

The Study of the National Specificity of Horror Film in Post-socialist China

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of post-socialist Chinese horror cinema – namely, horror films of the period from the film industry reform in 2003 to the present – and centres around the question of how Chinese horror filmmakers are responding to the new policies and regulations and achieve their financial success by fulfilling audiences' expectations from the perspective of cultural traditions. It contributes to an overview of the Chinese film industry and the production value chain of horror films that is rarely accessible to the English-speaking world, thus it is also intended as a practical guide for producers and potential investors interested in entering the contemporary Chinese horror film market. This thesis argues for the essential role of government regulation and the cultural context of China in shaping the generic attributes of Chinese horror film in both post-socialist China and post-socialist cinema.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

A Note on the Term of Horror Film

Firstly, it is useful to understand that in China ‘horror films’ as these films might commonly be referred to in the West, was referred to as ‘ghost films (鬼片).’ Before the regulation appeared banning the appearance of supernatural elements in films, horror films were commonly referred to as ghost films in mainland China. The name was given by the audience who came to expect the appearance of a ghost as the supernatural element in these films. When a series of regulations and policies came into effect after 2003, the term ‘ghost film’ was banned due to its implication of superstitious beliefs which violates the ideology set up by the communist China. Since then, films that contain horrific elements have officially been referred to as thriller or suspense films. This phenomenon can largely be seen on the advertisement posters of today’s mainland Chinese horror films. For example, on the posters of those films, distribution companies tend to avoid using the word 鬼 (ghost) by using its homophone term 诡 (lit. strange) instead. To maintain consistency and provide a better understanding within the context of this thesis, the term ‘horror film’ will refer to Chinese ghost story films, which have supernatural elements.

Aims and Research Scope

The Chinese film market, measured by box office revenue, is now the second largest film market after Hollywood (China Film Association, 2018, p. 28). From 2003, around ten years after the start of the post-socialist period, which is usually marked by the Chinese government’s adoption of a mixed economy, the shift in government policy affected the film sector and started a reformation within the industry. A number of private film companies emerged and were allowed to produce their own

commercial films and obtain the necessary licensing from the authorities to make these films public. Since then, horror as a genre has become one of the most favourable film genres for these companies and investors, as highlighted by the financial success of these films. As reports show, since 2010 horror films have proven to provide the highest Return on Investment (ROI) (艺恩集团 EN Group, 2014; China Film Association, 2018).

Although the genre has enjoyed commercial success, the research on Chinese horror cinema has received very little attention from academic scholars. Mainstream scholars in China either focus their attention on the study of horror film from the film history point of view or only provide a close analysis of individual films. Very few of them have studied horror film from the perspective of the production process and commercial context (Hong, 2014, pp. 3–5). Cinema is a vast and complex socio-cultural phenomenon which includes important economic and financial elements. This ‘multi-dimensional’ phenomenon does not allow for any rigorous and unified study, but only a heteroclite collection of observations involving multiple and diverse points of views (Metz, 1974, p. 9). Because of this complexity, one needs to take filmmakers, the audience (market), relative policies, critics, tradition of taste and industrialists interact into consideration in order to study cinema (Tam and Dissanayake, 1998).

Unlike other genres, horror cinema, with its reliance on supernatural and violent elements seems to present a challenge to the ideological standards set up by the post-socialist government (McGrath, Berry and Lu, 2013, pp. 49–80), which still draws its ideological orientation from a political theory predicated on Marxist dialectical materialism which is the foundation of Communist ideology. Since this genre of film usually portrays supernatural elements and violence, they are therefore placed on the “close-watch” list maintained by the government authority at all times.

This close attention is continually regulated through policies and regulations. This relationship between the film production industry and government is influenced by cultural, political and economic changes. The result is a simultaneous interplay between government regulations and audience expectations in presenting a national specific horror genre relevant to contemporary China.

