: MMC, DM 457

Department: English
Major Professor: Dr. Nathaniel Cadle