

East asian horror comedy



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It is a type of horror film in which the usual dark themes are treated with a humorous approach.

These films either use goofy horror clichés like in some well-known horror comedies of Hollywood such as *Scary Movie* sequels, *Little Shop of Horrors*, haunted mansion where campy styles are favored. First of all, what is a horror comedy? Obviously, it is a combination of elements from both comedy and horror fiction. Some people mistakenly confuse Horror Comedy with Black Comedy because they can resemble to some aspects but when you take a closer observation you'll know that they are quite different.

However, we can still consider black comedy as a subset of horror comedy. When people think of Horror they would rarely associate it with comedy, however they do make a great couple in crimes together.

The reason why I'd say they work so well is because the viewers need "breathers" between nonstop screaming or nonstop laughing, and one can easily segue into the other. We can break horror comedy down into three categories: horror dominant, comedy dominant, and balanced.

A "balanced" work is perhaps the most hardest to achieve, because while it has equal amounts of horror and comedy, the viewers may be so sensitive to horror it seems scarier, or so desensitizing to horror it seems funnier. In my paper I want to touch on the aspects of how Horror-comedy plays with the viewer's mind; gives us laughter one moment and you'll hear yourself screaming the next.

In general some films in this category have either their Horror or Comedy parts highlighted so the other part may seem suppressed vice-versa.

In fact they are very hard to keep them balanced mainly because they are two North and South pole different genres. It is not easy to keep them combined as a single genre. It is often hard to see well-balanced Horror. Comedy films as an early experiment but however anthropometry horror-comedies have survived and improved so much better.

The writers and filmmakers are starting to be able to balance them out equally while on the other hand being able to take more sophisticated approaches.

The main focus or attention of this essay will lean slightly more towards on the Asian horror/comedy films better than the Hollywood version. There are two Thai horror/comedy movies that I have picked to discuss that will best represent the genre itself; they are 1) Pee Make Para Shaking and 2) Pupa Rater . All of the movies are based on the Tall illogic legends but the first movie is the one that I will be expanding more on just because of the complexity of it.

Also because it is harder to understand because of along with some wartime related events in it.

Horror Comedy films in Asian countries generally have always been on the hit list for as long as I can remember. It does not have to be from a single country because in Asia we watched all other countries movie equally as if they were your own country's production. So I am talking about movies that

are basically from all over Asia, Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan, Vietnam, Mainland China, India, Cambodia, Singapore and Burma. However, when it comes to attractions in films it is hard to tell which is the best because different people are attracted to different things in a movie.

So for horror if one is more into baleful yet over the top creepiest looking ghosts then they definitely need to see Japanese spoolers which can creep you out for nearly a whole week or so, but if one is more attracted to blood and gore then their best choice would be the Korean variants. For Thailand, they do make some decent horrors that were soon re-made by Hollywood such as Shutter, Mirror, Evil Twins, One Missed Call and etc. But at least to me they did better in the horror/ comedy genres. Although most of the films didn't get credits internationally they still did pretty good within South East Asian countries.

Of the very few films that get credit internationally, I'd like to start talking about this one film that I listed in my movie choice for this paper. It's the movie called " Pee make Para Shaking " which was released earlier this year 2013. I'd like to give some plot and background information on the movie itself. So, the plot of the movie is, in the Ratification Kingdom, Make leaves his pregnant wife Nag to Join the war and tests four soldiers who become his best friends.

During this time that he's at war, his wife Nag struggles to give birth to their baby.

When the war ends, Make invites his friends to visit their village Para Shaking and meet his beautiful wife Nag. Meanwhile, rumors fly around town

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that Nag is a ghost. Of course Make does not want to admit or believe in this nonsense as he still could still touch and talk to Nag in skin and flesh at their house by the river. His four friends (the main source of humor) and villagers trying to tell or warn him that his wife is already long dead due failed child livery and that the person he is seeing and interacting at home may not even be her.

The villagers are hesitant on signing for this because there was this one incident where one of the villager tried to warn him and he died the very next day so, the rest of the villagers including his four best friends are not fully committed in telling him the truth after they have figured out by their own ways that she was truly not whom Make thought she was.

This movie was based strongly on a Thai folkloric legend called " Mae Nag Para Shaking" that has been passed down from generation to generation. Vive heard it from my grandmother when I was still a toddler.

It was the same basic storyline where the humor was not even the least bit involved. It was a very serious legend where the wife of the soldier in the legend has to be clayed by a powerful monk aka demon slayer to lay her spirit in peace because she started sneaking out to the village at night time when her husband is fast asleep taking the lives of young children of the village and actually ate them.

She disposes the bones and clothing of the kids that she consumed in the backyard buried so that her husband won't find out.

It always freaks me out whenever I think about it as a child but when I actually as if your childhood fear gone funny. So, when I go back to my country I asked my grandma why would she tell us a story that was so scary when we are still in diapers, all she had to say was " I didn't tell you the story because it is so terrifying, I just want to tell you all how powerful a mother's love can be when it comes to their own child, powerful enough to take the lives of other's children just to stay with your child and your family for a little longer" That's when I started realizing the true moral of the story embedded in it.

