

Analysis of East Asian Women's Social Status and Roles from Asian Horror Films — Taking China, Korea and Japan as Examples

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ABSTRACT

Women in East Asia have been under the oppression of patriarchal society for a long time, due to the differences in physiological structure of gender, women get easier to be treated by violence. But horror movies often give women who lost their lives some supernatural magic, helping them get power beyond male, so they can make a revenge for themselves. This essay will analyze the oppression of East Asian women reflected in horror films from different aspects.

Keywords: *Female consciousness, Horror film, East Asia.*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Gender Gap Report, a ranking of 149 countries published in the "Gender Gap Index", China ranked 103rd, Japan 110th and South Korea 115th. And in 2019, China ranked 106th, South Korea 108th and Japan 121st.

The 2021 global gender gap report shows that compared with men, women are more affected by the outbreak, such as COVID-19 today. In East Asia, Japan ranked 120th in the world, the lowest among G7 countries, while South Korea ranked 102nd and China 107th.

The reasons for the low status of women in East Asia are diverse and complex. For example, the special geographical location led to the early emergence of local civilization and feudal times, and also formed the small-scale peasant economic production mode with family or clan as the unit. Another reason is the great influence of Chinese Confucian culture on East Asia, which is embodied in politics, economy, daily life and other aspects of Asian countries.

Around the late 1980s and early 1990s, the East Asian horror film showed up. In the following decades, Asian horror films flourished, and in these

films, the horror characters were often female. These films also gradually explore the female theme in a progressive and allegorical way. Through the form of satire, the female characters are demonized or turned into rebellious monsters, so that they can be liberated mentally or physically in the traditional patriarchal society.

Dating back to ancient China, women lived in the Confucian culture often faced to a serious gender identity gap, and women's resentment is usually heavy. Now in today's world, this problem has not disappeared, in horror films, the deformation and alienation of the female body has become a common way of expression. With the rise of female consciousness, the ways in which women declare their sovereignty are becoming more and more diversified, and the female roles in horror films are becoming more and more full of self-exploration, which involves women's attention to and demand for their own physiology and psychology, and women's inner desires and needs are more expressed. How to reposition the female characters in the horror film and show the desire of the female heart? This becomes something worth thinking about.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How does horror film reflect female living condition?

Why is the status of Asian women so low?

When will Asian women get equal rights?

3. ANALYSIS

3.1 China

3.1.1 *The History of the Development of Women's Status in China*

Primitive society in China is a matriarchal society. By the pre-Qin period, women had stepped down from the throne of feminism and entered a male-dominated class society. They gradually retreat to the family, and lose their due position in society step by step.

In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, great changes in social unrest in the original which is harmful to women's basic rights of legal system has received the unprecedented impact, although "sexes" legal system require women to be trapped in the family, but the destruction of rite system of Zhou (the ritual collapses and music breaks) made the repressive situation of women's status in this period eased, and women could participate in social activities to a certain extent and even interfere in national politics.

However, since the law of "deposed hundreds of families and respected Confucianism alone" in the Han Dynasty, Chinese women have been deprived of independent personality and basic rights. The Three Principles and Five Constants of Confucianism stipulate that women "must be ordered by their father when they are unmarried, and from their husbands after marriage", and obedience have become the code of conduct that Chinese women must abide by. Based on that, unmarried women have no right to choose or express in family life and production activities, or to inherit family names and property. For women after marriage, their task is to reproduce and teach their children. While the husband is alive, the woman must unconditionally obey whatever her husband ordered; if the husband dies, women must obey her son's demands and orders. Women who fail to bear boys have no human right in the family. For a wife who is unable to have children, the husband has the right to divorce and send her back to her mother's family. In the event of her husband's

death, only if she performs the duties of raising children and taking care of her parents on her husband's behalf can she obtain the husband's property rights and paternal rights indirectly. If the woman is remarried, the parental rights to the children and the property rights of the husband are all stripped away and the family is expelled.

