

Genre paper and presentation



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Film1: The Silence of the Lambs Year: 1991 Director: Jonathan Demme Ted

Tally Stars: Jodie Foster (Clarice Starling), Anthony Hopkins (Dr. Hannibal Lecter) Film2: Ringu Year: 1998 Director: Hideo Nakata Writer: Hiroshi

Takahashi Stars: Nanako Matsushima (Reiko Asakawa), Hiroyuki Sanada

(Ryuji Takayama) Horror Genre Conventions Setting. The setting of these films worked to establish the scary atmosphere where the stories take place.

“ The Silence...” was set in modern day America. Shooting locations include an asylum hospital, an FBI office, and the labyrinth-like office of the killer. “

Ringu”, meanwhile, was set in both rural and urban modern day Japan. The flashback scenes, however, were set in rural 1940s Japan. Scenes were shot in traditional Japanese houses, an old cabin, and a newspaper organization.

Characterization. Both the hero and villain in ““ The Silence...”” possessed characteristics not typical of those found in most horror films. While the

victim in most horror films is a woman, the woman in “ The Silence...” is a hero. She is not perfect though because she still possesses weaknesses

which she covers up with a strong facade. The villain, meanwhile, is an educated, cultured, refined man - not the usual scary-looking monster types

in most horror films. In “ Ringu”, the hero is also a woman who somewhat becomes a villain when she committed an evil act in the last sequence of the

film. The villain in this film is the monster type - a woman dressed in white, hair covering the entire face, with eyes rolled up. Conflict. The conflict in

these films arises from an act the villain commits which disrupts the peaceful lives of the people. A hero will appear to solve the conflict and bring back the

equilibrium in life. The conflict in “ The Silence...” lies in looking for the killer to save the girl, which means the hero must establish a congenial

relationship with the villain to get clues about the killer. In “ Ringu”, the

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curse of the video tape must be lifted in order to save the lives of those who saw it. Resolution. The conflict in both films was temporary resolved. The girl was saved in “ The Silence...” but the villain escaped prison. The hero and her child were saved in “ Ringu” but the video tape will continue to spread the curse. What makes these films more terrifying than other films is the fact that the villains were not conquered and, therefore, will continue to commit horrifying acts. Editing. Both films utilized effective editing techniques in introducing scary scenes and amplifying the fear evoked by those scenes. The feeling of fear that accompanied the scenes where the villain escaped and the killer was entrapped was accomplished through parallel editing, in which two events seem to happen at the same time. Some scenes in “ Ringu” were shocking simply because of the proper timing of cutting and joining scenes together. Cinematography. These films used different camera angles, distance, and movement. To show the emotions and feelings of the characters in “ The Silence...”, close-ups were used. This method evokes a feeling of intimacy for the characters: sympathy for the hero and hostility towards the villain. Whereas the camera in “ The Silence...” was mobile and fluid, the camera in “ Ringu” didn't move as much. This technique enabled the scary atmosphere to slowly unfold while the audience gets slowly immersed in it. Watching “ Ringu”, then, is like being in the same setting and experiencing the same emotions as the characters did in the film. Lighting. The films used varying shades, tones, and colors to portray horrific scenes. The villain in “ The Silence...” was usually partly-lit from above creating shadows under his eyes and, therefore, emphasizing his terrifying looks and stares. The shade of blue was apparent in most scenes in “ Ringu”. A scene in the cursed video tape was shaded in blue. The scenes inside the dimly-lit

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Japanese houses were also in blue. I think this technique unified the events in the tape and the events in the film creating a singular world of horror.

Sound and Music. These elements serve to intensify the feelings and emotions conveyed in scenes. Classical music was playing in the background as the villain commits acts of violence in “ The Silence...”. “ Ringu”, meanwhile, has some high-pitched sound effects that seemed to have come from a string instrument. Sound effects were particularly useful in this film as it served to make scenes more shocking.

Themes Transformation in The Silence of the Lambs. The film explores the transformation not just of the killer but the hero herself with a little help from the villain. The killer who was disgusted by his being male wanted to become a woman by wearing the skin of his victims. The hero, for her part, wanted to establish a career in a male-dominated discipline and, more importantly, 'silence' the 'screaming lambs' of her past. To accomplish the hero's transformation, she needed to forge a congenial relationship with the villain who will help her in both becoming an FBI agent and resolving her childhood issues. The film contained scenes that portrayed this theme. In the final sequences of the film, the killer was dancing in the nude, fully made up and ready to wear the 'skin' dress he has sewn together. His death symbolized his liberation from his male body; he is now free to transform into a woman. The scenes in the elevator and autopsy room, meanwhile, showed how the hero struggled with male domination. The conversation scene between the hero and the villain where the former revealed her childhood issues to the latter signaled the beginning of her transformation. Her transformation was completed when he saved the girl and metaphorically 'silenced' the lambs. The Cycle of Evil in “ Ringu”. The English title of “ Ringu” is " Ring" which, I think, connotes the theme of an

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endless cycle of evil. The video tape which, when viewed, inflicts a curse on its viewer which will eventually lead to death after exactly one week. The exact origin of the tape can't be pinpointed but the film suggests that it is a product of the villain's vengeance. The key to breaking the curse was revealed in the last sequences of the film. The person who viewed the film must make a copy of the video and show it to another person to lift the curse. And the cycle continues. In one scene in the film, while the hero was thinking about what she did to lift the curse, a ghost of her ex-husband pointing to the copy of the video tape was reflected on the TV. After realizing what the ghost of her husband meant, she took the tape and made a copy. The film ended in a scene where the hero was driving to see her father and telling him to do a favor for his grandson - view the video tape.

Genre Elements from Directors It is said that the only defining characteristic of the horror genre is its ability to evoke feelings of fear, terror, and anxiety from the audience. In both “ The Silence...” and “ Ringu”, the directors were able to evoke that kind of feeling. Director Jonathan Demme was able to create the horror in “ The Silence...” through the psychologically-tensed screenplay, Anthony Hopkins' terrifying performance, and the camera, light, and sound techniques. Director Hideo Nakata of “ Ringu”, on the other hand, established the well-crafted video tape and Sadako (villain) as icons of horror. The horror in “ Ringu” lies not in bloody monsters or special effects but in the entire atmosphere of the film which is alienated, scary, and eerie all at the same time.