This thesis seeks to explore the history and development of the Chinese ‘horror’ or ‘ghost’ film, with the emphasis on trying to understand the growth of the genre contextually by investigating the relevant policies and regulations and their influences on the commoditization of horror cinema in China in the period following 2003. This study also includes two case studies representative of Chinese contemporary horror cinema after 2003. The focus of these case studies are on the relationships between pre-filmic events, of which government policies and regulations are specifically selected, and post-filmic events, where audience expectation and market performance come together opening up a space for discussion around the role of culture and tradition in Chinese horror films. This research will attempt to show how certain thematic aspects and narrative patterns of the Chinese horror films set it apart from the horror films from other countries through a representational analysis.

The post-socialist period in China is normally marked as the period from the late 1970s to today, when China defined its official ideology as socialism with Chinese characteristics¹ and started its economic reformation in late 1978 (Chen, 2016, p. 4). The scholars of post-socialist cinema in China focus on the change in cinematic themes resulting from the shift from planned economy into mixed economy. I will argue in the following chapters that this view is only partially correct because the Chinese film industry does not reflect the same changes as the wider national economy in adjusting to this economic transformation. While the wider Chinese

¹ Official term in Chinese: 中国特色的社会主义

economy underwent a transformation from a planned economy to a market economy, the film industry in mainland China remained largely state-owned under the control of government production companies and distribution channels. The special attention given by the authorities to horror films, due to its mass propaganda function, was only partially relieved after 2003 when the policy of *Regulations on the Administration of Movies (2002)* was officially implemented. Only after this, did the Chinese film industry turn into a profit-driven industry with open competition within the domestic market and from other countries. This, in turn, has dramatically changed the game plan within the industry and forced producers to continuously satisfy audiences' needs while also following governmental regulations. The year 2003 is therefore crucial because the film censorship and film production were both controlled by the same government institutions before the year, while the functions were separated following 2003. Thus, the milestone of the post-socialist turn offers a useful framework for understanding Chinese society after the economic reformations while the year 2003 identifies a key turning point for the Chinese film industry.

The purpose of this study is thus to understand those aspects of the government policy and cultural traditions that specifically affect the commodification of horror cinema in China after 2003. Both traditional (presocialist and premodern) Chinese culture and a series of highly controlling government regimes have been important determining factors in the evolution/mutation of this specific 'national' version of the horror cinema in China. By analyzing film policies and the outcomes of their influences, this thesis offers an overview of the Chinese film industry and the production value chain of horror films that is rarely accessible to the English-speaking world. In addition, this research is also intended as a practical guide for producers and potential investors interested in entering contemporary Chinese horror film market.

Theoretical Framework

‘Cinematic fact,’ as the umbrella term for research of film in the broadest sense, offers a framework to the researcher to look at films within the intersections of text, industry, policy, economics and public response. The term use by Christian Metz (1974,12) borrowed from Gilbert Cohen-Seat, refers to cinematic institutions which in its broadest sense is a multi-dimensional sociocultural idea. As Metz pointed out,

[F]ilm is only a small part of the cinema, for the latter represents a vast ensemble of phenomena some of which intervene before the film (the economic infrastructure of production, studios, bank or other financing, national laws, sociology of the contexts of decision making, technological equipment and emulsions, biography of film producers, etc.), others after the film (the social, political, and ideological impact of the film on different publics, ‘patterns’ of behaviour or of sentiments induced by the viewing of films, audience responses, audience surveys, mythology of stars, etc.)

(Metz, 1974, p. 12)

The pre-filmic (Walsh, 1993, p. 35) events of the economic infrastructure of production, national laws, social-cultural contexts of making decisions and the post-filmic events of the social, political, ideological impact of film on different audiences and market reception become of the focus of this study under the umbrella term.