In the Song Dynasty, the oppression of women was not limited to ideological moral norms, but also reached its peak of destruction of the flesh. The most representative is the women's foot binding. It was not until the founding of the "Republic of China" that Sun Yat-sen, the provisional president, issued an order to ban foot binding throughout the country that it gradually disappeared in the big cities, but it still existed in the remote areas. In the nearly 1,000-year history of China, the birthplace of Confucian culture, women have not only been an appendage of patriarchal and husband-power at the spiritual and moral levels, but also the popularity of physical foot binding has prevented women from participating in productive activities and social life like men.

3.1.2 *Analysis of Female Images in A Chinese Ghost Story (Cheng Xiaodong, Xu Ke 1987)*

3.1.2.1 *Synopsis of the Story*

The story of the movie "Ghost of Qiannu" comes from *Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio* written by Pu Songlin.

A scholar named Ning Caichen went to Guobei County to collect the account, but encountered heavy rain, so he hid himself in Lanruo Temple, which has many legends, but was rejected by the Taoist monk Yan Chixia in the temple, so Ning secretly sneaked into the temple. In the night, Ning was attracted by a burst of music sounds and met the young girl Nie Xiaoqian. When Nie accidentally attracted the monster to attack Ning, fortunately, Yan arrived to save Ning's life. Nie thought that Ning was honest and kind, and gradually fall in love with him, but was stopped by Yan. However, Ning mistook Yan for a murderer and wanted to escape with Nie.

The tree demon grandma (monster) forced Nie to kill Ning, but Nie still refused, so the grandmother ordered the demons to kill them both. At last, Yan appeared to save the two, and the tree demon grandma and Yan were sealed by her palm thunder for a hundred years after the battle.

3.1.2.2 *The Female Character*

In the original text, Nie was not born as a ghost but was forced. Although her soul was still trapped and sold after death, Nie did not lose her kind heart. When facing the human Ning, she saved his life.

All Nie wanted was that one day someone would take her bones away from the monster, so that she would no longer be controlled from then on and could reincarnate as a human being again.

3.1.2.3 *Life After Marriage*

Nie is in a ghost world dominated by desire. Demons take advantage of man's greed to set traps, and humans fall prey to demons because of their own indulgent greed. Ning's brave and integrity are like a ray of sunshine projected into this dark jungle, dividing the world of man and ghosts. Although Nie was a ghost, she had never lost her conscience as a human being. Ning brought her the kindness of the human world, which was a life-saving straw she hoped to grasp. Her love, from the very beginning, has become a salvation road back to human world.

However, when Ning brought her home and planned to get married, he did not get his mother's approval. Ironically, the reason was not because Nie was a ghost, nor because she had hurt men before, the original text clearly points out that the main reason why Ning's mother does not agree is that the female ghost cannot give birth to children. And Ning is the only son in the family, and he needs to continue the clan heir for the Ning family.

This love becomes a dead end. In this story, *liyi* (etiquette and morality) divides people into saints and demons, and Ning won Nie's affection because he kept *liyi*. However, his love with Nie was originally a ceremonial righteousness, and it could only finally be a ceremonial righteousness.

Unable to be husband and wife, Nie entered the Ning family as Ning's righteous sister and took care of the housework for Ning's mother, showing her ability to be a good wife and mother, working hard and never complained. Ning's wife was frightened and sick, so Nie stayed away and did not disturb her; Ning's mother disliked her and was so unhappy that she did not prepare a bed for her, so Nie went to Ning's study room every night and sat next to him and read Buddhist scriptures to him; Ning thought that it was not convenient for the men and women to share a room late at night, and Nie quietly left when he was ready to go to bed.

There are comments, "this is the most depressing part of the novel". Nie in this section is like Dong Xiaowan, another figure who devoted her life to men and his family in the name of love because she was born into prostitution, yearning for the normal life of ordinary people. It is not difficult to see "Nie Xiaoqian" is originally an ancient brothel woman from the story of good, just borrow the ghost said to seize the reborn. The identity of female ghost is Nie's original sin, and she is willing to pay any price to return to the world. Every concession is because she did not want to go back to face the reality of as a ghost.

