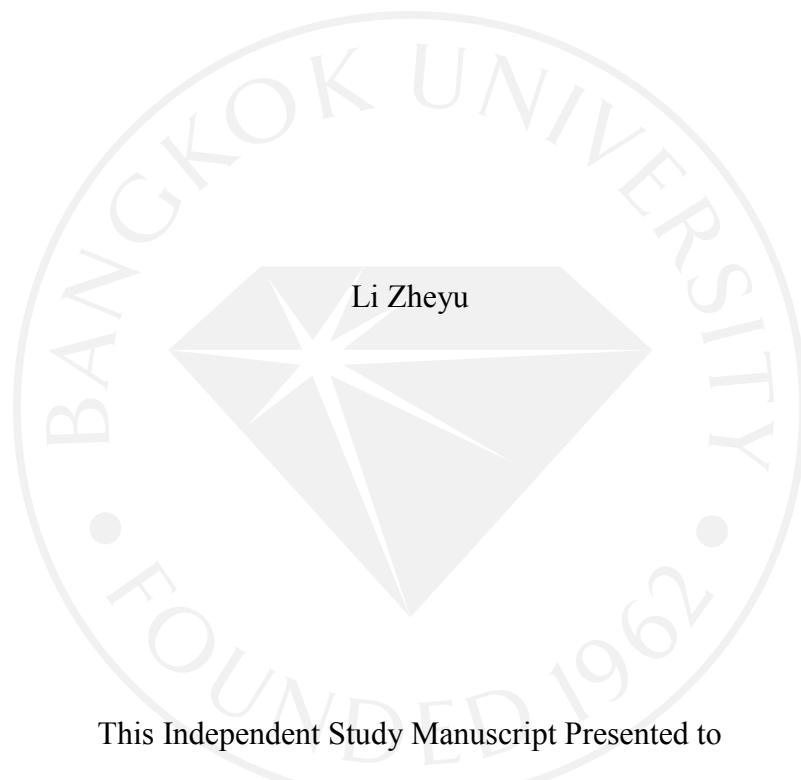


THE KEY ELEMENTS OF HORROR FILMS:  
COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THAILAND AND CHINA



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The key elements of horror films: Comparative study between Thailand and China (82  
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### ABSTRACT

This research is focus on the key elements of horror film and national culture. The objectives of research are finding key elements in China and Thailand horror film and compare the culture of China and Thailand horror film. Six horror films from China and Thailand had been selected to be sample from 2008 to 2017. They are *The house that never dies* (2014), *Who in the mirror* (2012), *Mysterious Face* 2013, *Pee Mark* (2013), *The Snow White* (2010), and *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* (2009). This study also combined with Greet Hofstede's culture dimensions to explore the similarity and differences of Chinese and Thai horror film.

The ghost events in Chinese horror film always occur at night and the image of ghost always female. Chinese horror film has defects on narrative logic.

The ghost events in Thailand horror film mainly occur at night and the image of ghost in different ages and gender besides female. The tone of Thailand horror film is humorous.

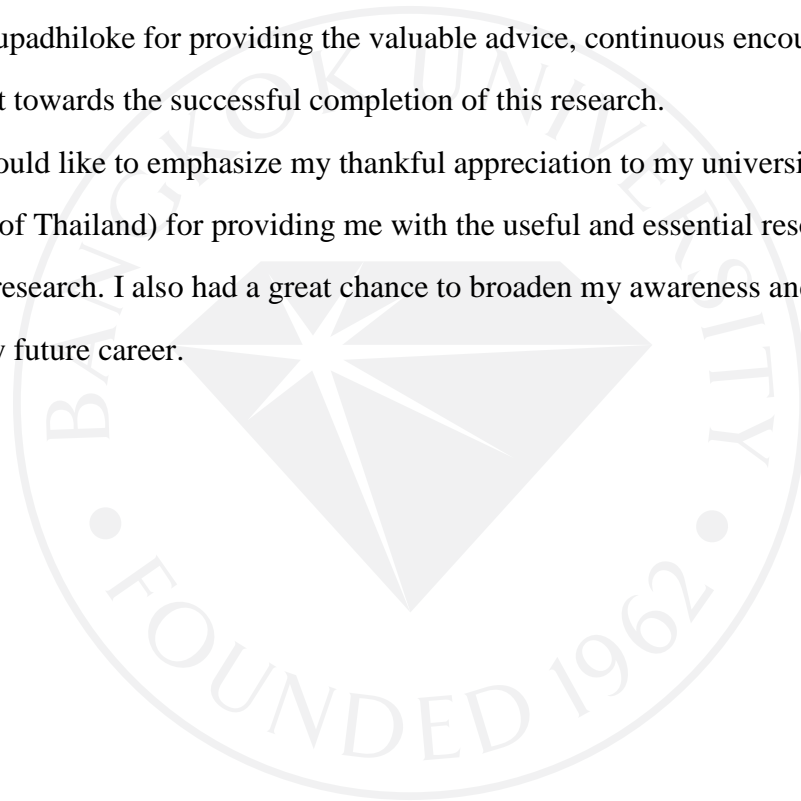
*Keywords: Chinese horror film, Thailand horror film, Elements, Culture*

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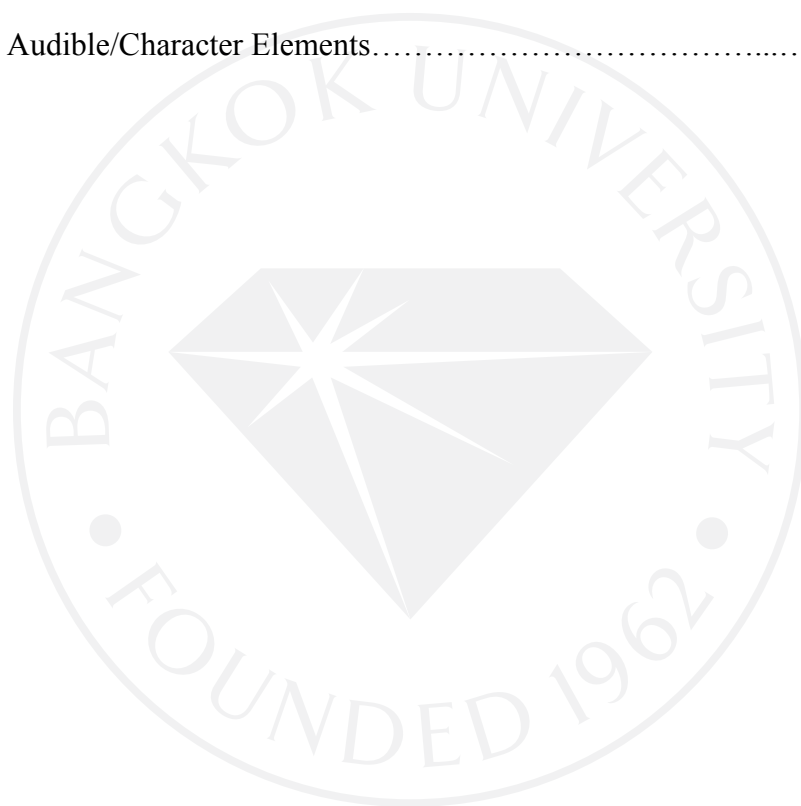
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction of the Study

Horror films, as a genre of film, have attracted a great deal of the audience's interest since it was created. Fear and curiosity often go hand in hand; people in the face of unknown things with curiosity, and as well in the face of unfamiliar situations have physical and psychological fear. This is why the terrible things have a special attraction to people, but also the feeling of fear can be sold as the entertainment industry.

Horror film, defined by Encyclopedia Britannica (2018), motion picture calculated to cause intense repugnance, fear, or dread. Horror films may incorporate incidents of physical violence and psychological terror; they may be studies of deformed, disturbed, psychotic, or evil characters; stories of terrifying monsters or malevolent animals; or mystery thrillers that use atmosphere to build suspense. *The Devil's Castle* is an 1896 French short silent film directed by Georges Méliès, which is the first horror film over the world, and became the enlightened of horror films.

#### 1.2 Rationale and Statement of Problem

Since 1913, Chinese horror film, in the horror film themes, performance techniques, story lines and clothing props and so, has a great change. From the early ancient literature horror films adapted from *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* to horror film which influenced by Western horror film themes, shooting technology in recent years, the Chinese screenwriters combined Chinese traditional culture and ideas to create a lot of films with Chinese characteristics. However, due to the impact of relevant regulations by State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), the development of the Chinese horror film is slow and lack of innovation. Horror film's overall reputation is not very good.

While the Thai horror movies show a trend of rapid development. After 1997, Thailand through the Asian financial crisis, the film industry also fully recovered. The large-scale invasion of Europe and the United States film, in early years, accelerated the decline of local film in Thailand, the issues of film, art and commercial integration have also been put on the agenda, so in Thailand, a local revival movement of Thai film "New Wave" had been started (Ainslie, & Ancuta, 2014). Due to the uniqueness of its traditional culture and the characteristics of Buddhism, the horror film of Thailand has attracted the attention of global audiences. In 1999, it was *Nang Nak* (Nimibutr, 1999) a retelling of the classic Thai ghost story – that became the first ever Thai film to find a foreign distributor. Productions such as *Shutter* (Pisanthanakun and Wongpoom, 2004), *Coming Soon* (Sukdapisit, 2008) and *Pee Mak* (Pisanthanakun, 2013) also caused a great sensation.

Within such rapid growth, the notable success and frequency of the horror genre in Thai film makes it a cornerstone of contemporary Thai cinema, and one that is therefore strongly representative of this industry, film style and wider Thai cultural logics.

### 1.3 Research Objective

The basic purpose of this study is to examine how different culture coded by key elements in the horror film. The specific objectives are:

- a. To find the key elements and explore the meaning of special semiotics in China and Thailand horror movie.
- b. To compare the culture of China and Thailand horror movie.

### 1.4 Scope of study

Since this qualitative study is limited to the cultural comparative study and symbolic analysis of the horror films between China and Thailand, the films selected must be horrifying films from China and Thailand, which have received much attention in recent years. I chose 6 horror films which include 3 Chinese horror films

during 2007 to 2017, which are *The house that never dies* (2014), *Who in the mirror* (2012), and *Mysterious Face* (2013). And another 3 Thailand horror film are *Pee Mak* (2013), *The Snow White* (2010), and *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* (2009).

In order to study the cultural implications of elements in horror films, I chose the Semiotic theory of communication theory. At the same time, the Hofstede culture dimension theory was used to analyze the different reasons of Chinese and Thai culture. Through the analysis of the key elements of the film, we found the connection with culture.

The key independent variable is cultural dimensions and the dependent variable is key elements of horror films.

### 1.5 Research Questions

There are two research questions that used to research the difference of key elements of horror films between Thailand and China:

Research Question # 1: How key elements in horror film reflect Chinese culture?

Research Question # 2: How key elements in horror film reflect Thailand culture?

Research Question # 3: What are the differences and similarities between Chinese and Thailand reflect the culture in a horror film?

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

Learning different cultures can help us understand other countries. Cultural differences are not only differences in customs, but also include differences in living environment, religious beliefs and historical allusions. Through the comparative study of culture, we can recognize the advantages of others as well as our own lack of. In the Chinese movie market, horror films not only failed to attract the audience, but instead were criticized locally or even disappointed. Thai horror films not only attract the attention of Thai audiences, but also exert some influence on the world. Through

the comparative study of the horror films between China and Thailand, the following meanings are obtained:

Firstly, through the exploration of the deep meaning represented by symbolic elements, we can understand the positive and negative cultures of China and Thailand and help the audience understand the cultural differences between the two countries. Then get better communication.

Second, since Chinese horror films are relatively backward in comparison with Thai horror films, in order to better improve and enhance the quality of Chinese horror films and compare the horror films of the two countries, we can gain effective experience from Thailand and Amazing creativity. Help the development of Chinese horror film.

### 1.7 Definition of Terms

#### 1.7.1 Horror Film:

A horror movie is film that have gloomy atmosphere horrible theme and include some violence and deliberately that make the audience horrified. According to the object, the horror movie contains three types of objects, namely:

- a. Fear of modern science;
- b. Fear of supernatural forces (of or relating to an order of existence beyond the visible observable universe; especially: of or relating to God or a god, demigod, spirit, or devil);
- c. Fear of the often threatening alien force of reality.

1.7.2 Chinese Horror Film: This term refers to the film produced by a Chinese company. Include *The house that never dies* (2014), *Who in the mirror* (2012), and *Mysterious Face* (2013) in this research.

1.7.3 Thailand Horror Film: This term refers to the film produced by Thailand company. Include *Pee Mak* (2013), *The Snow White* (2010), and *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* (2009) in this research.

1.7.4 Scene: In this study, scene means that the place where an action or event, real or imaginary, occurs. It's included continuous action in one place, a single situation or unit of dialogue in a play. For example, one of the scene is the bride, wearing a traditional Chinese red wedding dress--phoenix coronet and robes of rank, and used chickens instead of dead people to come to chapel married. Such scenes include many Chinese elements such as traditional Chinese wedding decorations, the old Chinese marriage thoughts and the feudal belief of ghost wedding, moreover Chinese collectivism.