The study, therefore, is a hermeneutic engagement with pre-production (context of production) and the actual product (film). It is therefore located within the qualitative interpretive paradigm and the interpretation of the content forming the largest part of the research. This study approaches the cinematic fact in contemporary mainland China and offers an opportunity to understand representational meaning in relation to the film content within the context of policy and the regulatory environment that is unique to the P.R.C. The intention is to understand how Chinese horror films may be

seen as a product of this policy while also remaining open to interpretation at the level of representation and meaning, and how this combination effectively meets audiences' expectations, which in turn is directly linked to improved market success.

Thesis Structure

This study consists of six chapters. The present chapter introduces the thesis, explaining its aim and research focuses. Chapter 2 presents the national and historical context of the Chinese film industry, paying particular attention to horror film development in mainland China and its relationship with censorship. In Chapter 3, I examine the cultural and religious traditions that form Chinese horror films' basic plot patterns and narrative structure. Chapter 4 presents an overview of relevant governmental policies and regulations in the commercial stage of Chinese cinema during the post-socialist period and considers how these have redefined the Chinese horror film as its own genre. In Chapter 5, two brief case studies are provided illustrating the findings in the previous chapters. Finally, Chapter 6 serves as a conclusion and also highlights the constraints of this study.

It needs to be pointed out that Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 are different studies that are interlinked but independent of each other. They are surveys for portraying different aspects of Chinese horror films, which together form a unique context for the Chinese horror cinema as a whole. They are thus not the preceding conditions for the case studies in Chapter 5; rather the case studies are the verifications for those studies ahead.

Methodology

As the focus of the study is to understand the aspects of the government policy that specifically affects the commodification of horror cinema in China, the understanding of Chinese film policies and how they have been implemented is crucial to the study. A content analysis will be performed on these regulations which directly influence the production of horror film through the control of certain themes and representations. Two case studies, the study of the adaptations to films of the story “Painted Skin” and the study of the film *The House That Never Dies* (2014), will be done in order to illustrate how and what influences that the policies and regulation impact on horror film production in the post-socialist period. Intertextual analysis is used to explain film senses and storylines.

Tzvetan Todorov’s theory about the types of horror story outlined in his book *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975) in relation to the ghost film, and Barbara Creed’s theory of the monstrous-feminine² will be used to compare and highlight the differences between western horror film theories and Chinese film examples. It is not intended to apply those western theories uncritically but rather to highlight certain differences relating to story-type and the female protagonist in order to understand how Chinese horror has developed its own forms and rules in response to policies.

Policies and regulations referenced for analysis and interpretation are imposed by central government and divisional government of the State which are found in the online archives from official governmental websites³. Box office and revenue data used in this thesis mainly comes from online ticket selling centres from the State Film Special Fund Office which is released by the *China Film News* and those that have

² *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (2007)

³ State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television website: <http://www.sapprft.gov.cn>

been given by the main theatre chain companies in China and verified with the data of the main theatre chain companies and distribution companies. Quantitative data in this thesis is gathered from multiple channels, such as reputable professional websites EN Group⁴ and The Numbers⁵, and where possible, the information has been cross-checked to confirm the authenticity and accuracy of the information used.

It also needs to be pointed out that the main constraint of conducting this research was that most of the data was collected from second-hand material – other scholars’ research and publications mainly – due to the difficulty of accessing first-hand materials which are mainly kept as hard copies in China, as I am now in South Africa. But at the same time, it also highlights the value of this research – to provide academic material to the English-speaking world.

⁴ <http://www.entgroup.cn/>

⁵ www.the-numbers.com

Chapter 2–The Study of Chinese Horror Cinema

In modern Chinese history, major cultural movements have always intertwined with political movements due to the socialist essence of its dominant party (Nowell-Smith, 2013). From the early 1930s to the present, power politics was the dominant force of the development of Chinese cinema. First with Nationalist Chinese rule under the Kuomintang party (1928-1949) and again under Communist rule from 1949 up to the present. During the 1950s and early 1960s only a few especially influential debates in Chinese film theory appeared. However, the sphere of these debates was limited to such subjects such as how film could better serve politics and the common people (Xia and Hou, 1990). In 1978 China entered a new historical era of Economic Reform⁶, which is normally referred to as the start of its post-socialist period. The efforts to create order out of the political chaos of the Cultural Revolution⁷ were intended to provide a healthier environment for the development and prosperity of Chinese culture, where more flexible censorship systems would replace the strict measures imposed during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution.