Ning understood and sympathized with this, but he couldn't help it. The book said that he wanted to keep Nie, but he was afraid that his mother would blame him, so he had to let her leave. It is clear that ancient men get the price from feudal etiquette and oppression of women, too. In today's China, a large number of men and women are still in the dilemma of obeying the elders.

At the end of the story, Nie's hard work finally won the approval of Ning Caichen's mother, and Ning's wife, who served as a background cloth, also died just in time. This is not enough, the author's gold finger also allows Nie to gradually become a true human and even restore the ability to have children.

The last problem was also solved. At the wedding, Nie could finally appear in front of everyone generously. Nie was finally made into a perfect wife image, and obtained a pass to return to the human world. In the end, they gave birth to three sons for him.

3.1.3 *Discussion on Gender Issues*

From the perspective of the character setting of *A Chinese Tale of Ghosts*, female ghost characters show certain initiative and positivity, while male characters deviate from the tall image of male, thus reflecting the strength contrast between female and male. Such setting seems to be based on women, but in essence it is an implicit expression of male center. In terms of narrative structure, from the perspective of female ghosts, men mainly assume the roles of torturer and rescuer, while women assume the roles of victim and recipient, forming a narrative structure in which men take the initiative while women are passive. Behind this narrative mode is the implicit communication of the male center in the narrative mechanism, which forms the domination of male discourse over women.

In East Asian horror films, there are often strong women and weak men. Female ghosts are generally not bound by space, and can use their own spells and powers to complete things other than male ability. Unlike the strength of female ghosts, the male setting is contrary to the positive and tall image in the previous narrative, becoming a person similar to a weak student, mediocre, and spineless.

However, the role setting of strong women and weak men still cannot cover up the fact that men are active and women are passive, and men's control of the female ghost's life. Traditional texts often portray women as two extremes, angels or witches. Angels are produced by the imagination of men, they are docile, passive, willing to give and sacrifice, do not pose any threat to the male order, and have a maternal protective mentality. In the Hong Kong ghost films in the 1980s, the image of female ghost still did not escape from the two extreme models of angels and ghosts. They may be kind and lovely, or they may be evil and horrible, but they are undoubtedly victims under the control of men. They die for men, and they live for men. Their existence reveals the charm and value of men.

But the role of witches and ghosts are rebellious, selfish and evil because they reject the roles assigned to them by the patriarchal society and have the courage to pursue their own values and desires. They become "symbols of instincts and desires, physical bearers of men", who pose a threat to the male order and are difficult to manipulate and control. It can be said that those women who are shaped as female ghosts are those who have the courage to express their personal desires, and surpass the rules. However, these women are hated and feared by men for destroying the order of men's world and threatening men's interests.

Women who are obedient, patient and sacrifice for men are the perfect angels who are praised by them. But they are actually people who have killed their personality and have no demands for themselves. They are praised by men only because they meet the requirements of men. We can say that they are ideal women in patriarchal society for they have no passion. Compared with the alienation and objectification of women by patriarchal culture, this is actually another form of female personality alienation, which undoubtedly blocked the 'self' growth path of women as gender subjects.

3.2 Korea

3.2.1 *The History of the Development of Women's Status in Korea*

In ancient times, the Korean Peninsula was separated from the political sacrifices, with men in charge of politics and women in charge of sacrifices. During this long period, there were not too many laws on Korea that specifically restricted women.

In the economic field, for the Korean region at this time, textiles were not only a source of fiscal revenue, but also a very popular tribute and important relief. And the encouragement of the government made women, who were the main labor force in textile production, hold a pivotal position.

After the initial unification of the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of its own dynasty, in order to further rectify the national program and discipline and consolidate and strengthen the new political power, the government took Confucianism as a governing concept and vigorously promoted Neo-Confucianism.