It was never about the baby eating zombie woman, it's about a mother who can't pass on in peace knowing that her young infant is still in desperate need of a mother. Which is the main reason for her returning from the dead in whichever state she can be in so that she could live with her child and held him in her arms for a little longer. Hence I love Asian horrors, they always have some pretty spectacular message hidden in them that is waiting to be found and understood or maybe self-reflect.

Thanks to the director of this film Banjo

Afghanistan's, this myth has been transformed from a lovelorn, terrifying, nostalgic fable to a slick comedy that affectionately teases source material deeply embedded in the Thai collective consciousness. There have been about 30 film adaptations of the story - including animation, product commercials, and even porn. Next thing I am going to talk about is on the second film of my choice. The second movie that I chose to talk about is

called Pupa Rater: which literally meant Scent of a Night Flower or Flower of the Night.

This movie is basically about vengeful mode of woman when they found out they were being played. The plot of this movie is simple where a loner but a pretty female university student named Pupa living in Bangkok was messed up by a group of bad wealthy boys trying to show off their ability in seducing girls to bed. All of them agreed that Pupa is hard to get so they do a little game between them where the winner gets a bottle of some very expensive foreign brand alcohol in the limited edition collection if he can show them prove that he slept with her.

So, eventually a guy from that group named Aka succeeded in his plans and could successfully get their sexual intercourse video taped without her knowing anything.

As he promised, he showed the rest of his friends the proof that he did it with the girl so he was termed the winner and got his prize. After some time he did received a call from her saying that she is pregnant with his child for two months but he said he'd only meet her again if she agreed on getting the baby aborted. So she did followed his instruction to get her baby aborted at the hospital.

Aka did show up at the hospital to make sure Pupa gets abortion and he drove her back to her apartment where they had sex. She told him that she was not feeling very well inside her tummy.

He pretends that he was going to get her something to eat but instead he drove away, never to return after confirming the abortion. He never has a thing for the girl Pupa so he completely cuts his relation off with her and left to England to continue his study abroad. Not long after she had died of excessive bleeding in her own bathroom due to the complications of the abortion procedure.

Before she died, she did find out that the guy was playing with her all this time when she saw their video being uploaded on the Internet for the world to see. She obviously died in a very vengeful mode full of hatred and regrets so she came back to haunt every single one involved in her case. She as a ghost form got Aka to visit her apartment where her apartment.

She purposefully chose this way to kill him and made him into a legless ghost because she thinks that is the only way to make sure that he'd be apologizing to her for the rest of his ghost eternity.

This movie obviously don't sound very much like a comedy but when you actually watch it there are lots of scenes that will give you laughter as if it was comedy. The humor or comical parts of this movie comes from the exorcist, possessions, the fake shaman, and their encounter with a real existing vengeful ghost Pupa. In fact this movie was so famous that three more sequels followed up such as Pupa Rater Phase 2 followed it: Rater Returns (2005), Rater Reborn (2009) and Rater Revenge (2010).

Now, if we take a step back in looking at the bigger picture of Asian Horrors we can see that Asian Horrors films in my opinion have never fitted to any of those pre-existing film genres especially of Hollywood. They tend to possess a

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genre of its own because it is not only something different from the usual Hollywood horror flicks but it caters to Asians and tells something about their diverse cultures. The main reason why they are hard to put in either category of genre is because Asian horrors tends be very genre bending. They would most of the time cover thriller, suspense, romance, horror, teen screams all in one.

Asian horror flicks can be broken down into six main sub categories; they are Japanese Horror aka I-horror, Filipino horror, Indian Horror, K- horror aka Korean Horror, Hong Kong horror, and finally Thai Horror. Out of the six, he three that are currently dominating the horror movie market is the J-horror, K- horror, and Thai horror. I-horror aka Japanese horrors in general dwells on youth violence, murders, and about ghosts returning from grave to haunt anyone and everyone. Japanese horrors came into prominence mostly because of Hided Angina's Ring more popularly known as " The Ring" as it hits the cinemas.

Its main intention was to target the high school girls but somehow it managed to appeal to the rest of the world. Japanese people have been known to root for horrors and tarrying folkloric myths beginning from as early as 18th century. Documenting it back to the dates of the literature and print they have all these terrifying stories even in the old sculptures dated back to asses, but who knows they might have been there earlier than history. The above said film Ring was also based on a scary folkloric tale called " The Ghost Story of Youth's".

The believe of ghosts and spirits in this country is definitely not something unusual because they are also generational. Ghost stories have been around since early ages and have been deeply embedded not only in the Japanese culture but in other Asian cultures as well.

I-horror is not very different from K-horror aka Korean horror films. With Korean horror, they tend to be more convoluted then compared to any of the three dominating the market. It is far more complex to understand because the narration, plus directing all are sort of built in to play with the viewer's mind, human psychology.