The great economic growth in China since then, together with its adjustment to the global capitalist market, has led to a tendency to believe that China has abandoned socialism and embarked on a capitalist economic model (Kornai, 2004, pp. 26–45). Despite its economic miracle and its increasingly active role in the global economy, China still retains both its socialist structures and socialism as its ideological foundation. The two facts together have led to what the state defines as “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Chen, 2016, p. 20).

⁶ It is a program of economic reforms in the People's Republic of China (PRC) which began in December 1978 by reformists within the Communist Party of China, Deng Xiaoping 邓小平.

⁷ The Cultural Revolution (伟大的资产阶级文化大革命), was a sociopolitical movement in China from 1966 until 1976. Its aim was to purify Chinese Communism by purging capitalist thinking and traditional elements from Chinese society, and soon was manipulated by the Gang of Four leading to it becoming a violent youth movement. The movement destroyed China's political system and negatively affected both the economy and society of the country.

Under the influences of those political climate changes, Chinese horror films and their sub-genres became different to their western counterparts. The elements that constitute these genres are generally constrained by the time period in which they are located. Certain audience preferences are also time-specific as social, political and cultural changes emerge over time. Considering this it is necessary to offer a brief history of Chinese cinema with its focus on horror cinema development and its relationship to government and social changes.

Thus, to understand better what Chinese horror film is, we need to look at it within the cultural and political environments during particular times. In this Chapter, we trace the evolution of the Chinese horror film against the backdrop of a broader Chinese cinema unfolding across the twentieth century, as well as socio-political periods and ruptures in Chinese history of the twentieth century, leading up to the (current) post-2003 post-socialist era. The emphasis here is on how successful political regimes have imposed highly restrictive/prescriptive filmmaking policies which have shaped the narrative and aesthetic content of the Chinese horror/supernatural genre. Of particular interest is the analysis of the catastrophic effects of the Cultural Revolution on Chinese film production as a whole (apart from the setback for supernatural films specifically).

According to the characteristics of horror films in different social and cultural backgrounds in mainland China, I propose that the development of mainland horror films be approached across five stages.

2.1 The pre-1949 period

Chinese cinema from its appearance in 1905 to the establishment of the P.R.C. in 1949 was not only pre-revolutionary but also post-colonial (Nowell-Smith, 2013, p. 409). During the period of the 1920s and 1940s, China's political situation was quite chaotic and turbulent. The entirety of Chinese society was controlled by various warlords and people's daily lives were occupied by various wars. The Kuomintang government (Nationalist Party) was the only official government through this period with little control over foreign settlement areas in Shanghai, Tianjin, Qingdao and Guangzhou; and had no sovereignty over the Japanese occupied provinces and Communist party ruled areas (Fenby, 2018, p. 149).

Concurrently, it was the golden age of Hollywood classic horror films (Mank, 1994, p. 404). Hollywood horror films were continuously introduced to mainland China through the channel of special franchise⁸. Hollywood's golden age of classic horror films during the period of 1929 - 1948 was felt in Shanghai as these films flooded in and attracted audience recognition plus commercial success (李道新 Li Daoxin, 2005a, p. 18). This increased the confidence Chinese filmmakers had in horror films. By mimicking the techniques and expressions from Hollywood horror films, the Chinese horror film market reached its first peak of horror film production in history with works by *Yan Ruisheng* (任彭年 Ren Pengnian, 1921), *Red Pink Bone Waist* (管海峰 Guan Haifeng, 1921), *Zhang Xinsheng* (张石川 Zhang Shichuan, 1922), *Ma Jiepu* (邵醉翁 Shao Zuiweng, 1936), *The Legend of Wu Ban* (朱瘦菊 Zhu Shouju, 1927), *Emperor Visits the Hell* (余清泉 Yu Qingquan, 1927)⁹.