After the middle of the 17th century, the family property inheritance system changed completely, only the eldest son of the first wife had the right to inherit the family property, while the woman's property inheritance right was deprived, and only in special circumstances (such as the extinction of the family), the daughter could inherit the parents' property. Women's family economic status is reduced and they are completely dependent on men financially.

South Korea has achieved economic take-off as early as the 1970s, completed the transformation from an agricultural country to an industrial country, and successfully ranked among the four Asian tigers. However, in stark contrast to South Korea's economic success, the status of women in South Korea remains low. According to the Gender Gap Index rankings, South Korea's ranking has been declining almost every year since 2006, at the lowest level.

Based on South Korea's nearly decade-long gender gap report, South Korea has a long way to go to achieve equality between men and women. But that doesn't mean there's no hope of equality between men and women in South Korea. In fact, in the long period before the establishment of the Joseon Dynasty, South Korea had a certain degree of gender equality, and women could also

participate in social activities and enjoy a series of rights such as inheritance rights. In some ways, women are even more senior than men. South Korean women were clearly discriminated against after the middle of North Korea. Until modern times, this idea of discrimination against women still exists and has become a serious obstacle to women's development.

3.2.2 *Synopsis of the Story of Strange Girl (Wu Rentian, 2014)*

Jiang Renxiu has the ability to see sentient beings in another world since childhood, he is constantly bothered by ghosts, so he decided to move back to his hometown and live with his uncle. The next day in the bus to his uncle's home, he saw a very beautiful ghost. Renxiu was born in a family of exorcists, but his uncle suffered from wilderness phobia because of his experience, and he refused to come out of the house.

And when Jiang went to school, just sat in his seat, the beautiful female classmate Xianzhi in the class showed interest in him and began to be attentive to Renxiu. But Xianzhi already have a boyfriend, and Xianzhi himself has a small group and often bullies other students in the class. While in class, Renxiu saw a masked ghost photographing a bright red handprint on the glass of the classroom.

At this time, a girl from a bullying group centered of Xianzhi suddenly died, a girl in the small group and her boyfriend were also attacked. At this time, the whole class fell into panic. Renxiu found out that the female ghost Shixi, who spends time with him, is bullied to death by her classmates. Because the students in the class who were related to the bullying incident died or disappeared one after another, the initiator, Xianzhi and her boyfriend wanted to apologize to Shixi's ghost and begged the ghost to let them go. But they were still killed by the ghost.

It turned out that there was a girl in the class wearing glasses who had been bullied by Xianzhi and her friends, and Shixi wrote a report letter to the teacher, hoping to stop the bullying incident, and that's when the bullied person became Shixi. The bully cut Shixi's hair, scribbled on her face, forced her to eat the rest of their meal, and finally put a mask on her to prevent her from speaking. The teacher removes Shixi's mask during class, which leads to her being bullied even more severely. Finally, Shixi, who can't stand the bullying and the

cold eyes of other classmates, hanging herself in the warehouse at home.

Later, when Jiang found the objects of his childhood in his bedroom, he remembered that he and Shixi were childhood sweetheart, and according to Shixi's diary, the next to die would be the teacher of the class. Renxiu rushed to the school and informed his uncle to come to help. When he arrived at the school only to find the teacher who is possessed by the ghost, he tried to stop the mask ghost's revenge but fails due to his lack of ability, fortunately, his uncle appears in time, Renxiu also took out the diary of his childhood to awaken Shixi's conscience, and finally Shixi ended her life with a peach wood sword in order to protect the people who are still alive.

3.2.3 *Discussion on Gender Issues*

The combination of ghosts and women makes female ghosts become passive characters dominated by men. Although they are highly skilled and have distinct personalities, their skills are always used to help to make men successful or to retaliate against men. For example, in the setting of the female ghost Shixi and Renxiu in this film, although the female ghost has extremely superb power, her mana is used to retaliate against the people who bully her, and at the end of the film, there is no doubt that the death of the female ghost has achieved the prestige of Renxiu's Uncle exorcism skill and highlighted Renxiu's own humanistic care.

