

## English 197: Writing Link with Comparative Literature 272

### Modleski Article Response

#### Length and Due Date

**Length:** 1-2 pages, formatted as described in the “Essays” portion of the syllabus

**Due:** Wednesday, November 19; bring in two electronic formats

#### Assignment

Tania Modleski critiques theorists who see mass cultural forms like film as supporting dominant ideologies. Low-culture genres like horror, Modleski argues, “are engaged in an unprecedented assault on all that bourgeois culture is supposed to cherish . . .” (694). Narratively, visually, and thematically, horror films undermine cultural beliefs regarding family and other institutions and critique aspects of contemporary life. Moreover, according to Modleski, their open-ended plots eschew narrative closure, which generally functions to reinstitute the status quo, and their underdeveloped characters thwart spectators’ ability to identify with someone “like them.” As Modleski notes, however, horror films are not entirely oppositional, particularly in their connection of victimization and feminization.

Although Modleski references *Videodrome*, an extended discussion of the film is beyond the scope of her article. For your response, you will engage Modleski’s ideas as they apply to *Videodrome*. How does the film use narrative and visuals to subvert dominant cultural values or practices? Does *Videodrome* take a wholly adversarial position, or are there limits to its critique? In your analysis, make sure to clearly identify the values or practices the film destabilizes (notions of gender, sexuality, identity; our relationship with media, etc.) before examining *Videodrome*’s story, characters, and visual elements.

#### Resources

While you do not need to be familiar with the theoretical approaches Modleski references in order to complete your response, those of you who want more background may consult the following sites:

- [Frankfurt School, Overview](http://www.bookwire.com/bbr/politics/frankfurt-school.html)  
<http://www.bookwire.com/bbr/politics/frankfurt-school.html>
- [Frankfurt School Theories of Media](http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/marxism/marxism08.html)  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/marxism/marxism08.html>
- [Postmodernism: Overview](http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html)  
<http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html>
- [Postmodernism and Media Studies](http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Intellectual_Traditions_in_Media_Literacy)  
[http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Intellectual\\_Traditions\\_in\\_Media\\_Literacy](http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Intellectual_Traditions_in_Media_Literacy) (note: the site is written by education graduate students examining how postmodernism affects K-12 media education; consequently, the language is accessible, a contrast to many sites on postmodernism)