

A Study on the Characteristics of East Asian Horror Films

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Keywords: Horror film, Characteristics, Culture, Ghosts

Abstract: horror film contains great cultural and social value. It can effectively vent the pressure of the audience and has always occupied a place in the film market. Asian horror films have unique regional characteristics. This paper combs the typical Japanese and Korean horror films, explores their narrative characteristics, and puts forward the problems existing in the development of Asian horror films.

1. Introduction

Horror films mostly refer to the films that run through the whole film with terrorist plots and terrorist atmosphere. They often tangle with people in real life with gods and ghosts, and derive bizarre story plots to stimulate the audience and achieve terrorist effects. It can also be interpreted as a film that uses a series of stunts to make the audience feel threatened or stimulated.

Freud believes that dreams are the vent of people's unrealized desires and the emergence of people's subconscious images. Director Han Xiaolei once described the connection between dream and film in his posthumous work the art course for film directors: "dreams vent human desires and worries. Showing human dreams in films is the reproduction of human daydreams." Bunuel once said, "movies are the best way to express dreams, emotions and instincts tools for. " Watching horror films is an effective way for the audience to vent and release pressure, so horror films have always occupied a place in the film market. In Asia, due to historical, religious and cultural reasons, it has provided rich soil for the development of horror films. Taking Japan, South Korea and Thailand as examples, this paper analyzes the characteristics of Asian horror films.

2. Differences between Asian Horror Films and Western Horror Films

There are a large number of horror films in Asia, such as Japan's "Curse", "midnight bell" series, South Korea's "ghost call", "pen Fairy", Thailand's "ghost shadow", "card to Yin", "devil's art" and so on. The ugly and frightening horror images such as vampires, werewolves, aliens and aliens often used in western horror films are rare in Asian horror films. The introverted character of Oriental people has formed the characteristics of sensibility[1]. The most common horror images in Asian horror films are female ghosts. They generally have a tragic life experience and deep resentment. There are many karma behind the characters. Unlike the bloody and powerful pictures of western horror films, Asian horror films tend to create a gloomy atmosphere and create a fear atmosphere in daily life.

Japan has a long history and rich experience in making horror films, with unique shooting techniques; Korean horror films mostly take the youth campus as the place where the story takes

place, focusing on the emotional entanglement in the campus, which is slightly inferior to Japan in the rendering of horror color; Thai horror films are the most active branch in Asia in recent years.

3. Japanese Horror Films

Japan is an island country with a narrow geographical area. The closed natural environment has deeply affected the national character. They conflict the two opposing elements of man and ghost in the film, reflecting the psychological worries brought to them by Japan's natural disasters, lack of resources and fierce competition. Japan's ghost culture is very prosperous. For example, the distinctive "Yuling" is a traditional belief in Japan: in the Edo era, Kyoto people believed in different family doll gods, calling this doll "funadonokami", also known as "Yuling". "The so-called imperial spirit refers to people's belief that the real souls of generals and nobles who hate to die in this world will turn into unjust souls in the afterlife and bring disasters and diseases to people, so people are very afraid of all

The "imperial spirit" was worshipped in order to avoid disasters. It can be said that 'Yuling' is a unique contribution of Japanese horror films[2]. "In addition, there are ghosts at night, Baqi snake and so on. Japanese TV stations broadcast some programs about ghosts on the Zhongyuan festival every year to hold sacrificial activities and mourn their ancestors. Such a social atmosphere provides a good foundation for the production of horror films.

Japanese horror films rose formally in the post industrial era. Since its birth, it has had a close relationship with "female ghost", "revenge" and "resentment". Japanese horror films like to use women, children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups as the image characteristics of ghosts, and use supernatural events to express their fear of natural and man-made disasters and the actual situation. For example, the classic image in the Japanese horror film "midnight bell" -- Sadako, with black hair and a masked face, strange eyes, pale skin and distorted body. Under the weak shape, it is the heart of revenge formed by strong resentment. By watching the video tape, the core of the story of death will envelop the terrible atmosphere over daily life. In the "Curse" series, the resentment of the heroine gayezi brings innocent people into the scope of their own revenge. The urgency of revenge has become irrational killing, which to some extent reflects the extreme ghost images created for fear in Japanese horror films, and to some extent reflects the extreme cultural characteristics of Japan.