It can be said that in most East Asian horror films, men are always at the center of the characters, and they either affect the fate of female ghosts by either harming or saving. In addition, the identities of the perpetrator and the rescuer are often separated, that is, the perpetrator and the rescuer are generally undertaken by two males, while the female passively becomes the object of the infliction or rescue, and becomes the concentrated embodiment of the sufferer and the recipient.

For example, in this film, the female ghost is harmed by the little gangster in the school, and the rescue is the male protagonist Jiang Renxiu, which makes the female ghost Shixi first passively become a victim and be deprived of her life; Then she is passively redeemed by another male character who appears, obviously a victim, and does not get an apology, but in the end, a hero is needed to appear to wash away her "evil ghost" side, that is, only when she sacrifices herself and no longer avenges herself can she get some sympathy

from people, and before she dies again, she will not get justice, nor will she get people's pity.

In addition, when the female ghost takes revenge, she will also look for the same or innocent woman as her own encounter as a stand-in, and the woman will once again become an innocent victim, thus forming a stylized narrative structure of male victimization - female help - male salvation.

Male harm is an indispensable link in the narrative of direct revenge of female ghosts, which directly constitutes the motivation for female ghosts to take revenge and promotes the development of revenge. It is generally explained that the perpetrator intentionally or unintentionally kills the victim into a ghost, where the role of the perpetrator is assumed by the male, while the female is the passive victim. When women are brutally harmed by men, they are either killed or commit suicide, and then turn into female ghosts to take revenge on the perpetrators. In this process, the perpetrator will also use external forces to help evade the punishment of the female ghost, which will cause a struggle and conflict between the two sides, thus advancing the development of the narrative, which is also an indispensable part of the narrative. For example, in this film, when the female ghost takes revenge, the Taoist priest appears so that the perpetrator avoids the revenge of the female ghost.

3.2.4 *The Relation Between Female*

When female ghosts take female teachers as objects of possession, the relationship between women is presupposed as a hostile relationship of mutual harm, and they can only passively become the target of male victimization and ask men for help for salvation, while they cannot unite with each other to fight or save themselves.

For the male salvation, male salvation directly contributes to the success of the female ghost's revenge, and also realizes the completion of the narrative. Here, with the help of men, the female ghost often kill the perpetrator, complete revenge, and calm the resentment before the ghost leaves. Therefore, the salvation of men is crucial, when the female ghost revenge is in trouble, unable to get out of the predicament through their own efforts, the male savior will appear in time, and easily help the female ghost to resolve the crisis and complete the revenge.

For such a plot arrangement, we can interpret it as men have the right to decide the fate of women,

and as the perpetrators and saviors of women's fate, they have absolute control and are representatives of authority. Only they can control the fate of women, while women can only passively bear the influence exerted by men on them, and they are deprived of the possibility of solidarity and resistance or rescue.

Therefore, from the narrative chain, the male perpetrator makes the female turn from a person to a ghost, while the male savior restores the female ghost to an adult or helps the female ghost achieve a long-cherished wish, and the male becomes the completer of saving the female fate. The setting of narrative roles and the termination of actions reflect an unconscious gender concept, whether men are perpetrators or savers, they always hold the initiative of the narrative, while women can only assume the passive role of victims and recipients in the narrative.

3.3 *Japan*

3.3.1 *Analysis of Japanese Women's Discourse Power*

Before the 8th century AD, Japan was in the matriarchal period, and men and women naturally divided labor and cooperation based on physical differences, forming a division of labor space in which men going out to hunt, women in charge of picking and taking care of the life of clan members.

By the 10th century, with the rise of the samurai class, men took advantage of their superior physical strength to fight for the possession and control of land, property and other space resources, trying to rewrite the female-centered gender space order, and Japan gradually entered a male-dominated society.