1.7.5 Character: An individual's or group's, or nation's attributes or features. It refers to the different personalities, both Chinese and Thai actors convey their emotion.

1.7.6 Culture: According to Merriam Webster (2017), culture is defined as the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. In this study, Chinese and Thai culture refers to religion, customs, apparel, folk, etc.

1.7.8 Elements of films: in this study, the elements of films contained by two groups, esthetic elements and technical elements. Since this study is related to cultural studies, research and elaboration are focusing on literary, visual and sound design. Some elements are summarized as follows. They include environment, location, time, event, costuming, religion, custom, ghost and music, dialogue.

1.7.9 Semiotic: Merriam Webster (2017) defined the semiotic with the study of signs and symbols and how they are used. From Christoph Biemann (2017), the semiotic of films use a kind of pictures and sounds to convey the information. In order to explore what kind of semiotics belong to the key elements of the film under study, researcher look for semiotics such as raining from the above environment element.

1.7.10 Folk belief: Folk belief is a kind of cultural phenomenon inherited, developed, evolved and extended to the present since the primitive society. It is a

kind of similar and fundamental difference with human religion (Xiang Bosong, 2011).

1.7.11 Cultural dimensions: Hofstede divided National culture (The set of norms, behaviors, beliefs and customs that exist within the population of a sovereign nation.) into six dimensions. The cultural dimensions represent independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries (rather than individuals) from each other. The six dimensions are 1) power distance index 2) masculinity versus femininity, 3) individualism versus collectivism, 4) long-term orientation versus short-term normative orientation, 5) uncertainty avoidance index, and 6) indulgence versus restraint (The Hofstede Center, 2017).

1.7.11.1 Power Distance Index (PDI): This term was defined by Hofstede as the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (The Hofstede Center, 2017).

1.7.11.2 Individualism: This term can be defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families.

1.7.11.3 Collectivism: it is represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

1.7.11.4 Masculinity: Hofstede think it represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive.

1.7.11.5 Femininity: This term stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

1.7.11.6 Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI): It is expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.



Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour, and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

1.7.11.7 Short-Term Orientation: This dimension is focused on the present or past and consider them more important than the future. In this culture, they value tradition, the current social hierarchy and fulfilling your social obligations. They care more about immediate gratification than long-term fulfillment.

1.7.11.8 Long-Term Orientation: This dimension is focused on the future. In this culture, people are willing to delay short-term material or social success or even short-term emotional gratification in order to prepare for the future. They value persistence, perseverance, saving and being able to adapt (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

1.7.11.9 Indulgence: This term stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun.

1.7.11.10 Restraint: This term stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Horror films

Horror films almost as old as films itself. *Roundhay Garden Scene* (Prince, 1888) is considered the first film over the world. Then, *The Le manoir du diable* (1896) shot by Georges Méliès became the first horror film in the history of film, even it is only two minutes. The film appeared the bats into the people, summon evil spirits, white skeleton and other early appalling scenes. During the next 30 years, much more creativity has become available in horror film's theme. The most famous one is *Frankenstein* (Dawley, 1910) which was the first motion.

In the early 1900s, there are many horror films produced by expressionist in Germany. *The Student of Prague* (Wegener & Rye, 1913) which was seen as a model of schizophrenia horror films. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Wiene, 1920) describes Caligari's life that is both a psychology doctor and a murderer with a dual identity. Roger Ebert (2009), American movie critic, believed that *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is the first true horror film. "Caligari creates a Mindscape, a subjective psychological fantasy. In this world, unspeakable horror becomes possible" he said. Another film that has a great influence on modern horror films is *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922). *Nosferatu* is a silent movie based on Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897). Roger Ebert (2011) believed that this film doesn't scare us, but it haunts us. The reason is the artistry, ideas, atmosphere and images have a creative change. Follow-up vampire films are almost created based on *Nosferatu*. In addition, there are *Warning Shadows* (Robison, 1923), *Waxworks* (Leni & Birinsky, 1924) and many more silence horror films are laid a foundation of Hollywood horror films.

In 1930s, the horror films produced by Universal Pictures, one of the biggest film company with the history of the second longest in Hollywood, opened the Hollywood horror movie era. There are two classical horror movies called the early

talkie. One is *Dracula* (Browning, 1931), and another one is *Frankenstein* (Whale, 1931). In these two films, the German expressionist style coupled with the horror of the sound effects creates a nightmare world in Hollywood.

Until the development of Hollywood film to 1940s, Frankenstein, ghosts, vampires, zombies, humanoid animals and other horror images appeared on the big screen. These horror themes mostly rooted in Western novels, drama, poetry or folklore. At that time, the horror films brought the audio-visual fear to audiences through the actor's horror makeup, ferocious facial expressions and disturbing sound. It is worth mentioning that in 1949, the film *Yotsuya kaidan* from Japanese director Keisuke Kinoshita, which is based on the same name dance adaptation from Nanboku Tsuruya, opened the prelude to the Japanese horror film. At that time the rise of Kabuki promoted the prosperity of the script creates. Moreover, the story comes from the folk, so some of the legend of the ghosts appeared on the screen after the packaging of playwrights.

During the World War II, the horror film was still popular even it had been relegated to strictly B-film status. After being threatened by nuclear weapons, the fear of the destruction of the world was increasing, and several horror films that show the end of the world appeared in Hollywood. There were emerged two subgenres: The Doomsday film and the Demonic film. This new science fiction horror film combines the brutal history of war and science fiction. What famous films are Japanese nuclear monster *Godzilla* (Honda, 1954), *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (Arnold, 1954) and *Invasion of the body snatchers* (Siegel, 1956). At the same time, in the United Kingdom there are violent and sex horror films, such as *The Curse of Frankenstein* (Fisher, 1957), and *Horror of Dracula* (Fisher, 1958) and so on.

In the 60s, Hitchcock's film *Psycho* (1960) has brought great changes in Hollywood horror film. The theme of horror film turned the ghosts, specter, aliens, and crazy scientists to describe the heart of people. This is the first time that horror film begins to pay attention to real-life. The late 1960s to the 1970s were a period of

turbulence in American history. The suspicion of controversy over the Vietnam War has brought American society into an unprecedented split. The birth of the *Night of the Living Dead* (Romero, 1968) ironed and criticized the American social phenomenon. *Night of the Living Dead* (Romero, 1968) that have a lot of bloody scenes had been strongly criticized at the time because of its too real content, but after three decades the US Library of Congress included this film and others in the US national film roster on the grounds of “It's really (inclusive of) films that are historically, culturally or aesthetically important in any way.” The success of *Night of the Living Dead* (Romero, 1968) brought a large number of slasher spring up in Hollywood between 1970s and 1980s, such as *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Hooper, 1974), *Halloween* (Carpenter, 1978), and *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* (Cunningham, 1980) etc.

In the 90s and modern, in the wrapped with increasingly strong business atmosphere, the Hollywood film followed the preferences of the public, and constantly set off a boom on the screen. While Hollywood horror film drawn more widely. With the development of hardware technology, the film's story imagination and visual shock are also gradually improved. The psychological horror films which more modern well-known, such as *Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991), *Se7en* (Fincher, 1995), *The Sixth Sense* (Shyamalan, 1999), *The Others* (Amenábar, 2001) and *The Ring* (Verbinski, 2002) have remained popular through 2000s.

In addition, it is worth mention that the contribution of Japan in the history of the world horror film. Early Japanese horror films were mostly adapted from folk literary works. The more familiar Japanese horror film has been a modern horror film since the 1990s. *Ring* (Nakata, 1998), *Dark Water* (Nakata, 2002), *Ju-on: The Grudge* (Shimizu, 2003) and *One Missed Call* (Miike, 2003), all of them contain pale, stringy-haired female ghosts, often crawling or walking with awkward, stilted movements and sometimes emitting a guttural, croaking noise. These were called the classic horror film stimulated the audience in the vision and auditory sense, and set

off the trend of Japanese horror film.

## 2.2 Thailand horror films

The cinema date back to 1897, when King Chulalongkorn visits to Bern, Switzerland. He brought the movie and cinema equipment back to Thailand. And he initiated the trip of Thailand film. When the end of the Second World War, the film industry gradually recovered. Early Thai films such as *Mae Nak Phra Khanong* (Gomarchun, 1959) and the *Krasue Sao* (Naowaratch, 1973) were adapted from ancient folk tales and left a deep image of the audience.

After 1997, the real type of Thailand horror film had formed and developed. The outbreak of the Asian financial crisis has a huge impact on Thailand's economy. In this context, as a mirror reflects anxiety of the times, expresses fear, releasing emotions of anxiety and suitable for Thai people, at that time, began to establish a horror movie market. Until that time, horror films were beginning to take shape and gradually develop. In 1999, the horror film *Nang Nak* directed by Thailand director Nonzee Nimibutr had gotten great success in artistic and commercial markets, and inevitably affect later Thailand horror development model. Especially, *Nang Nak* (Nimibutr, 1999) stimulated development of Thailand horror films type. Remarkably, the film of *Shutter* (Pisanthanakun and Wongpoom, 2004) went on to become the highest grossing Thai movie for 2004. While its subject matter and context can be attributed to a particular New Thai cinema motif, its narrative structure is influenced by global horror trends (Ancuta, 2011, p45, p53). It can be seen from this that Thai horror films are blending with world culture on the premise of preserving their own style.

Thai movie productions such as, *Coming Soon* (Sukdapisit, 2008) and *See prang* (Pisanthanakun & Purikitpanya, 2008) all demonstrate the continued relevance of traditional Thai culture and contemporary Thailand.

### 2.3 Chinese horror films

The beginning of the Chinese horror film began with director Zhang Shichuan. The 20 minutes' short film *Bride Meets Ghost* (Zhang, 1913), which focused on the performance of the ghost and the sense of tension that ghost pursued people, was considered the embryonic form of Chinese horror film. The early horror film belongs to Chinese first generation director's innovation and try. For instance, China's first long story film and horror film *Yan Ruisheng* (Ren, 1921), *Zhang Xinsheng* (Zhang, 1922), *An Odd Manservant* (Ma-xu, 1926), and praised by the audience *Hun shi mo wang* (Ma-xu, 1926). Until *Song at Midnight* (Ma-xu, 1937) released in 1937, China's horror film has been pushed to the first peak. The film broke the 1937 domestic film box office record. And Ma-xu also laid the special status of 'horror film authority'.

With the founding of New China in 1949, the Chinese film industry was incorporated into the state-owned planned economy. Now the film's commercial and entertainment is greatly reduced, and affected by political factors. Except for *The Bell Rings From An Old Temple* (Zhu, 1958) to reflect the ferocious temple arhat, the weird gloomy old monk, black and white fuzzy picture, and frightening sound effects, there is no other horror film appears.

China's horror film has been in a state of tepidity, on the one hand is influenced by the traditional Confucian culture. Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, said that the child not talk about the disorderly god of the strange power. What meaning is to educate people do not believe that this feudal superstition. So even if the Chinese horror film has a strange phenomenon, in the end, it will also use scientific methods to explain clearly. On the other hand, due to the provisions of the film review standards by SARFT prohibit the contents of the promotion of superstition, as well as mixed murder, violence, terror, ghosts, supernatural. In addition, which include excessive horror picture, dialog, background music and the sound effects should be modified or deleted (2008). Therefore, most of the real theme of the horror movie more to begin to set up suspense, attached to the name of the

ghosts, but the final outcome is people making trouble, there is no ghosts at all. This led to the Chinese film industry in such a prosperous era, China has not been able to shoot a horror film to shock to the world.

#### 2.4 Elements of films

To analyze and write or talk about movies, we need to start with a clear understanding of filmic components are used for the story. A film is the successful combination of two distinct groups of elements: (1) the esthetic elements that transform the craft into an art and (2) the technical elements by which the film is made (camera, visual, sound and editing). (Bobker, 1974)

First, the esthetic element is transfer the literary to art. Through all forms to create a real, the film became an art (Robbe-Grillet, 1962). Literary design consists of the story ideas and the script. The story ideas include the characters and their actions in the story, the setting of the story, and any background story or subtext. The script includes the dialog and some broad actions for the characters. A film script is usually as a basic idea; it reflects the writer's thought. It is advisable to study the film first to start from the script, because the script plays a guiding role in film production. The director gets the text material, transforms it into a film, and gives it life. The script in the film, the relationship is like a springboard, the art of the film that is generated.

Second, explain more detail with technical elements.

- a. Camera. Cinematography deals with the choices that are made for the camera, the placement of the camera, the camera angle to the subject, the lens choice, and the camera movement. Each of these choices influences the recorded image and how the viewer perceives (consciously or unconsciously) that image. The quality of a film in the final analysis depends on the quality in all aspects. And film photography has a direct impact on the film viewing effect. This is also an important element of the film element. (Bobker, 1974, p.71-75).