4. Korean Horror Films

South Korea ushered in the golden age of film in the middle and late 1990s, and formed its own mature and unique aesthetic style. "The long suppressed national character has formed a unique psychological logic for Koreans, and their national culture has become a culture of hatred... Based on the psychological trauma of the national subject, which can not be relieved from the external real world for a long time, it makes it seek solutions internally and bury hatred in its heart." ② Therefore, after splashing blood and twisted arms, Korean horror films expose the cruel social reality and the most real darkness in people's heart[3]. The films "dining table for four" and "rose, red lotus" are worried about the traditional family concept and family ethics under the seemingly fresh style; "Strange talk of female Gao" series, "pen Fairy" and other campus horrors are the powerless hatred of small individuals under the educational crisis; And "three watch" and "bad looks" are the presentation of the spiritual world of small people with moral degeneration and spiritual crisis. Horror films have become the tortuous reflection and disguised release of domestic contradictions and people's anxiety after the Korean financial crisis. As Marx Weber said, "what everyone sees is what is in his heart." The pen fairy of the classic series of Korean horror films is not so much a horror film as a silent complaint of the weak under the campus bullying culture[4].

Pen fairy is a kind of calling spirit game. It uses the pen as a prop to have a dialogue with the pen fairy and answer questions through the writing of the pen. Several heroines in the film, bullied by their classmates, began to plan to play with the pen fairy to attract the pen fairy and curse the bullied students. One of the girls was possessed by the pen fairy, and the bullied students also burned themselves to death one after another. The terrible setting point is the terrible tragedy of the bullies. Although the plot of the story is relatively simple, in the process of watching, the audience can feel the hatred of the weak for the strong who bully themselves and the desire for revenge with the help of external forces, even if such external forces are destructive and destructive.

5. Chinese Horror Film

Compared with Japan and South Korea, Chinese horror films show a strong religious and cultural meaning. China is a country with a strong culture. Religious culture has formed a rich and colorful world of gods and ghosts. All kinds of punished acts in hell provide a rich source of imagination for the production of horror films. Ghosts, head lowering, witchcraft and evil spirits are reflected in China's horror films one after another. Although some ghost images are also added in the western classic horror films, they are very different from the ghost images in the East, and it is difficult to define their specific characteristics. An expert in American horror film research carol defined the object of horror art as monsters that have been proved impossible by current science, such as non-human monsters, monsters pieced together through strange combinations, alien invaders and so on[5]. On the one hand, China rewrites the popular myths, legends and epics into films for a new performance; On the other hand, it integrates the thought of karma into real life, pays attention to excavating the supernatural events in real life, and emphasizes the real existence of Buddhist transmigration everywhere in ordinary life, forming a unique feature different from western horror films.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, although the horror films of Japan, South Korea and China have their own characteristics and have formed their own specific narrative methods, it can also be seen that the terrorist elements of such works are too similar. Female ghosts, revenge and bizarre bloody death have become repeated ways to create fear, and the development momentum is insufficient. An obvious example is “Zhenzi vs gayezi”, which was released in Japan in June 2016, directed by “the first person in Japanese horror film” akishi Baishi, so that the two most famous female ghosts in the history of Japanese horror film, Zhenzi and gayezi, still did not receive the expected reputation and box office, while Thailand's horror films are increasingly developing in the direction of causing physical aversion, All these show that the current Asian horror films are in a bottleneck period. Like other art forms, horror films are exploring many deep-seated relationships of things to meet people's spiritual needs. Behind every horror film is the most hidden and taboo thought in the depths of human heart, which allows the audience to interpret the goodness and ugliness of human nature and reflect the beauty and darkness of life. It is worth thinking about how to get out of the bottleneck and give full play to the external functions of Asian horror films, such as aesthetics and entertainment.

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