At the end of the 14th century, the samurai class began to popularize marriage at all levels, and introduced the Chinese Confucian ethical order of "male superiority and female inferiority", emphasizing that in the family, wives should be all husband-centered, absolutely obey the will of the in-laws, and the family status of daughters was lower than that of brothers, completely replacing the female-centered gender that continued from the matriarchal society period.

With the introduction of Western capitalist production methods and the idea of equality between men and women, the patriarchal gender space production model since the feudal society of Japan has been broken, showing new characteristics of the times. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868,

Japan entered the stage of capitalist development, and due to its increased demand for social labor, men began to allow women to enter the society and join the ranks of industrial workers. Feminists carried out a series of activities such as criticizing the feudal ideology of male superiority over women, protesting to the government, establishing women's industrial schools. They also carried out feminist movements to fight for the right to education, participate in political power, and encourage women to achieve economic independence.

The COVID-19 outbreak has far more negative impacts on women than men, with a large number of women being laid off and discrimination becoming more serious. Japan has made many efforts to create an equal society between men and women, but at present, it seems that more and more women are struggling in the whirlpool of family, workplace, marriage and childbearing, and there is a growing gap with men.

3.3.2 *Synopsis of the Story of The Grudge* (Takashi Shimizu, 2003)

The grudge is caused by a haunted house, which used to be inhabited by a family of three, a husband named Tsuyoshi, a wife named Kayako, and a son named Toshio. The heroine Kayako is lack of love since childhood, she did not get the love of parents, nor the love of friends, and her only accompany is a small black cat. She is introverted and withdrawn, from the university has been secretly in love with her classmate Kobayashi, and finally developed into a stalker, she can collect all the information about Kobayashi in a diary. Later, Kobayashi and another classmate married, at the same time, her parents both dead, and she was too sad to marry the tenant, then soon after they gave birth to their son Toshio.

When Toshio was six years old, Tsuyoshi wanted to have another daughter, only to find that he suffered from oligospermia, and basically his was unable to have children, he immediately suspected Toshio's birth, after went home and he found the secret love diary, and sure enough, he found that Kayako had a crush on a man named "Kobayashi", and then contacted her insisting on naming her son Toshio, and Kobayashi was actually Toshio's class teacher, thinking that Toshio must not be his own son, at this point, the jealous Tsuyoshi killed Kayako with extreme cruelty, And broke her neck to make her make a "clucking" sound. Returning home, Toshio finds his home disheveled, only to see his abused mother and mad

father. In a hurry, Toshio hid in the closet of his room. Tsuyoshi came to look for Toshio and found him hiding in a closet that he couldn't catch, so he angrily sealed the closet with tape. Then the black cat who gave the coconut to Toshio was also killed.

Tsuyoshi finds Kobayashi's home and brutally kills his pregnant wife. At this time, the ghost of Kayako appeared and took his life. Toshio was taken away by Kayako, too. Because the evidence of Tsuyoshi's killing of Kayako is conclusive, but the hilt of the knife that killed Tsutomu is fingerprinted by Kayako, so the police cannot solve the case.

This murder is the origin of the entire Curse series. The spirits of Kayako, Toshio and Tsuyoshi have since been entrenched in the mansion, waiting for an opportunity to kill anyone who enters the place. The videotape version and the theatrical narrative are based on the respective experiences of the victims of the curse, and the experiences of the grudge victims.

3.3.3 *The Horror Core of the Story*

The concept of a grudge is a curse that a person who dies with a strong grudge will place at the last moment of their life, and this curse will accumulate in the place where the deceased lived, causing the death of anyone close to it and creating new grudge.

In *The Grudge*, the Three Families of the Zober family is a collection of grudges. Kayako is resentment and pain, Tsuyoshi is jealous and angry, and Toshio is fear.

According to the concept of the grudge, the subsequent residents of the house, the social workers, the real estate agents, the police, the 'explorers' who come into the house for various purposes, the grudge will attach to them, occupying their consciousness, causing them to kill or commit suicide, tortures them, destroys their mind. And for those who enter the house occasionally (even if only for one step), the grudge will either kill them on the spot, or in the form of Kayako or Toshio, or in the form of a shadow, and it will follow them to their respective places of life and work until the person dies.