- b. Visual design. Visual consists of what we see on screen, a very broad category of components. Not only the actor's performance, but also includes costume that can highlight the age, hair and makeup can strengthen the narrative, different lighting and set design (Bobker, 1974, p.51-53).
- c. Sound. Sound deals with the sound components, what we hear in the film. The cinema was originally limited to the visual image of the audience. An Early silent film with piano music background, also can feel the film wanting to express the emotions with the melody and the screen match the change. With the birth of the first sound film in 1927, the sound as a special element in the subsequent development of more and more important. Dialog editing, sound effects, and music contribute to the story. Mood, environment, character, time and place are just a few of the story aspects that can be established or emphasized with sound (Bobker, 1974, p.83-84).
- d. Editing. Editing is the sequencing of the shots in the film. Editors decide on the order and the duration of shots, the visual transitions from scene to scene, and visual effects. The editors have two major contributions to the story. The first is the sequencing of shots in terms of how the audience “reads” the film. The second is the pacing of the film, which helps establish the overall feeling or mood (Bobker, 1974, p.115).

As this paper focuses on the study of intercultural film elements contrast, so I will exclude the professional film operating factors, focusing on literary, visual and sound design to research and narrative.

### 2.5 Hofstede's Cultural dimensions

Before talks about the Hofstede's cultural dimensions, we need to know what culture is. Goes Hofstede, a Dutch sociologist and psychologist think about that



culture is the software of our minds. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1966) stated “laid the foundation of the view...that communication constitutes the core of culture...” (p.1). Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), well-known anthropologists, identified there are six dimensions of culture (nature of people, relationship with nature, duty towards others, the mode of activity, privacy of space, and temporal orientation). Culture is a group in a long time through common language and common habits developed invisible rules. Culture has in common, but it is unique.

In 1980 Geos Hofstede published his book --*Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. In this book, he used the concept of dimension of culture. The dimension of culture is a framework proposed by Hofstede to measure cultural differences in different countries. The study was initially based on data from a large-scale global survey of IBM in the 1960s to the 1970s. At first, Hofstede divided the values of different cultures into four basic dimensions: power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity.

In the 1980s, based on research by Canadian psychologist Michael Harris Bond's comparative Study of Eastern and Western Cultures, a fifth dimension 'Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation' was added (Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

In the 2000s, research by Bulgarian scholar Michael Minkov using data from the World Values Survey (Minkov, 2007), and the addition of a sixth dimension (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

For a better understanding of Hofstede's Cultural dimensions, it will take an overview of each other and explain their differences (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

### 2.5.1 Power Distance Index (PDI)

Power Distance has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The difference of power distance is reflected by the Power Distance Index (PDI). In a society with a large power distance, PDI index is high, people accept a strong hierarchy, communicate instructions through orders

between superiors and subordinates, parents and children. The power distance is small and the PDI is low. People accept a weaker hierarchy. Use of power should be legitimate and is subject to the criteria of good and evil. People can be equal with others.

Chinese PDI is 80, that is, China is a society in which most people accept inequality. The subordinate-superior relationship tends to be polarized and there is no defense against power abuse by superiors. People should not expect anything beyond their rank. While the PDI index is less than average Asian countries (71) in Thailand in 64. Like China, inequality is also accepted in society. Each rank has its privileges and employees show loyalty, respect and deference for their superiors in return for protection and guidance (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

#### 2.5.2 Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

Individualism can be defined as the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. Individualism tends to the social relations between people is loose. People in this social tend to care more about themselves and small families; but collectivism tendencies of the community are concerned about the relationship within the group. Individuals in this social must be loyal to the community. A society's position on this dimension is reflected in whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "we."

With a same score of 20 China and Thailand are a highly collectivist country where people act in the interests of the group and not necessarily of themselves. Personal relationships prevail over the task and company in China. Same with China, Thailand is a highly collectivist culture where people are not confrontational and in their communication, a "Yes" may not mean an acceptance or agreement. The relationship between people is paramount (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

#### 2.5.3 Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)

In this dimension, Hofstede indicated that Masculinity represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success.

Society at large is more competitive. Its opposite, Femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. The tendency of masculine/feminine is measured by the Masculinity Dimension Index (MDI). The greater the value of MDI, the more obvious the masculine tendency of the society and the more prominent male temperament; on the contrary, it shows that the female temperament prominent.

In 66 China, which higher than the world average of 50, China is a Masculinity country. Chinese pursue the success of the business, emphasize materialism, and had been greatly appreciated that image of through their own efforts to achieve the success. They can even ignore the family and individual quality of life because of their careers. They need to be successful is the fact, so at the expense of family and free time to work overtime. Competition in China is very intense, success is the most important. While in Thailand 34, means that Thailand is a Feminine society. Thailand has the lowest Masculinity ranking among the average Asian countries of 53. Social gender roles in Thailand society overlap each other, so transgender in Thai films often appear as important symbols. Furthermore, in the Feminine society, the Thai people pay attention to the quality of life. (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

#### 2.5.4 Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

The Uncertainty Avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. Its strength is reflected by the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI). A culture that encourages its members to overcome and develop the future can be seen as a strong uncertainty avoidance culture. Otherwise, social culture that educate their members to accept the risks, learn to endure, accept the different behavior can be seen as a weak uncertainty avoidance culture. The country has a strong uncertainty avoidance likes the written rules and regulations, conservative legal order. They don't like adventure and innovation, and resistance to change. However, the country has a weak uncertainty

avoidance is less resistant to change. They have an open mind, and can hold conflict and compete and use it.

China scores 30 in this dimension, which means that it is a weak UAI society. The uncertainty inherent in life is accepted, and each day is taken as it comes. The Chinese are comfortable with ambiguity; the Chinese language is full of ambiguous meanings that can be difficult for Western people to follow. And at intermediate 63 Thailand is slightly tend to Uncertainty Avoidance. To minimize or reduce this level of uncertainty, strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations are adopted and implemented. (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

#### 2.5.5 Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO)

Long term orientation and short-term orientation reflect a nation's values of long-term interests and short-term interests. It is indicated that a society's decision-making is influenced by traditional and past events or by the present or future. This dimension was summarized after Hofstede and other scholar's study of Confucianism. Short time orientation society prefers to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. In Long time orientation society, on the other side, they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

At a score of 87 China is a very pragmatic culture. They can adapt traditions easily to changed conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest, thriftiness, and perseverance in achieving results. Different from China, with a low score of 32, means Thailand is a normative country. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results (The Hofstede Centre, 2017).

#### 2.5.6 Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

The sixth and new dimension is Indulgence and Restraint. Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that

controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

As we can see, china is a Restraint country with low score of 24. People in this society have a perception of helplessness: what happens to me is not my own doing. And they feel leisure is lower importance. Especially in China have stricter sexual norms. However, with an intermediate score of 45, a preference on this dimension cannot be determined in Thailand. But at least Thailand is more indulgent than China (Hofstede Centre, 2017).

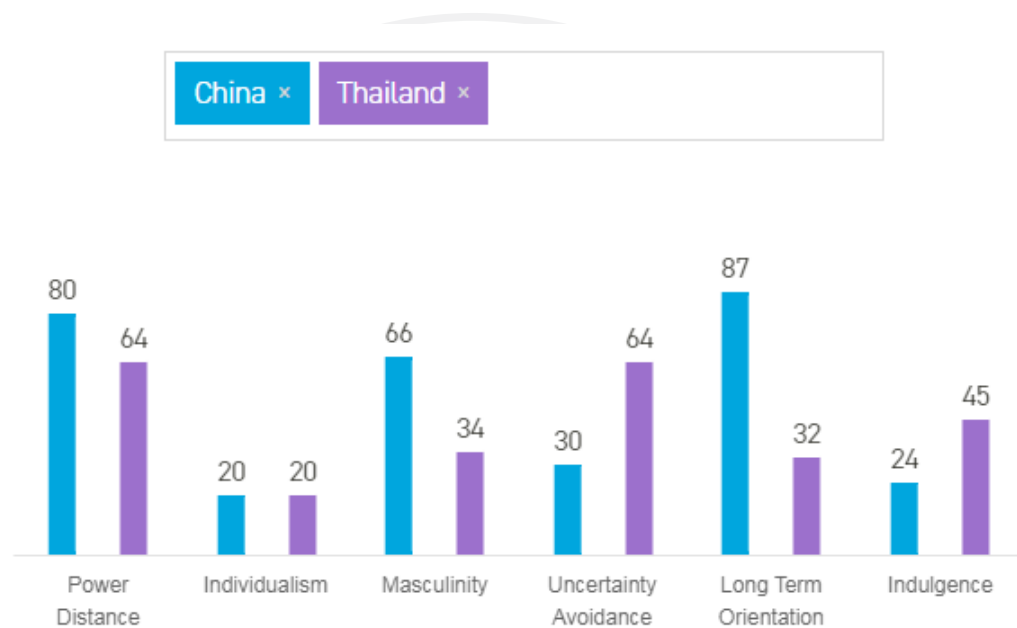


Figure 2.1: The Comparison of China and Thailand Culture through the Lens of the 6-D Model ©

Source: The Hofstede Centre. (2017). *China in comparison with Thailand*. Retrieved from <https://geert-hofstede.com/china.html>

## 2.6 Culture of Thailand and China

By Integrating the Lens of the 6-D Model, Figure 2.1 shows that although China and Thailand belong to Asian countries. However, due to geographical location, traditional culture, management policy and other factors, China and Thailand have the differences on five cultural dimensions except Individual. It is precisely because of the closing geographical location, the two cultures have a better blend,

communication and influence.

In the late 1980s, the political scientist Joseph Nye created the term “soft power”. In 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007, Chinese President Hu Jintao emphasizes the need to enhance the Chinese culture as the country’s soft power. Since then the idea of soft power significantly emerged in the field of international relations as well as the arena of media, and has played a crucial role in shaping the Chinese government’s policy. On December 12, 2012, the film *Lost in Thailand* released in China had acquired cumulative box office up to 1 billion yuan. And there were more than 30 million people viewed it (set record). The film became the first film in the history of the Chinese box office over 1 billion Chinese films. As the film shoot in Thailand, and humorous and vivid plot attracted a large number of Chinese visitors to travel to Thailand. China’s influence in Thailand in the cultural dimension can also be seen in the advent of the China Cultural Center and of Chinese media, including radio and newspaper, to promote China’s image internationally. In addition, the soft power of education also promotion in Thailand. This can be seen most number of Confucius Institutes in Asia now found in Thailand, as well as the growing number of Thai students studying in China.

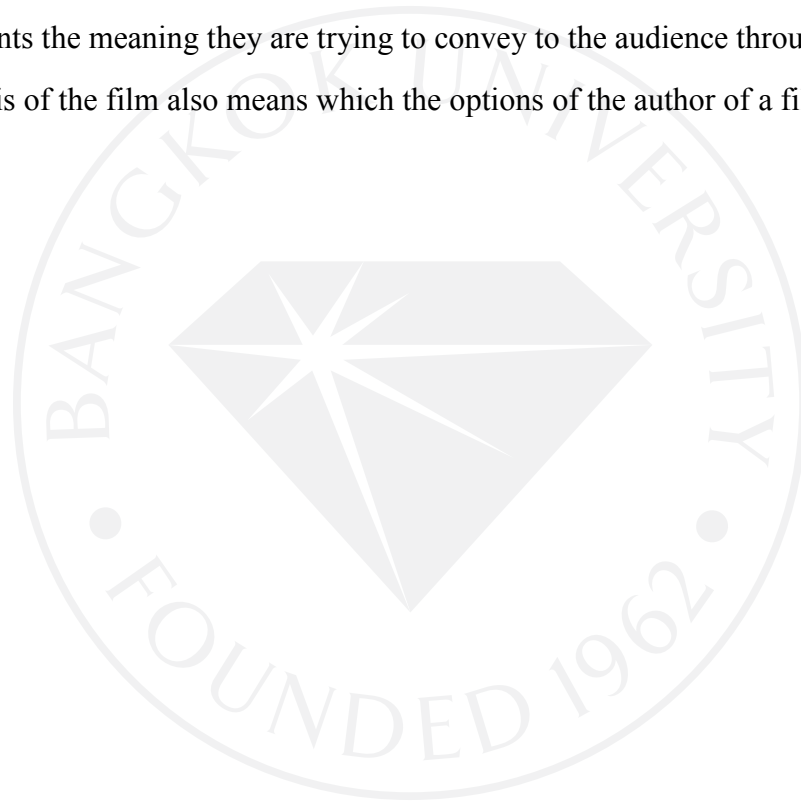
### 2.7 Semiotic analysis of films

To understand the key elements of the horror film, semiotic theory had been used in this paper. From Christoph Biemann (2017), a German writer and director, we get the information about that one system of signs is language. The films also use a kind of language made up by sounds and pictures. As a result, to analyze a film, the primary path is the film’s pictures and sounds. The pictures or scenes include the location of plot, environment, weather and the role of character, clothing, religion and other important elements. The sounds of the film include the language of character and the music in the background.

Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist and semiotician, believes “a sign as

the combination of signifier and signified” in *Course in General Linguistics* (1916, p.15). Signifier is the word, an entity that directly on the human senses. The signified is a concept or meaning it represents. In exploring of film semiotic, the scenes and sound is what we called signifier, and the signified of this sign is what we focus on.

