
The Discourse of Urban Regeneration and Gentrification as Devices of Fear in the Horror Genre

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Abstract

The paper examines three European horror movies with an urban setting under a regeneration process and the way actual and fictional fears affect the everyday urban experience. Neil Smith describes urban regeneration as an ‘alibi for gentrification’ and a change of vocabulary to smoothen the discourse and the resistance from practitioners and academics. Still, the applied strategies continue this cycle of providing a solution to media demonization of areas and of people, and the real estate clashes with the element of neighbourhood and the right to the city of different social groups, who may not be able to afford the new land prices. Mixed-income housing becomes an excuse for dislocation and exclusion, but at the same time, the media support it through promoting a state of necessity. Whenever there is an oppressed, then fear is generated, as they are to return (Wood, 2004) and the horror genre has proven to be very inventive into encompassing various sources of fear and their implication on people and space into its frames. The paper follows a parallel editing of the movies and the social and material context of the specific areas that *Rec* (Spain, 2007), *Tale 52* (Greece, 2008) and *Attack the Block* (UK, 2011) refer to in Barcelona, Athens, and London respectively. In that way, it aims to trace the way actual fears are visualised, used and challenged by fictional attacks. By examining various scales affected by the processes of regeneration and how facts and fiction about fear generate an intertextual memory of the city as a place, transcending from the local to the global.

Keywords: Cinema, Gentrification, Urban Regeneration, Horror, Fear

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