They are more perfectly structured with a proper beginning and usually ends with decent ending along with some sort of redemption made possible for the ghosts.

The dynamics of the Asian family and the Asian culture is intertwined with how each Korean horror movie works. However, I-horror fans stated that K-horror and J-horror are mostly very much alike, although not all of us agree on it. I guess the main reason why they feel that way is because the Korean horror films as with any other Asian horror flick goes back to the fairy idyllic home located near the lake, themes that point back to myths and gothic fairy tales.

Lastly, what I discovered on Thai horror is that they can be a mixture between I-horror and K-horror. We can also say that Thai horror has a more similar approach as Korean horror concerning narrative part but has more of a Japanese scary notepaper. Thai horror has a usual chillingly cryptic way of narration along with heart pumping scares like in Japanese horrors.

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Though on the contrary the I-horror usually portrays ghosts that are not a figment of the character's imagination but are very real ones which makes the movies even more raw and spine chilling.

Whereas in the Korean horror and Thai horror the ghosts majority of the times will be portrayed as a character's imaginative state, or a dream, that usually wind up as something that was not even there in the first place. In the conclusion paragraphs of my essay, I'd like to discuss on the importance of gender roles in horror films and the earliest horror/comedy film made. The earliest Asian Horror/Comedy that was made dated back to the asses called "Haunted Spooks" by Alfred J. Colluding. I personally have not watched it as yet but the one that I have watched is called Dry.

Pickle and Mr.. Pride by Scoot Pembroke. It was made in the 1925, was a spoof or parody of the Dry.

Jewell and Mr.. Hyde (1913) a movie that was made during early cinema era Cinema of Attractions period. Since then horror-comedies has been expanding and surviving ever since. I am a ass kid so the earliest and most successful Hollywood horror- comedy that I have watched as a kid was Evil dead (1981). Now I got to admit I don't find it very funny watching it as a five years old, I think I might have picked up more on its ugly brutal side of it.

Although I came to find out that it was a budgeted film the special effects make-up was pretty cool for the time so it does creeps the hell out of me. Now, re-watching this same movie for college class, I was surprised at how funny it actually is. Furthermore, there was always this one question that got stuck in my mind when watching horror movies as a child: why does it

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always have to be female ghosts? Talking about men, women, gender roles in horror films, I was back in Burma until I was 12 so most of the horror movies that Vive watched are all Asian horror flicks and they all have one thing in common.

The female ghost, never in my life I have watched an Asian horror that has a male ghost as the main ghost character, there are of course some second characters that are male ghost which appears less than 5 minutes of the entire movie.

Since then I have always wonder why does they always have to be female? How will the movie differ if the movie has a male ghost instead? To answer this there are quite a few different reasons why Asian people don't usually like to portray man as ghosts. Number one reason being in Buddhism people take man as a highly beings that are way above women.

Men has a chance and capability of becoming a God if they practice and meditate hard enough but women will never have a chance at it no matter how hard they try. While keeping that in mind, Muslims also has similar idea about males being a higher species, they wont let women enter church which is considered a sacred or holy ground. They take it as women are so unworthy to step on such ground and that they are a disgrace to the church.

Also they won't let women touch the Muslim bible when they are on period and many other more regulations that are strictly forbidden on women.

So, as a result the Asian horror movies generally don't come with male ghost figures. Second reason is vengeful and unforgiving when it comes to people

who have wronged them. Going back to the folkloric aspects, it is women who are more bonded or attached to the children, or spouse so, it was hard for them to release the ties when they die unwillingly.

Hence women are more likely to return from their grave taking vengeance or just to simply be close to the ones they do not wish to be apart; the ones they love.

Lastly to wrap up my paper I'd like to say a few things why horror comedies have survived so well since the 18th century. I don't know if you remember but we briefly talked about how genre-bending movies these days are getting more attention when we were talking about the hit movie Warm Bodies. Of course, these genre-bending works have one big problem they have to fight: avoiding jumping the shark due to mood whiplash. Avoiding this requires that the comedy or horror not break the feel of the established setting.

Slapstick in the middle of suspenseful horror, or remorselessly and humorlessly killing a character in a comedy would do this.

It might be because people are getting tired to being in a fixed category seeing the same things repetitively over and over again with little to no change made at all. But remember when I said earlier in this essay that people watch movies for their own reasons and attractions, it will never be the same so the important thing to note is that whatever it is that you are searching for in a film or what appeals in your eyes, you will continuously be attracted to it and will continue to search for it.

As for me I am so hooked to the Jump scares that horror movies (not necessarily Asian horrors only) can provide me with along with the hidden messages behind the hideous face of the ghost characters, myths and tales around it, their redemption, and everything so as long as I find them catchy I will always dig and root for horror films for as long as I live. One very important quick tip in watching a very folklore based Asian horror vie is to prepare yourself to like Vampire movies when you have never heard of vampires before in your life, you are totally going to be very lost simple as that.