When a director starts his/her artistic creation, he/she need to face amount of choices. From the final film, all audiences can watch what the choice of the filmmaker was. But it is difficult to say why filmmakers to choose like this. Their choice represents the meaning they are trying to convey to the audience through the film. Analysis of the film also means which the options of the author of a film have got.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

In order to be able to accurately analyze the sample film, in this chapter will introduce the method of this study and the standard samples' selection. It also describes how to collect data and how to interpret the data. This chapter includes research design, research materials, research procedure, data collection, textually analysis and reliability, validity and limitations.

#### 3.1 Research Design

Since this study is exploration for social sciences-cultural, the qualitative approach and content analysis are chosen in order to gain insights into different key elements of Thailand and Chinese horror films. In addition, Christoph Biemann's (2017) film semiotics and Ferdinand de Saussure's (1916) signifier and signified was used to analyze the selected film semiotics, as well as Hofstede's cultural dimensions was used to explain the cultural meaning that behind the semiotic.

As a result of the culture will change due to the development of ethnic groups or the intercultural contact among different ethnic groups (Boas, 1932). So it is necessary to select a specific period to study. In order to be able to close the current living environment and the present culture, at the same time, with sufficient data to be able to analyze, the sample of this study was selected in the decade from 2007-2017. The study includes six major films and related film reviews. Due to time constraints, all the work included film selection, data collection and analysis, and the final find lasting for about three months.

#### 3.2 Research Materials

In the past decade, China and Thailand shot a great many horror films. The study selected three films each one, namely, a total of six films. As this study puts emphasis on the cultural meaning represented by film elements, according to Chinese



film network 1905, which is direct media under the SARFT and also largest Chinese film information network, selected first three Chinese films by users' rating from high to low order in horror film classification from 2007-2017. While the other three Thai horror films are based on the IMDb website, the world's most popular and authoritative source for the movie. In Thai Horror Movie Compilation, the first three horror films in 2007-2017 were selected according to users' rating from high to low.

Three Chinese horror films are *The house that never dies* (2014), *Who in the mirror* (2012), and *Mysterious Face* (2013). *The house that never dies* (2014) is a story based on the legendary mansion at No. 81 on Chaoyangmennei Street in Beijing follows Xu Ruoqing, a woman whose presence in the notorious mansion draws up the spirits that have taken residence there. *Who in the mirror* (2012) is a story based on folktale in China. At midnight the stroke of 12, light 2 candles in front of a mirror and face the mirror, at the same time peel a red apple. Make sure that the peel does not break, and then you can see the ghost in the mirror. Fei Yan received a letter from ghost in the mirror. She knows that she will be killed by ghost. Her husband lead her and a group friends go to Wu town to find ghost out, instead of killing. *Mysterious Face* (2013) talk about a story that to find the missing eldest sister Liu Ling, Liu Tian invite a group of friends to the ghost village. Whenever at night, they will have a ghost with only a face without body on their pillows, and one of them disappear day by day.

Three Thailand horror films are *Pee Mak* (2013), *The Snow White* (2010), and *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* (2009). Appendix 1 lists details of the films examined in this study. *Pee Mak* (2013) is a story based on a Thai traditional legend. Mak served in the war during the beginning of the Rattanakosin Dynasty. After war, Mak invited his four friends into his home. A rumor was going around in the village that Nak had died giving birth to her stillborn baby, Dang. The four friends want to told to Mak and take he away. It's up to Mak to choose love or reality. *The Snow White* (2010) talks about two students dissect the dead body of a pregnant woman to turn her unborn baby into

a dark magic charm which they believe can grant their wishes. *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* (2009) composed of five short movie segments. Include Buddha, Zombie, and ghost. It also combined with western style.

### 3.3 Research Procedure

There are three steps constitute this study. Firstly, determined research samples by screening information on the website. The second step is text analysis to find the key elements' similarities and differences between Chinese and Thailand horror film. This step is the most important one and spends a long time to summarize. As the exact perception of the key elements is the primary of the study. And the last step is comparing Chinese and Thai horror film based on the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions 6-D Model©.

Through the two sites' information to filter that meet the requirements of the film. One is the American's most authoritative website of movie-www.IMDb.com and the other one is the largest Chinese movie website- www.1905.com. In addition, the choice of Chinese film based on the current situation and the views of Chinese horror movies.

The number of semiotics in the movie is numerous and complicated. For example, the semiotic includes visual signs, environment, location, clothing, religion, and audio signs, lines, and background music. While the determination of semiotics and analysis is the most important, so the semiotics collection and grouping needs to be related to culture and can be classified. Based on Ramasubramanian (2003), two dimensions of the films -- visual/audible and scene/character were investigated.

### 3.4 Data collection

Through the summary of six horror films, roughly divided key elements into 9 parts. Due to terrorist symbols are complexities, it was classified into table 3.1. The six films were carefully recorded and classified according to the following rules, and summed up the semiotic characteristics of Chinese and Thai horror films, respectively.

The result of the encoding is as follows:

Table 3.1: Catalogue of China and Thai Cultural Elements

	Scene	Character
Visual	Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather</li> </ul> Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban or specific place, as old house or Temple</li> </ul> Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern or past</li> </ul> Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation according to the legend or fictional</li> </ul>	Costuming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Thai dress or traditional Chinese dress</li> </ul> Religion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The religion for Chinese and Thai people</li> </ul> Folk belief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existence of the movie and its attitude to it</li> </ul> Ghost role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender, age and appearance of the ghost</li> <li>• Ghost appear and disappear</li> </ul>
Audible	Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horror music appears</li> </ul>	Lines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue</li> <li>• Soliloquy</li> <li>• Narration</li> </ul>

According to Saussure's (1916) important concept signifier and signified, the above forms of Environment, Location, Time, Event, Costuming, Religion, Folk belief, Ghost, Music and Dialogue are “signifier”. While the meaning they represent, that is, “signified”, requires specific analysis. This is also called decoding process.

This study focuses on the exploration of ghost culture, so the record of the semiotic is also focused on the part associated with the ghost.

### 3.5 Textually Analysis

Based on the above methods, this study makes a textual analysis of key elements in Chinese and Thai horror films, trying to find out the similarities and differences between the two cultures. The textual analysis method is as follows:

1. Carefully observe the sample film and record the key elements of the "ghost" or the semiotic with the horror element;
2. The recorded semiotics are classified according to the above classification system;
3. Explore the behind or hidden meaning of the semiotics;
4. Compare the differences and similarities between Chinese and Thai which with different or similar semiotics.

Hofstede 6-D Model © is used to analyze the Chinese and Thai cultural characteristics behind the phenomenon. There is Hofstede culture dimension conceptual framework in Figure 3.1.

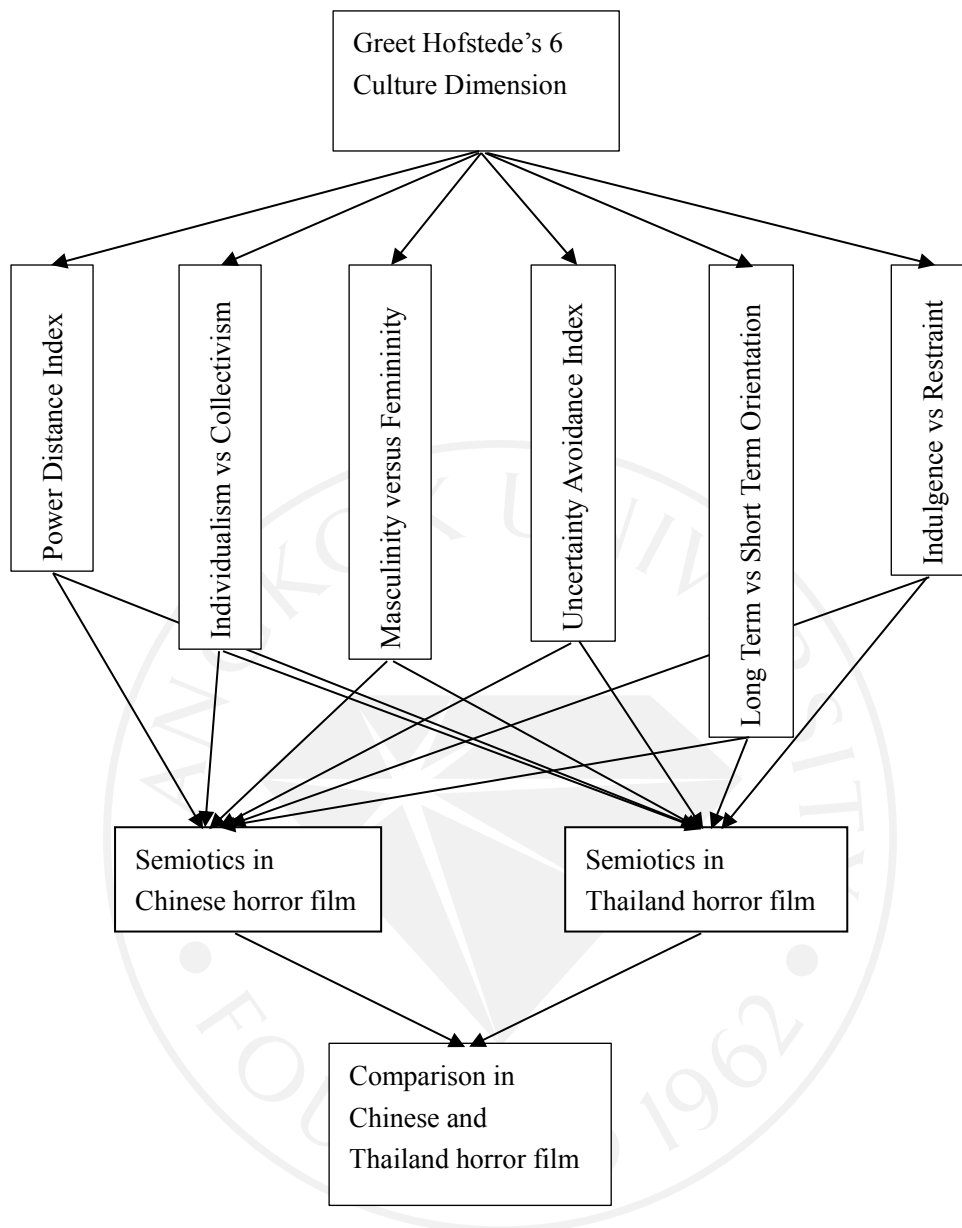


Figure 3.1: The conceptual framework of Hofstede's 6-D Model

### 3.6 Reliability, Validity and Limitations

The reliability and validity of qualitative research differ from the quantitative research that based on statistics, which will replace the reliability and validity in the quantitative study according to the Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered criteria. Alternate terminology of Reliability is Consistency or Neutrality. Means that the researcher's

decision is clear and transparent, and eventually can get a similar conclusion with other research. Through the above clear statement of data collection and classification methods, the six films were recorded, and finally got a high consistency.

And which to replace the terminology of validity is Truth value, which mean recognizes that multiple realities exist. It should be compared with the similar study to reduce the impact of personal bias, although the researcher has a personal bias in the study. Therefore, in the process of studying the film, combined with film review on Mtime (China's largest query film information and write video on the movie site) and IMDb to analysis. Analyze the cultural reflected by the film semiotics from a neutral point of view.

Because of the limited time, and the selected six film samples are only representative. In addition, the study of the time range in the last decade, so this study will have limitations, hope that some scholars to be added in the future.

## CHAPTER 4

## FINDINGS

This chapter describes in detail the textual analysis of the six horror films and analyzes the key elements of Chinese and Thai films with Hofstede's cultural dimension model to try to show the cultural differences between the two countries through horror movies.

#### 4.1 The semiotics of Chinese and Thailand horror films

The semiotics of selected three Chinese horror films and three Thai horror films were analyzed separately. The results tables are as follows: visual / scene elements, visual / character elements, audible / scene elements, audible / character elements are tabulated separately in Table 4.1, Table 4.2, Table 4.3 and Table 4.4.

In the textual analysis of Visual / Scene Elements, the three key elements--Environment, Location, and Time, are used for comparative analysis.

Table 4.1: Visual/Scene Elements

Visual/Scene Elements	Chinese Horror Films	Thailand Horror Films
Environment	Always at night with thunder, lightning and rain.	At night with thunder, lightning and rainy, and less in daytime.
Location	Concentrated in the traditional Chinese house, old and shabby houses.	Involving a variety of local, including Thai traditional huts, Involving a variety of local, including Thai traditional huts, hospitals, temples, tropical rainforest, road, second-hand car shop, film studio.