Grudge is a supernatural, hyper-physical entity that cannot be removed and can appear on walls, floors, under beds, even on people's backs and quilts. Victims are often hanged, stabbed, torn or even dragged away to unknown places. The body of

the deceased will somehow disappear and become a new grudge, to attack others indiscriminately.

Not only that, people who are infected with grudge will also infect their classmates and relatives, like a virus spreading. For example, the social worker, Rijia, the ghost follows her all the time but does not let her die directly. Instead, the ghost of Kayako let her see the injustice she was treated before her life and let her feel their pain and despair.

3.3.4 *The Female Perspective of The Grudge*

The female ghost Kayako in *The Grudge* has a lot in common with the female characters in other Japanese horror films: they are both weak and subordinate to the patriarchal society, and their status is humble.

But this horror film is not only to show the inferior status of women, but also to express a very powerless fact: women have become subordinate to men due to physical strength, social conceptions and other reasons when they are alive, lack love and confidence, they usually die with hatred. When violence of men reaches its extreme, women often die and lose the opportunity to find justice and avenge for themselves, but horror movies give women a chance, the power to start a new life as ghosts in the supernatural world.

Horror films often give women endless energy and extraordinary abilities. When this ability is surpass men's abilities is generated, female ghosts take revenge and become the masters of the world, treating men who have hurt them with all their cruelty.

In a sense, horror movies give women a chance to speak for themselves and seek justice, and this theme of reincarnation and fate also reflects one of cores of feminism.

In addition to women, the film also portrays a child's character. Children have always had a pure image, but in many horror films there are similar content to baby spirits. *The Grudge* magnifies this kind of children ghost, and it can be said that the appearance of Toshio is the misfortune of the world. He was killed and also kills others.

Each person's childhood is so important to the growth of the individual that it influences the outlook on life and values of adulthood. Due to the misfortune of Toshio's childhood, he became an evil ghost and killed countless people. For his

mother, Kayako, her childhood was also unfortunate, and it also hurt in her youth, and this misfortune continued until her death. In this way, this turns into a curse that never ends. It can be considered that the relationship between Kayako and Toshio in *The Grudge* is not just a mother-son relationship. The experience of Kayako's childhood caused the resentment in her heart to grow deeper and deeper, and Toshio also had resentment in his heart because of his dead. The superposition of these two grievances produces a multiplier effect. The female ghost image of Kayako fixed with the image of her poor son Toshio, it can say that they shared the same pain.

3.3.5 *The Female Status Embodied in the Filming Method of The Grudge*

Usually in horror films, the lives of female ghosts are undoubtedly wretched, but the different perspectives of the story reflect the different gender consciousness tendencies of the narrators. According to Genette, when the narrator is narrating as a character in the film, it is an internal focus narrative. In the inner-focused narrative, the film will be narrated from the perspective of the first person — "I", and prove the existence of the self through direct narration, narration, inner monologue and other ways.

This perspective of narration will make the audience feel intimate and make the narrative itself more convincing. In this kind of the movie, when the female ghost tells her own life, she often uses this first-person narration, which is often an internal and emotional perspective, and the audience can also be touched by their emotions and experience, and feel their misery and pain.

This inner-focused first-person perspective pays attention to the emotional awareness and experience of the female ghost from the perspective themselves. They can use their own autonomous words to break the male statement about women. However, the expression of female subjectivity is not sufficient, and the gender bias of women as weak and passive objects still exists in the consciousness of the narrator. Therefore, the self-description of the female ghost's life is to better win the sympathy of men, so they can get help to get out of trouble, or to fulfill their attempted wish.

However, different from the above narrative method, the narrative of other people other than the female ghost or the lens itself is presented as an objective and external narrative perspective. For

example, through other character narratives and lens narratives, the life of female ghosts is told.