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): Visual/Scene Elements

Time	During the Warlord Era and modern times.	During the war of the Rattanakosin Dynasty and modern times.
Event	Adaptations from real events or folklore	Adapted from folktales, or just imaginary stories

#### 4.1.1 Environment

China has a clear and changeable climate throughout the year. China's climate has the characteristics of monsoon climate with hot and rainy summer, cold and dry winter, and high temperature and rainy periods consistent. While Thailand is a tropical monsoon climate, affected by the southwest monsoon, from July to September is the rainy season. Annual precipitation heavenly, wet and dry season clear. Chinese horror movies, no matter what the season, when there is a ghost there will be lightning thunder. Chinese horror movie for the performance of lightning storm is almost less breeze, mostly stormy, lightning thunder. Most of the causes of these natural visions are not weather changes, but the appearance of innocent ghosts or the occurrence of murder. At the same time, horror films in China will also make use of the weather in the autumn winds to create a ghostly atmosphere.

For example, the story of *Who in the Mirror* set the scene in the autumn, Wu town full of withered leaves, desolate and uninhabited make people feeling scary. There were a total of three thunderstorms, lightning in *The House That Never Dies*, a total of 7 times in *Who in the Mirror*, and only 1time in the beginning of *Mysterious Face*. Every time the thunder and lightning were accompanied by terrorist incidents. Although Thailand is tropical and there is a lot of rain, there is very little effect of thunderstorms in horror movies. *Pee Mak* appeared in 2 times, other films did not appear. Visible that Thai horror film is not to borrow the natural weather to create a terrorist atmosphere.





Figure 4.1: The view of Wu town's autumn

Source: Niu, C. Y. (2012). *Who in the Mirror* [Motion picture]. China: Beijing Oriental Gedian Culture Communication Co., Ltd.

#### 4.1.2 Location

The themes of China's horror stories were chosen from the earlier period as the background, so the buildings were dominated by ancient Chinese architecture, especially the old abandoned houses. For example, the old house of Mr Huo in *The House That Never Dies*, Western-style building and Wu town in *Who in the Mirror*, abandoned Feng Men village in *Mysterious Face*. Except horror stories occurred in the old house, the Chinese horror film seldom picks other outdoor location.

The place is very different in Thai film. In addition to occurred in Thailand's traditional Stilt House of *Pee Mak*, also chose the Thai temples with religious beliefs. The tropical rain forest in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng- Novice*, as well as ordinary hospital morgue, ward in *The Snow White* and *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng- Ward*, the ordinary highways and rural towns in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng- Backpack*, second-hand dealers in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng- Salvage* and so on. Compared to the location of Chinese horror stories, Thailand is more diverse.



Figure 4.2: The old house of Jingcheng No.81

Source: Ye, W. M. (2014). *The House That Never Dies* [Motion picture]. China: Heng Ye Film Distribution Co., Ltd.



Figure 4.3: The view of Thailand traditional Stilt House

Source: Banjong, P. (2013). *Pee Mak* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Good Things Happen Co., Ltd.

#### 4.1.3 Time

Based on a detailed observation of the horror films in China and Thailand, both countries have chosen the past and the modern as a backdrop. There are many

folk stories in China and Thailand. Therefore, the two countries have a large number of topics of rich themes. In *The House That Never Dies*, the two timelines of the modern and the period of the Republic of China crossed each other. Lu Dieyu, who lived in 1932, was the past life of Xu Ruoqing, a modern actress. The story in *Who in the Mirror* built on Chinese warlord melee period. At that time, China was undergoing change. The beliefs of ghosts and monsters in the past have not been restricted. Therefore, there are many kinds of legends and are quite mysterious.

In addition to the ghost husband was a legend of the period of the Bangkok Dynasty, the remaining two films were chosen to the modern context. Unlike in China, Thailand believes in Buddhism. There can be a reasonable presence of ghosts and gods in the horror films without interference. Even in the modern age, the horror and mystery will not diminish.

#### 4.1.4 Event

Whether it is a horror movie in China or Thailand, there are folklores from their own cultural backgrounds as the theme of the story. The Chinese horror film just borrowed a great variety of horrible legends, no matter the traditional customs or the spread of the modern internet, all of them provided quite good themes for the horror films. For example, the film *Who in the mirror* make use of the popular folklore of peel the apple face to mirror to build the story. Compared to Thailand's fictional horror movie, China's horror films were traceable. For example, *The House That Never Dies* was based on the true story about a House, ranking first among the Four oriental ghost house. The theme of *Mysterious Face* taken from supernatural events of ghost face on pillow at Feng Men Village, Henan Province, China in 1963. However, this is a legend, the authenticity is not high. Some outdoors went to adventure and netizens spread supernatural events. Coupled with these two houses have existed too long. Such folklore has become a hot topic.

There are also horror films adapted from folklore in Thailand. *Pee Mak* is based on the real poignant love story of Mae Nak. But Thai horror films such as *The*

*Snow White* and *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* were fictitious. *The Snow White* was based on Thailand's unique corpse oil culture and Guman Thong culture. Based on the fact that Thailand is a country where Buddhism is very popular, locals are quite detached about their life and death. In the folk, people think that the wizard's corpse oil has the mysterious power. If a woman smear it on body, then she can attract men. In addition, the Guman Thong appearing in the film is a magic weapon widely known to Thai people and has many kinds of magic powers. It is often used to help the dependents to solve their problems and help them enrich. Built on folklore, horror films can achieve more real effects of horror.



Figure 4.4: Feiyan peel the apple face to mirror

Source: Niu, C. Y. (2012). *Who in the Mirror* [Motion picture]. China: Beijing Oriental Gedian Culture Communication Co., Ltd.



Figure 4.5: Mea Nak stand on the pier miss her husband

Source: Banjong, P. (2013). *Pee Mak* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Good Things Happen Co., Ltd.

Table 4.2: Visual / Character elements

Visual/Character Elements	Chinese Horror Films	Thailand Horror Films
Costuming	Tangzhuang, cheongsam, Phoenix coronet and robes of rank, Peking Opera costumes and other traditional Chinese costumes, and modern clothing	Traditional Thai clothes and modern clothing
Religion	Simple reference to Buddhism, rarely involved in religion	Buddhist temples and monks appear frequently
Folk belief	Existence, but few believe it	Existence and people

(Continued)

Table 4.2 (Continued): Visual / Character elements

		believe it
Ghost role	Young women, long black hair, white or red dress	Including men, women, elder and children, in various forms

#### 4.1.5 Costuming

There is no doubt that the actors' costumes represent a social culture. With the development of globalization, clothing can reflect the culture represented by this country, especially traditional costumes. From the traditional costumes of China and Thailand, we can understand the changes of the times in a country.

In *The House That Never Dies*, when the whole Mr Huo family worship ancestor, they wearing a dark Tangzhuang and cheongsam. It reflects that the influence of Manchu culture at that time, the dress also followed change. Only Mr. Huo's second brother Huo Lianqi, returned from France, dressed in white suit, leather shoes. It shows that China in 1900s was Multi-cultural blend era. In *Pee Mak*, Nak dressed in traditional Thai costumes, Mak and other actors dressed in simple and plain Thai clothing. Show custom of Thailand and sense of age to screen. It can better reflect the simple and kindness of the Thai people without gorgeous clothing.

At the same time costuming can also reflect the characteristics of roles and professional nature. In *The House That Never Dies*, Lu Dieyu wore a colorful cheongsam, reflecting her superior living environment at the time. In the early years of the Republic of China, five young people came to the Wu town in film *Who in the Mirror*. The actress wore a magnificent cheongsam and pearl necklace. The actor wore a clean suit and tie. In stark contrast to the deserted Wu town. And in *The Snow White*, Oh wearing a nurse's clothing, Golf wear hospital worker clothing, and Yong wears a college uniform. Their clothing is interpretation of the character's occupation.



Figure 4.6: The view of Huo Lianqi and Lu Dieyu

Source: Ye, W. M. (2014). *The House That Never Dies* [Motion picture]. China: Heng Ye Film Distribution Co., Ltd.



Figure 4.7: Mak and Nak wear the tradition Thai clothing

Source: Banjong, P. (2013). *Pee Mak* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Good Things Happen Co., Ltd.

#### 4.1.6 Religion

China is a multi-religious country. Chinese religious believers mainly believe in Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity. Chinese citizens are free to choose their own beliefs and show religious identities. According to incomplete statistics, there are over 100 million religious followers in China. Different from Thai Buddhism, Chinese Buddhist doctrine, which emphasizes the great mercy and compassion and save other living creatures, incorporates a great deal of Chinese culture and Confucianism and Taoism and is a thought of Chinese Buddhism with a strong Chinese character. Less religious beliefs appear in Chinese horror movies. Only appeal twice Lu Dieyu's monologues in the opening and ending of *The House That Never Dies*: Buddha said that, the life has the eight sufferings of life: Fresh, old, sickness, the death, likes leaving depart, the resentment is long-time, asks not to have, cannot lay down. Buddha said the samsara without end. There are so many languishing youths and unhappy maidens came to the world for wishing he/she can find the true love that they would never leave until the end of time.

Buddhism is the traditional religion of Thailand from generation to generation and is also the heart of Thai people's life. Among the 47 million people, Buddhists account for 95%. It is said that there are more than 30,000 temples throughout the country. Since all the kings in Thailand have embraced Buddhism, Buddhism has become a Thai state religion and the monks are respected. What is different from Chinese Buddhism is that Hinayana Buddhism is flourishing in Thailand. It emphasizes more on the degree of self-reliance, karma, respecting Buddhism. Advocate monasticism abstinence life in order to achieve results. These Buddhist teachings have a direct impact on the expression of the storyline and the expression of the meaning of the film in Thai horror films. Thai horror films have always advocated personal self-reliance (Zhang, 2011, p14). They think that everyone will pay for what they have done, that is, where there is a cause, there will be a consequence in Buddhism. And good is rewarded and evil is punished.



Embodies the self-reliance of Buddhism in the South: If people cannot be self-liberated and self-understanding Buddhism, there is no way to truly remove the troubles and evil (Ding, 2015, p145-146).

First of all, the semiotic of Buddhist culture has become an essential element in setting scenes, characters and props in Thai horror films. The monk in *Pee Mak* released souls from purgator for Mae Nak. Mak held the Thai Buddha amulet for fear of ghosts. Pey's mother sent him to the temple to hide in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-Novice*. Second, Thai horror films have been greatly influenced by the Buddhist concept of samsara. Samsara's view is that all beings in the world cannot be freed in six times of samsara because of the inability to extinguish the three poisonous: desire, anger and ignorance at the source. For example, because desire of second hand car owner Nuch. She sold the car in problem to the customer, leading them to have a traffic accident. At the same time, she purchased scrapped vehicles with low-cost, and sold after renovated.

Finally, Nuch has been judgment. The special influence of Hinayana Buddhism in Thai religion. It is worth mentioning that the Thai people believe in Buddhism, but in horror movies, Buddha Dharma "seems" not almighty. We can watch in the film that People who are attacked by ghosts or witchcraft will pray to the Buddha for disaster relief. The result is often that the tragic death of a character is not resolved by the Buddha Dharma. In *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-Novice*, the rebellious teenager Pey who set the robbery, wounding, patricide, and theft stolen. Even to be a monk, it is difficult to make a full redemption of the sin. In *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng- Backpackers*, fury zombies rush towards monk firstly in the market. This is different from the traditional Chinese concept. In Thailand, Hinayana Buddhism can only self-reliance. The Buddha is just a tutor, a prophet, and a leader. Although later deified, it is not like the omnipotent Buddha in Mahayana Buddhism of Chinese faith. Buddhist scripture is the need for people to self-understanding, Buddhism is only a guide and enlightenment, and only self-awareness reached a

certain level that can win the blessing (McDaniel, 2015).



Figure 4.8: Seeking protection in the temple

Source: Banjong, P. (2013). *Pee Mak* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Good Things Happen Co., Ltd.



Figure 4.9: Zombies rushed to the monk in the market

Source: Banjong, P. & Visute, P. & Paween, P. & Songyos, S. & Parkpoom, W. (2009). *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* [Motion picture]. Thailand: GMM Tai Hub (GTH) Co. Ltd.

#### 4.1.7 Folk belief

This is a broad concept. This category includes a wide variety of behaviors, expressions, and beliefs. Examples of concepts included in this genre are magic, superstition, popular belief, folk religion, planting signs, hoodoo, conjuration, charms, root work, taboos, old wives' tales, omens, portents, the supernatural and folk medicine (Green, 1997). Folk belief is an extremely complex spiritual and cultural phenomenon, which belongs to "spiritual folklore." The value of Chinese ghosts and gods' culture is mainly reflected in folk belief that find sustenance in the lower layers of people imagination and freedom of spirit. Chinese traditional cultural of ghosts and gods, apparently also provides a rich cultural heritage for the creation of modern national horror film. For example, Posthumous marriage is a traditional Chinese custom, it have more than three thousand years of history. In ancient China, the Posthumous marriage ceremony was arranged for died men and died women who were married and buried. At that time, the old people thought that if they were not married to him or her, the ghosts of his or her would make trouble and disturb their family (Xiang, 2011). However, with the change of time and customs, there has also been a marriage between the living and the dead.

*The House That Never Dies* use bridge plot of Posthumous marriage. Mr. Huo let Lu Dieyu married to the deceased second brother and substituted him with a rooster to meeting the bride. And in *Who in the mirror*, Jiang Huan told to his wife Fei yan who want to make mediumship with dead old man, put your right hand on the body of elixir field, and put the left hand two fingers on one inch above the lips, close your eyes, count 1 to 49, then you can talk to him. In addition, Fei yan believed that the method of peel apple in front of mirror at midnight will meet ghost. At the end of the movie, she have done followed by this method. This method of peeling apples to mirror is not the traditional Chinese folk beliefs but the modern folk beliefs that are difficult to trace and even the ones that are being circulated on the Internet by young people.

From a macro point of view, roughly three types of Thai folk beliefs have a huge impact on Thai horror movies. The first is natural worship. Natural worship is that people take nature as an object, give it soul and consciousness, and then worship it (Ma, 2014). Under the concept of "all things have spirit," Thai filmmakers incorporate the worship of nature into horror movies.

The first story *Novice* in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng*, Paween Purijitpanya, the director, combined a starving devil with nibung tree, a new ghost that is created in rainforest, although without a ghostly positive appearance, judging from the shadow, slender limbs, extremely tall body like a nibung tree. At the same time, the story takes place in Thailand's special rainforest, dark gloomy environment add the terrify feeling for the movie.

The second is ghost worship. The concept of ghost, or soul, is born of human beings' perplexity and ignorance of life's existence and death, physical illness and suffering, and phenomena such as fantasy and reality (Ma, 2014). The Thai people think that the soul wanders around before reincarnation, because the deceased are still missing relatives, friends, and his own property (Rajadhon, 1987). In particular, the soul who too sudden, too late to reincarnation, such as die in a car accident, murder, etc., If you can see the soul, this is the ghost. The ghost is the physical soul, the soul is the dead ghost. In the story *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-Salvage*, Nuch renovated second-hand scrapped cars, and sold to customers. It result these dead suddenly human ghosts comeback revenge. The story of *The Snow White* was also because of the disrespectful behavior of Yong and Pong for dead body of a pregnant woman, leading to the pregnant's ghost come back to vengeance. Thai horror films blend into ghost worship. It is the most direct and most powerful manifestation of Thai folk beliefs in horror films.

Finally, Witchcraft worship. Witchcraft is the oldest and most common religion, not related to ghosts and gods. But as the witchcraft and religion continue to develop and blend, the concept of ghosts and gods permeate with witchcraft each

other and then formed Thailand's unique witchcraft culture (Ma, 2014). There are many types of witchcraft in Thailand, mainly spiritualism, dispelling evil spirits, black witchcraft, illusion, astrology and so on (Rajadhon, 1987). The use of these elements makes Thai horror movies have strong local characteristics. For example, in *The Snow White*, Yong in order to pass the exam, he go to library and inadvertently saw a book ——Witchcraft teaching materials. The book described in detail the extraction and use of the corpses' oil ——Sacrifice the infant after roast, and the baby's soul will make this people dream come true. The corpse oil is extract from pregnant, if you rub to a girl, then the girl will enamored of the owner who own the corpse oil. Yong's good friend Pong also got the favorite girl's heart because of the corpse oil. *The Snow White* relates to the witchcraft of ancient Guman Thong belief, corpse oil belief, so this movie has local characteristic that other countries is difficult to go beyond.



Figure 4.10: Lu Dieyu married with a cock

Source: Ye, W. M. (2014). *The House That Never Dies* [Motion picture]. China:

Heng Ye Film Distribution Co., Ltd.



Figure 4.11: Yong read the book of Witchcraft teaching

Source: Sarawut, I. (2010). *The Snow White* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Golden A Entertainment.

#### 4.1.8 Ghost role

The image of the ghost in Chinese horror film is usually dominated by young women, and ghost makeup always long black hair, looking pale, and wearing a pure white dress. For example, in *Mysterious Face*, the ghost appear in end of film is long black hair with white dress. And in *Who in the Mirror*, the film appeared many times ghost with long black hair, white dress, blue skin, and long nails. The ghost of *The House That Never Dies* wear in a red wedding dress, also has black hair. As the image of the ghost is not excessive modification, and the appearance is the actress herself, the effect of horror is not obvious. From the Chinese horror film, ghost image reflects on modern Chinese horror film is imitate Japan and South Korea terrorist symbols, the characteristics of their own culture is less obvious.

Compared with Chinese single ghost image, the image of the character in Thai horror film is more diversified. Of course, in addition to the image of the woman-based, also have man. There were more age groups include young ghosts, children and the elderly. More notably, besides the traditional ghost imagery in Thai

horror film, there are also Western zombies (*Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-Backpack*) and mysterious witchcraft (*Phobia 2-Ha phraeng- Ward*). And the image is not all black hair and white dress. Although Mea Nak has black hair, she wore traditional Thai clothing. Ghosts in Thai horror films vary in form and costume, and are often closely linked to the suffering they suffered when they died. Pregnant women in *The Snow White*, naked because she were parked in a hospital morgue, did not wear clothes. The images of ghosts in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* are even more diverse, tall and skinny starving ghosts, zombies, ghosts of people who died in accident, and ghost actors in the studio. None of these characters are repetitive and the images are very rich. In the Thai horror film, the image of the ghost adheres to the Buddhist thought of the samsara, so the image of the ghost is more inclined to keep his / her original style. Therefore, so close to the real-life style give doubled the fear to audience.



Figure 4.12: The image of ghost

Source: Zhao, X. X. (2013). *Mysterious Face* [Motion picture]. China: Beijing Tongren Shidai Media Co.,Ltd.



Figure 4.13: The image of nude ghost

Source: Sarawut, I. (2010). *The Snow White* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Golden A Entertainment.

Table 4.3: Audible / scene elements

Audible/Scene Elements	Chinese Horror Films	Thailand Horror Films
Music	Chinese classical musical instrument soundtrack and modern dark low urgency sound	Western and Thai classical musical instruments and strange and gloomy sound effects

#### 4.1.9 Music

The addition of sound elements to the screen brings the real world of cinema closer to life. It enriches the editing of the film, and the lens of space-time unified on visually can change its nature by incoherent sounds; Visually inconsistent lenses may also be unified with consistent sounds (Xi & Geng & Chen, 2005, p.60). The horror film's sound elements are very important for the creation of horror effects. If you turn off the sound when you watch horror movies, the fear will not be so strong. This shows the importance of sound to horror movies. The primary task of the horror film



is to set the music frame and determine the paragraph where music appears on the basis of understanding the role, the key points of the story, the overall tone and the director's setting of musical status (Bobker, 1974, p.103). During the process of creation, it is necessary to ensure that the music has enough tension and intensify the contradictions as it moves forward and finally get released. This is the key to determining whether the music can be outstanding in the final presentation.

In music of film, horror films in China and Thailand have their own characteristics. Both use a lot of sharp blade voice, such as the wind over the cave, deep percussion and so on. However, the addition of classical instruments makes the movie more local. In *The House That Never Dies*, accompanied by a cheerful music Suona when Lu Dieyu married to Huo Lianqi. But when she found the object of marriage is a cock, the music instantly became tense and strange low. It created a good horror environment for the story. *Who in the Mirror* appeared many times music of Pipa. Not only reflects the Chinese elements, but also adds a touch of fear and tension in the film atmosphere, indicating that terrible things will happen.

The Thai horror film narrative structure is complex. There are more elements included in films, so the soundtrack is also more abundant. In addition to horror-specific sound effects in *Pee Mak*, there is a very warm and soothing music. When Mak and ghost wife Nak at home and when they go to the night market and the end when Mak confessed his feelings for Nak were use very warm music, relaxed and pleasing. Make the tone of a horror movie into a poignant love story of a ghost wife was reluctant to leave her beloved husband. At the same time the movie is also western equipped such violin, piano and symphony as a soundtrack. In *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng -Novice*, When Pey and a crowd of monks passing through the forest full of sacrificial items, the sounds of insects and the crows just to reflect this unusual forest. In the end Pey became the new hungry ghost with Thai traditional music, the whole scene revealed a mysterious, strange atmosphere. Because of the use of elements of the western zombies, the *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng -Backpackers*

used the intense and fast-paced rock music in the soundtrack to drive the tense nerve shocks. Combined with the bloody and brutal images, it makes extreme sense of fear.



Figure 4.14: Lu Dieyu married with cheerful music

Source: Ye, W. M. (2014). *The House That Never Dies* [Motion picture]. China: Heng Ye Film Distribution Co., Ltd.



Figure 4.15: A lot of crows over the rainforest

Source: Banjong, P. & Visute, P. & Paween, P. & Songyos, S. & Parkpoom, W. (2009). *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* [Motion picture]. Thailand: GMM Tai Hub (GTH) Co. Ltd.

Table 4.4: Audible / character elements

Audible/Character Elements	Chinese Horror Films	Thailand Horror Films
Lines	Guide the bedding and summarize the story, explain the mystery.	Cleverly guide the plot development.

#### 4.1.10 Lines

The lines are words spoken by the characters in theatrical performances. It is the main means used by the dramatist to show the story, characterize and reflect the theme (Bobker, 1974, p85). It is also the basic composition of the script. Lines generally include dialogue, soliloquy and narration. The inner monologue of characters in the film and television art in the form of voiceover, which is one of the basic means by which film writers reveal the psychological activities of characters and is a form of the verbal movements of characters (Xi & Geng & Chen, 2005, p60).

In the beginning and end of the movie *The House That Never Dies*, have the monologue of Lu Dieyu. Paving the way for the causal relationship of this story from the beginning, and finally lamented that the crazy man and woman were not able to get love after all, making this horror movie into a poignant love story that she careless anything but love. At the end of the *Who in the Mirror*, Jiang Huan and Han Yu said to Fei Yan, do you know Qing Hua Hui? An organization that specializes in getting married to the rich, and then killing the rich for their money. From the day you get married, you guys are dead, and all we have to do is push your death to the ghost (Let people think you killed by ghost). Describe the reason for the whole ghost story, and the fear of the audience vanished with the truth. And at the end of *Pee Mak*, Mak said to his wife, even you died already, but were still able to come back for me. How is it wrong that we can love each other this much. Nak said: Aren't you scared

of me? Mak said, you know I'm scared of ghosts, but I'm scared more of living without you. Changed the image of Nana in the past, during this process which people can reflect on their own cognition, reflect on if existence any paranoid about Nak, reflect on whether Mak is too harsh to his wife, and reflect on people's own understanding of the faith is really too one-sided

#### 4.2 General Comparison between Chinses and Thailand horror film

On the one hand, in the analysis of horror films in China and Thailand, I found the following three aspects in common:

- a. Ghost events mainly happen at night

Ghost events in the horror films of China and Thailand mainly occur at night, and less occur during the daytime.

- b. Folklore plays a very important role

The use of folklore can increase the horror of movies both in China and in Thailand. All 6 horror films are used from their own cultural background of folklore. Lu Dieyu in *The House That Never Dies* is married to the younger brother of Mr. Huo, who died. In *Pee Mak*, the legend of ghost wife Mea Nak. As well as the worship of witchcraft such as the Guman Thong and corpse oil by Yong and Pong in *The Snow White*.



Figure 4.16: Lu Dieyu married with Mr. Huo's brother who died

Source: Ye, W. M. (2014). *The House That Never Dies* [Motion picture]. China: Heng Ye Film Distribution Co., Ltd.

c. The image of the ghost is predominantly female

In both Chinese and Thailand horror films, always appear the women as ghosts. In China's 3 horror films, the images of female ghosts are similar, with black long hair and long dress and facial ferocious. The other 3 horror films in Thailand are mainly female, with different images.

On the other hand, the differences between the three aspects have been found in the research on horror films in China and Thailand:

a. Narrative logic

Narration is a series of events with causal relationship occurring at some time and some place. The narrative relies on the causal relationship, and the connection between the plots is also reasonably related. The most basic requirement for an excellent movie is the rigor and clarity of narrative logic.

China's horror films have two problems in narrative logic: on the one hand, the character and motivation of the roles are not clear, leading to a sudden development of the plot. For example, the ending part of *Who in the mirror* reveals

that all of the supernatural events were made by Jiang Huan and Han Yu. Their purpose was to kill the rich Fei Yan, but suddenly Jiang Huan killed his companion Han Yu. The move of Jiang Huan kill his companion Hanyu's is very strange, there is no logical association. It's just a very abrupt plot set by the screenwriter to have a good ending.

On the other hand, the narrative has obvious plot loopholes and divorces from the causal connection of narration. For example, the outcome of *Who in the mirror*, Fei Yan desperately run to the entrance of Wu Town under the chase of Jiang Huan. Just in time to catch up with Jiang Huan, inexplicably appeared a group of police shot Jiang Huan, then Fei Yan was rescued. A deserted abandoned village, suddenly appeared a group of police. Logic barrier in the narrative plot, make people feel at a loss. In the *Mysterious Face*, it is also revealed in the final part that the ghost is actually played by people, and those supernatural events are man-made. But after Ye Zi were packed leave home, her bed actually had a mask and a pinch of black hair with blood which same with in Feng Men village. Since the truth is already clear, the ending has to mystify. There is no logic at all, just blindly imitate the horrors of Japan and South Korea.