In the narration of movies, every picture, every line and every plot are presented after filtering through the perspective of the narrator, implying the subjective evaluation and attitude of the narrator, so the narration is undoubtedly absolutely dominated by the thought of the narrator. While the female ghost story seems to be objectively presented through the lens, in fact, it is artificially presented by the director through selection with subjective consciousness and value. In the process of this presentation, the unconscious gender bias is also unconsciously revealed. For example, the female ghost's own subjective consciousness is ignored. The female ghost in the film does not have the right to express herself. Even if she becomes the protagonist of the narrative, she is also controlled by the words of others.

And *The Grudge* belongs to the third-person, all-knowing horror film. If you only watch one of the movies, the audience sees that she is only a harmful evil ghost, and does not involve her life and tragic cause of death, she has no right to defend herself, only at the end of the film Kayako is attached to the female college student, so that the female student and the audience can see her tragic fate and the wretch of death. Therefore, presenting the fate of female ghosts from such a perspective ignores women's emotional appeal to a certain extent, and also reflects women's aphasia and silence after being deprived of their right to speak.

In addition to the deprivation of the female ghost's words, this omniscient perspective also reflects the indifference to the fate of women when narrating.

3.3.6 Summary

Women in East Asia have been under the oppression of patriarchal society for a long time, due to the differences in physiological structure of women became an object of a man's accessory and get easy to be treated by violence. But the horror movies give women who lost their lives by some supernatural power, let they go beyond the power of the male, so they can make a revenge for themselves. A tragic childhood like Kayako, although she got rid of her original unhappy family, she transitioned from one patriarchal male's environment to another, and it is not rare in Asia.

Their misfortune lasted until death, and they were unable to protect themselves and seek for

justice. Undisputed, horror movies represent part of the rise of feminism.

But Ghosts in Japan usually kill indiscriminately, with a great deal of randomness in their choice of victims. This is quite different from horror movies in Thailand and Hong Kong, where women have a strong goal of revenge. In contrast, Chinese, Thai and Korean horror films are more cause-and-effect and pay more attention to revenge than just kill. However, it shows the living situation of East Asian women, which is worth studying and discussing.

4. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

This paper analyzes the oppression of East Asian women reflected in horror films. Women, children and the elderly are often used as ghosts in East Asian horror films, which precisely reflects that these groups are the most vulnerable to get injured due to their weak strength. Moreover, the male rescue can easily resolve the female ghost crisis; Or female ghosts often choose the same innocent women and their revenge, causing secondary damage to women; The male abuser will use an external force to escape punishment, thus advancing the story; Also, the female ghost is true to themselves and dares to resist compared with a perfect woman in men's eyes. This result reflects the stereotype of women in traditional Confucian thought, which holds the idea that only women who sacrifice themselves and take men as the center are worthy of praise. Furthermore, horror movies often use the third perspective narrative, with strong subjectivity, and it belongs to a male gaze.

In today's society, we can say that the status of women reflects the degree of civilization of a country, and the disparity between women's status and national economic strength is undoubtedly contrary to the development trend of the times. Women and men are both valuable social resources, and women's development is part of social development. Only when the power of women is fully utilized can society be healthy and stable, and sustainable development can be achieved. Otherwise, it will be a great waste of human resources and hinder the further development of society.

4.2 Limitations

As far as the current research is concerned, the academic community mostly discusses the living conditions of women from the aspects of literature or education, and less involves with other aspects. Moreover, the current research is limited to native Asians of the West. Secondly, there are fewer angles of combining feminism and horror films, and there are fewer relevant historical materials and documents, which adds a certain degree of difficulty to the research.

Also, this article only selects one horror film from each of the three countries for analysis, which is not enough to reflect the real social status of all East Asian women. It also cannot analyze the changes in women's social status from a more professional historical, social and psychological perspective due to own major limitations. By writing this essay, it is hoped that through the superficial discussion in this article, more professional scholars will study feminism and horror films, and add more information to this perspective.

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