On the contrary, horror films in Thailand are impeccable in their narratives, their narration is fluent and the logic is clear. Even short stories such as the five stories in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng*, all of them have causal links, and rational use of memories of the story to complete the story.

#### b. The Tone of horror film

The tone of the Chinese horror film has always maintained serious and tense. One of the major features of the horror film in Thailand is that it is humorous but no lack horror atmosphere. In Thai horror films such as *Pee Mak* and *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-In the end*, they join the Thai-style humor, it seems exaggerated funny. Rhythm control just right. Because of the nature of the funny plot, the horror film as a background can increase the comedy effect. In *Pee Mak*, the plot that Ter

inadvertently bit his face by wasps, and he can not be clearly speak and the plot that Mak and four companions escape by boating and they can not judge who is the real ghost; the four lead actors in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-In the end*, contrast with a careless heroine. The most intimate story of this story is to find a reasonable explanation of what happened, no one died, and then everyone died.



Figure 4.17: Ter inadvertently bit his face by wasps

Source: Banjong, P. (2013). *Pee Mak* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Good Things Happen Co., Ltd.



Figure 4.18: A group of timid and funny people

Source: Banjong, P. & Visute, P. & Paween, P. & Songyos, S. & Parkpoom, W. (2009). *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* [Motion picture]. Thailand: GMM Tai Hub (GTH) Co. Ltd.

#### c. The nature of film

In the nature of film, the horrors of China and Thailand are very different. Chinese horror films are not as educational as Thailand. Chinese horror film is simply use a legend to adapt into a purely scary horror movie. Use of horror films elements to achieve the superficial scary effects, such as horrible makeup, dark and tense soundtrack, fast switching shots and so on.

The horror film in Thailand can be said to be a higher level. Not only is there a thrilling lens, but it also incorporates Buddhist ideas to alert and educate the audience. Although Nak's image makes the audience feel terrible in classic horror film *Pee Mak*, her loyalty to love is worth the respect of the audience. From the experience of the protagonists Yong and Pong in *The Snow White*, as well as care workers Golf intentional killing of pregnant women to meet his desire for the body,



and the final result of revenge, The movie reveals the Buddhist idea of karma and warns the world evil will be rewarded with evil. While not all of the stories in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* are a cautionary note, at least the *Novice* and *Salvage* tell the audience how to save themselves through self-redemption, and the idea that should never do evil.

#### 4.3 Cultural Comparison between Chinses and Thailand horror film

Used Hofstede's cultural dimension model to compare the culture of horror movies in China and Thailand, then I explore and analysis them.

##### 4.3.1 Power Distance Index (PDI)

The power distance index of China is higher than the average Asian countries. Such high score means China is a country that people accept inequalities and is divided into different levels. In Chinese film *The House That Never Dies*, Mr. Huo, a rich man, marries low status prostitute Lu Dieyu for his dead brother. As long as Mr. Huo has money, he can spend money forcing others to do what he or she is unwilling to do, which reflects the hierarchy of Chinese society. At the end of the film, the son of the Mr. Huo's old chamberlain has been guarding Huo Lianqi 's mummy, and has been spoke respectfully and bowed to him, showing his loyalty to the Huo family.

Thailand is also a country with high power distance. In the film *The Snow White*, Yong's mother, the hospital's dean, hopes her son can get high score in exams without losing her face, or Yong will be sent to study abroad. So Yong use witchcraft in exam for good achievement. It reflects the power distance between parents and children. Children do not have the right to speak, only obediently appointed to respect the lessons, and respect for parents. Pey in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-Novice* made a mistake and listened to his mother's teachings and went to the temple to hide. The superior monks in the temple are also strict with Pey.

##### 4.3.2 Individualism versus Collectivism

China and Thailand are the same in this dimension. They are highly

collectivist country where people act in a group. It is not hard to see from the movie that Chinese and Thai people intend to act with a group of people. For example, Jiang Huan in order to find ghost in *Who in the Mirror*, He assembled a small team of five people in total went to Wu Town, and during that time they take care of each other. *Mysterious Face* is also a team of six people went to FengMen village to find Liu Tian's missing sister. During this period, as long as one person was in danger, others will quickly arrive. Have a strong collective spirit and everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

There are many examples in Thai horror films. Mak and four friends in *Pee Mak* supported each other from the war, and formed a small group to return home after the war. After four people realized that Mea Nak was a ghost, they tried to tell Mak truth and wanted to take him away from the village instead of abandoning anyone to flee. There are also four boys in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-In the end*, a group formed by the working relationship. Although all four people are very timid, they take care of each other when they flee. It is obvious that actress Marsha was not part of their team, so they kept ghost on her side several times and escaped. It can be seen that loyalty is more important than most other societal rules and regulations in a collectivist culture.



Figure 4.19: Five people in a group

Source: Niu, C. Y. (2012). *Who in the Mirror* [Motion picture]. China: Beijing Oriental Gedian Culture Communication Co., Ltd.



Figure 4.20: They always in a group

Source: Banjong, P. (2013). *Pee Mak* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Good Things Happen Co., Ltd.

#### 4.3.3 Masculinity versus Femininity

The gap between China and Thailand is also large in this dimension. At a score of 66 China is undoubtedly a Masculinity country. Success is most important in such a society. As in *The House That Never Dies*, when Xu Ruoqin's boyfriend Zhao Yitang received a text message, there was a problem with the typography of the printing house, and you should hurry up and solve the problem, from his secretary when he was asleep at night. Then he got up to the factory immediately. The next 1 o'clock in the morning, Zhao Yitang still had a meeting at the company. Even though Xu Ruoqing is scared of at home, his sacrifice of rest and time spent with his family for his career success.

Thailand is a typical Feminine society with less assertiveness and competitiveness, with a focus on quality of life. During the war in *Pee Mak*, the five main characters did not have hope or even timidity for the victory of the war. When Mak and the other four were seriously wounded and were hiding in the trenches, Shin asked Mak if there was any last word. Mak said, there was no last word, and no matter what, I would go home and visit my wife and children. This shows that the Thai people's sense of competition is not strong, and a stable life with family and friends is important.

#### 4.3.4 Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

China is a country with low uncertainty avoidance relative to Thailand. Although there is a rule system, China is flexible. While Thailand is a highly afflicted society, it takes and enforces strict rules and regulations to control everything in order to eliminate or avoid accidents. It can be observed in the movie *Who in the Mirror* and *Mysterious Face* that both teams led by Jiang Huan and Liu Tian knew that there were ghosts and supernatural events in the Wu Town and FengMen villages. However, they resolutely decided to go there stating that they accepted the existence of uncertainty. While Thai people like Mak and Pey face the unknown ghost, they choose to go to the temple to pray for the blessing of the

Buddha. It shows that the Thai people feel uncomfortable in the face of uncertainty and comply with certain rules to eliminate the accident.

#### 4.3.5 Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Orientation

The gap between China and Thailand is the largest in this dimension. The fact that China has a very high score on long term orientation reflects that the Chinese people value the future and have long-term plans for work. In *The House That Never Dies*, Zhao Yi tang's ex-wife in order to stop him and Xu Ruoqing together, she asked the son of the old housekeeper at Huo's family to exchange Xu Ruoqing's sleeping pills into psychotropic drugs, LSD. Long-term use led to Xu Ruoqing hallucinations. Zhao Yitang's ex-wife didn't hesitate hurt others in order to the benefits of herself. The story of *Mysterious Face* also tells Fang Wenqing that in order to prevent a team led by Liu Tian from discovering the secret of killing Liu Tian's sister seven years ago, he deliberately joined Liu Tian in seeking his sister's team and always tried to create supernatural events to make them feel scared and leave FengMen village. His careful planning, that is, in the future will not be found the secret of their own murder.

Thailand is a short term orientation country with a high respect for tradition and a focus on the present. So you can see a lot of Thai traditional architecture and temples in Thai movies. And like Yong and Pong looking at the current test scores and catch up with girls, regardless of the consequences of the use of witchcraft. And in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng-Salvage*, Nuch sale of the vehicle in question for the interest of the current.

#### 4.3.6 Indulgence versus Restraint

It can be seen from this dimension that China is a Restrained society. People in this society will control the gratification and not pay attention to leisure time. Thailand is more Indulgence than China. In *Pee Mak*, Mak took his wife to play in the night market and play games at home. Pong came to the pub several times in *The Snow White*. We can see that Thailand people did not try to control their desires and

impulses.



Figure 4.21: Pong in a pub

Source: Sarawut, I. (2010). *The Snow White* [Motion picture]. Thailand: Golden A Entertainment.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter introduces some of the issues discussed and theoretical significance as well as the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research. Through explore the six horror films discuss the similarities and differences of the key elements between China and Thailand culture. There is a reasonable explanation for the occurrence of certain phenomena, such as why the image of the ghost is predominantly female, and why there is such a big difference in logic, tone and audience reputation between Chinese horror films and Thai horror films. It is hoped that through the study of horror movies in China and Thailand, it will be helpful to the development of films in both countries.

#### 5.1 Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to observe and analyze the horror films in China and Thailand and find the similarities and differences between the key elements of China and Thailand and the impact of culture on this element. The movie's semiotics are decomposed by various elements. So, in order to more accurately study the similarities and differences between the key elements, this study is focus on analysis of more accurate film's semiotic. The method is to conduct a text analysis of the selected 6 horror films, and clearly display the key elements in four tables to find a reasonable semiotic for further explanation.

We have reasonably answered the three questions raised in chapter 1:

Research Question # 1: How key elements in horror film reflect Chinese culture?

Chinese horror film elements reflect its environmental characteristics of the location, and the uses semiotic of autumn heighten the atmosphere of horror. Create atmosphere by semiotic of thundering, lightning and raining when supernatural events occur. In addition, the location element in the Chinese horror film includes

the unique semiotic of traditional architecture as well as the semiotic of the Western building during the war years that reflected the Western countries' aggression at that time. And use the legend or the so-called real events adapted theme. The elements in the movie's costumes such as semiotic of Tangzhuang, cheongsam, Wedding dress and Peking Opera costumes embody traditional Chinese culture. Chinese are described as not believing spirits but strongly dependent on folklore. The almost unified ghost image in China reflects the influence of Japan and South Korea on the culture of horror films.

Research Question # 2: How key elements in horror film reflect Thailand culture?

The element of location in Thai horror film contains many different scenes. Some are related to the geographical location and cultural beliefs, such as Thai traditional huts, hospitals, temples, tropical rainforest and other semiotics. Thai horror film adapted from the legend, mostly fictional. Actors' costumes include Traditional Thai clothes and modern clothing. Thai horror films have a description of Buddhism, and Thai worship of witchcraft is also a very important theme of Thai horror film. The changing ghost image in the horror film also reflects the Thai Buddhist culture from the side.

Research Question # 3: What are the differences and similarities between Chinese and Thailand is depicted in a horror film?

The differences between Chinese and Thailand horror film were reflected in three parts. First, the narrative logic of Chinese horror films is blocked and the plot is flawed. The logic of Thai horror film is always smooth. Second, the tone of Chinese horror films are tense and somber. However, Thai horror films are humorous and tense. Third, the Chinese horror film is essentially a scary film that scares people simply. Thai horror films always combine the Buddhist culture to educate the general audience.

There are three similarities between the Chinese and Thai horror films: First,



the ghosts and supernatural events appear and occur after dark at night; Secondly, folk legends add a local cultural atmosphere to the horror films of both countries, so that the audience feels more relevant; Third, China and Thailand Ghost horror film is mainly young women ghost.

In general, there are other similar semiotics in Chinese horror films and Thai horror films. Such as thunder and lightning. There are also different semiotics, such as costumes - Chinese Tang suit cheongsam and Thai traditional Thai suit; Buddhism - Thai belief Theravada Buddhism.

## 5.2 Discussion

This section will discuss in depth some of the phenomena found in this study.

5.2.1 The ghosts portrayed in Chinese horror films are mostly women, which reflect that women are in a disadvantaged group in this society.

The most obvious point is that the character elements of the ghost character are dominated by women. Horror films in China are long hair, wearing gown dresses. Why China and even Asia are the selection of women as a horror ghost image? The reason is roughly the following two points:

First, in China, the book of Yijing divides the world into two categories: Yin and Yang. The man on behalf of Yang, and the woman on behalf of Yin; human for Yang, afterlife for Yin. Therefore, females and ghosts are both belong to Ying and their fears are more intense (Jiang &Liu, 2014, P62-63). And superimposed semiotics of Yin on the image of the ghost will make the sense of terror worse. For example, the ghosts in the Chinese horror film will have black hair, pale faces and white long skirts, all of these are belong to Yin. According to Yin and Yang can also explain why ghosts and supernatural events have occurred and occurred after dark. The daytime represents the Yang, the night represents the Yin, and the horrible make-up during the day is very hard to cause any fear. However, it is very fearful to the audience who is very easy at night.

Second, the choice of women is also related to the disadvantaged position of women as a result of ethical and moral values. In Chinese traditional society, the basic principle of the Confucianist ethics morals is "the three cardinal guides" which the feudal rulers promoted with great effort. One of them is husband guides wife, which means wife should absolutely obeys her husband. Unequal status of men and women, making women become weak, more vulnerable to become victims, thereby accumulating more grievances and resentment (Jiang &Liu, 2014, P62-63). Thailand, due to its own Buddhist beliefs and the influence of Western culture, has more varied choices in shaping the image of the ghost. Such as emaciated starving ghost, lesions zombies, and people who died in traffic accidents in *Phobia 2-Ha phraeng* (2009) and so on.

In addition, according to *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017* (John. & Richard. & Jeffrey. 2017) the China Gender Gap Index is lower than the Global Weighted Average, while the Thai Gender Gap Index is higher than the Global Weighted Average. This shows that China is a country where the status of men and women is relatively unequal, and women's social status is usually lower than men. They are vulnerable to bullying, which leads to more resentment, so almost ghosts in Chinese horror films are portray by women. However, although Thai horror films are mainly women as ghosts, there are also men. The phenomenon of Gender Gap in the two societies can also be reflected in China and Thailand horror films.

5.2.2 Chinese and Thai horror films show different values, due to religious beliefs.

Another obvious feature is religion. The Buddhist complex in Thailand is not only reflected in the object-level image of the horror film, but also deeply rooted in the spiritual content of the plot and film structure. As China is an atheistic country, advocating science, there are almost no movies that reflect the superstitious themes of the real world. Most horror movies come from classical masterpiece or legends. Most horror movies are mostly suspenseful at the beginning, continue to injection

with ghost fog, and ultimately will be the scientific method to open the layers of fog, the result is often made by people, which reflects the attention and emphasis of people in Chinese horror film. Such as *Who in the Mirror* (2012), *Mysterious Face* (2013) and other horror films, the final of the film, ghost is people make trouble. Deeply reflects the Chinese horror film is the emphasis on human factors and roles. Obviously, the biggest difference between a Thai horror movie and a Chinese horror movie is the difference in cognition of the existence of the spirits and gods. Thai horror films focus on the relationship between man and Buddha, while the horror movies in mainland China focus on the relationship between human and human nature.

5.2.3 The difference between the tone of Chinese and Thai horror films is due to cultural differences.

The unique humorous plot of Thai horror film has become a feature of Thai horror film. In the context of globalization, the optimistic images of Thai people are also spread through films in various parts of the world. Religious beliefs in Thailand also show its mysterious charm through horror films, attracting tens of thousands of tourists. Thailand's unique humor culture is no doubt that is inextricably linked with the culture. According to Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, it can be seen that except for the individualism index, the other five dimensions are not equal. Understanding from the two dimensions Long term orientation and Indulgence, Thailand is a country focused on achieving quick results and relative indulgence, so it is easier to satisfy. In the 2014-2016 Ranking of Happiness, Thailand ranked 32<sup>nd</sup>, while China ranked 79<sup>th</sup> (World Happiness Report, 2017). The happiness of Thai people is much higher than that of China. From the movie, it is clear that Thai people have a unique sense of humour. Even in the most critical moments, they will have relaxed and funny clips and lines.

### 5.3 Implications of the finding

#### 5.3.1 For audiences:

Through the study of the horror films in China and Thailand, under the background of globalization, people in two different cultural backgrounds can be helped to learn about each other's cultures, especially traditional cultures and religious beliefs. Only by establishing mutual understanding and communication can we reduce the misunderstandings caused by cultural differences.

#### 5.3.2 For filmmaker:

Deep analysis also provides creative ideas for filmmakers. After understanding each other's cultures, there is a trend of future cooperation. Therefore, the comparative study of the key elements of the horror film in this article has reference value for the film making in the future. It also provides movie creators with material and inspiration in different cultural contexts.

#### 5.3.3 For researcher:

On the other hand, there are few studies on Chinese horror films nowadays, and they are still at the superficial level. The research in this paper is of great value for further analysis.

### 5.4 Limitation of the study

After answering my research questions, there also have limitations in this research. On the one hand, except the Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, which is used to analyze the key elements in the horror films of China and Thailand, there are no more theories are used to assist the analysis. Such as Nonverbal Communication. Nonverbal communication is relative to the language communication, refers to the process of communication through the body movements, posture, tone of voice, spatial distance and other means of communication. This involves the High context-Low context theory proposed by Edward T. Hall. Both China and Thailand belong to a high-context culture. Except for implicitly implied words, there are many

similarities between the use of Nonverbal Communication. For example, when the characters in the movie are scared, they cover their faces with both hands. If we do a thorough research on nonverbal communication, we will be able to improve the research conclusion.

On the other hand, the limitation is that since many vocabularies of professional are translated, I am not a native speaker, and maybe will have some discrepancies in translation.

### 5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Researchers have some suggestions for future scholars who want to make relevant research. Future research into Chinese and Thailand horror film should usefully focus in Feelings of watching audience horror movies between two countries particular on extension of fear. Since this research has learned about the similarities and differences between the Chinese horror films and the Thai horror films on the key elements, further research should be put on the personal experience of the audience.

There are also some suggestions for future terrorist communication between China and Thailand. Thai horror film has a good creative level, if producer can cooperate with the Thai team or if Chinese government can introduce more excellent Thai horror films, it will provide the Chinese horror film market vitality. The Thai film market can also introduce China's horror film that reflects traditional culture. And it will play the role of cultural communication.

To understand what impact the audience by horror film from the perspective of the audience. It also advises the market and the audience to pick out and watch films with cultural differences or educational meanings. It not only understands different cultures, but also removes stereotypes from both sides and conducts effective and active cross-cultural communication.

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## Outline of Six Selected Films

Three Chinese films:

### 1. The House That Never Dies, (2014)

Directed by: WaiMan Yip

Starring: Francis NG, Ruby Lin, Tony Yeung, Amanda, Monica, Patricia Ha, Li Jing, Elaine Jin

Plot summary: Story based on the legendary mansion at No. 81 on the Chaoyangmennei Street in Beijing, which local legend says is haunted by the ghost of a Kuomintang official's wife, who committed suicide in the home around the time of the Cultural Revolution. The film follows Xu Ruoqing a woman whose presence in the notorious mansion draws up the spirits that have taken residence there.

### 2. Who in the Mirror, (2012)

Directed by: Chaoyang Niu

Starring: Kenny Kwan, Man-kwan Lee, Junhan Zhang

Plot summary: The story originated in a horror of the legend, which is at midnight the stroke of 12, light 2 candles in front of a mirror and faces the mirror, at the same time peel a red apple. Make sure that the peel does not break, and then you can see the ghost in the mirror. In the early years of China, there were five handsome boys and girls came to the dreadful witch town, to explore the legendary "mirror in the ghost". But they were sucked into the mirror one by one, or death in front of the mirror.

### 3. Mysterious Face, (2013)

Directed by: Xiaoxi Zhao

Starring: Qijiang Wu, Jenny Chao, Miao Liu, Chong Wang, Yingpu Geng, Hui Tao, Yesuo Zhao, Xin Wang

Plot summary: In 1963, a family of three had been killed and the death of innocent people wrapped around the village. Years later, a group of young people tried to enter the cursed village surrounded by water, at the moment into the barren village, they also came to a most terrible ghost place, then the nightmare had come. When the dead of night, their pillow frequently appears only the head, no body of the ghost made their wits, and finally they found the secret in this village.

Three Thailand films:

1. Pee Mak, (2013)

Directed by: Banjong Pisanthanakun

Starring: Mario Maurer, Mai Davika Hoorne, Nattapong Chartpong, Pongsatorn

Jongwilak, Wiwat Kongrasri, Kantapat Permpoonpatcharasuk, Sean Jindachot

Plot summary: Mak served in the war during the beginning of the Rattanakosin Dynasty. At war he became friends with Ter, Puak, Shin, and Aey, whose lives he saved. Once the war was over, Mak invited his four friends into his home in Phra Khanong town and introduced them to his beautiful wife Nak and his newborn baby boy Dang. A rumor was going around in the village that Nak had died giving birth to her stillborn baby, Dang. The source of this rumor; Aunty Priak, owner of the local liquor store was found dead floating on the river a few days later. The four friends felt it's time to tell Mak the possibility of Nak and Dang could be dead and lingered as haunting ghosts and risk their lives. It's up to Mak to choose love or reality.

2. The Snow White, (2010)

Directed by: Sarawut Intaraprom

Starring: Atthiwat Theeranithitnanth, Kapon Thongphlap, Nattapong Chartpong,

Prinya Ngamwongwarn, Pattaranan Deeratsamee

Plot summary: Two students dissect the dead body of a pregnant woman to turn her

unborn baby into a dark magic charm which they believe can grant their wishes. Not only does the magic not work, but they are also haunted by the ghost of the dead woman.

### 3. Phobia 2-Ha phraeng, (2009)

Directed by: Banjong Pisanthanakun, Visute Poolvorlaks, Paween Purikitpanya, Songyos Sugmakanan, Parkpoom Wongpoom

Starring: Jirayu La-ongmanee, Ray MacDonald, Chumphorn Thepphithak, Apasiri Nitibhon, Dan Worravech

Plot summary: Phobia 2 is composed of five short movie segments directed by five of the best directors of Thai horror films. A teenager who committed a crime goes to a sacred place for meditation and hiding that brings him a fright and guilt about what he did (segment Novice). A young man gets haunted in a hospital by an old man in coma who's not too far from him (segment Ward). Two men along with two hitchhikers in a truck got into a big trouble after opening the back (segment Backpackers). A second hand car dealer realizes what the previous car owners/passengers had terribly been into (segment Salvage). An ill hardworking actress whose role is a ghost is reported dead after she was brought to the hospital (segment In the End).



		Chinese horror film			Thailand horror film		
		The House That Never Dies, (2014)	Who in the Mirror, (2012)	Mysterious Face, (2013)	Pee Mak, (2013)	The Snow White, (2010)	Phobia 2-Ha phraeng, (2009)
Environment (Supernatural event occurred)	in night	√	√	√	√	√	√
	in daytime						Phobia 2-Ha phraeng (Backpackers)
	with thunder, lightning and rainy	√	√	√	√		
Location	Traditional house	√	√	√	√		
	Public place					√	√
Time	Past	√	√		√		
	Modern	√		√		√	√
Event	Real event		√	√			
	Folk legend	√	√	√	√		
	Fiction					√	√

		Chinese horror film			Thailand horror film		
		The House That Never Dies, (2014)	Who in the Mirror, (2012)	Mysterious Face, (2013)	Pee Mak, (2013)	The Snow White, (2010)	Phobia 2-Ha phraeng, (2009)
Costuming	Traditional costuming	√	√		√		
	Modern costuming	√		√		√	√
Religion	Buddhism	√			√	√	√
	non-religious		√	√			
Folk belief	Believe		√		√	√	√
	Not believe	√	√	√			
Ghost role	Female	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Male						√
	Young people	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Old people						√
	Long hair	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Costuming	Red dress	White dress	White dress	Traditional costuming	Nude	Casual clothes

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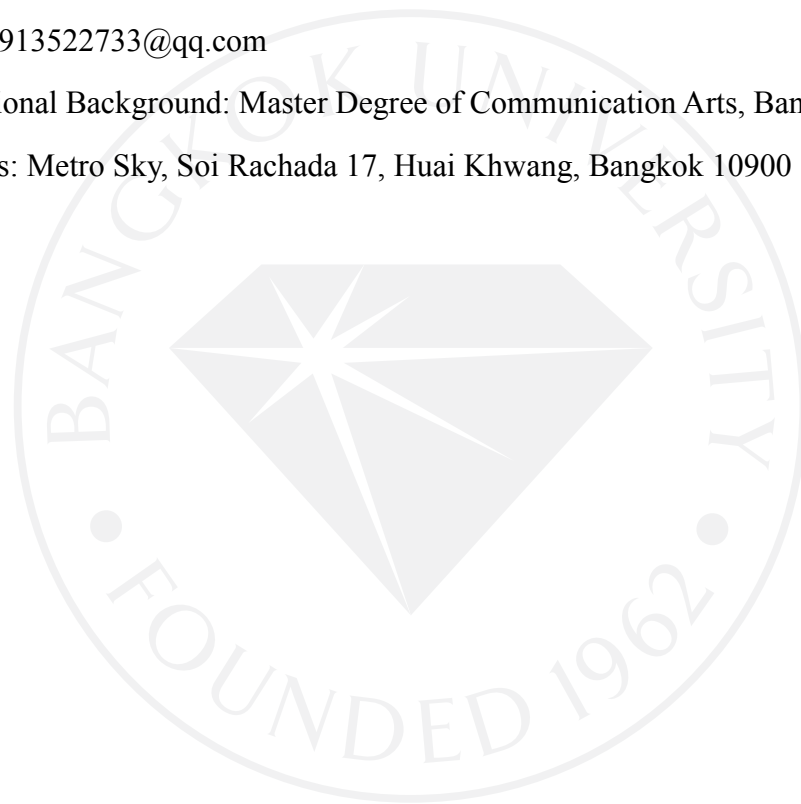
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