⁸ Term Originated in Chinese: 特许经营. A special franchise is the right granted by the public to use public property for a public use, but with profit.

⁹ Older films were never issued with English titles and so I have provided literal translations as required. In certain cases, these are the names of the main characters on which the story is based and were translated phonetically.

It was in this context that the earliest sub-genre of Chinese horror films known as the *wuxia*¹⁰ 武侠 and *yao*¹¹ 妖 films were created. According to statistics, from 1928 to 1931, more than 50 companies in Shanghai filmed nearly 400 movies, of which close to 250 were *wuxia* supernatural films (李道新 Li Daoxin, 2005b, p. 90). A series of monster films such as *Fire on Red Lotus Temple* (张石川 Zhang Shichuan, 1928) and *Burning the Lotus Temple* (张石川 Zhang Shichuan, 1928) that included the elements of fire and martial arts were created as a reflection of life during the unstable war situations with fire represents bombings and monsters represent warlords. These films provided the audience with a channel to vent their sorrow and dissatisfaction by offering a Robin Hood figure who would steal from the rich in order to help the poor or oppressed. In these versions the popular figure or the “*Xiake*¹²” would fulfil the fantasies of the audience who was often disappointed by the harsh reality of life in China at the time.

Along with the huge commercial and economic interests of *wuxia* supernatural horror films, more businessmen joined the competition and produced more horror films. This directly led to the proliferation of domestic horror films with low quality. On June 5, 1929, the Kuomintang government passed the *Proposal for the Establishment of the Party's Literary and Art Policy* and the *Rules for the Inspection of Films*. Films that “impaired public security” and “promoted superstition” were strictly prohibited under this rule (金太璞 Jin Taipu). On March 1, 1931, the Film Inspection Committee of the Ministry of the Interior was formally established. It supervised and examined the

¹⁰ Normally refers to martial art elements in film. It can also be a sub-genre of film in which good people always win and evil is punished.

¹¹ 妖 or 妖怪 is a class of supernatural monsters, spirits, and demons in Chinese folklore. Yao often possess animal features (such as the fox 狐妖) and have the ability to transform into human shapes. Yao usually have spiritual or supernatural abilities. Yao are frequently seen in the book of 聊斋志异 (Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio).

¹² Original term in Chinese: 侠客

production and exhibition of film in accordance with the *Film Inspection Act*¹³. Scenes in a film that depicted actions such as worshipping to a God, worshipping Buddha, making wishes in front of a God, promoting religion or defamation of certain religions, performances as ghosts, performances that advocated superstition or the playing of grotesque records, were officially banned (蒋中正 Jiang Zhongzheng, 1930). This was the first regulation that directly impacted horror film production. Under the impact of these polices, Chinese horror film production was substantially reduced. Horror film during this period (1931-1936), which are available on record according to my research (程季华 Cheng Jihua *et al.*, 1963, pp. 676–680), were only the Union Film Company's *Evil Shadows in the Temple* (朱少全 Zhu Shaoquan, 1930), Ji Nan Film Company's *The Evil of the Golden Island* (叶一声 Ye Yisheng, 1930), Golden Dragon Film Company's *Phantom of the Moon* (1934), Art Sea Film Company's *X-Ray* (1934) and The Great Wall Film Company's *Shadow* (李英源 Li Yingyuan, 1935).

During this time the horror film *Song of Midnight* (马徐维邦 Ma-Xu Weibang, 1937) was produced by the famous director Ma-XuWeibang which is sometimes incorrectly regarded as the first Chinese film to belong to the horror genre however this is debatable. The first Chinese film in the horror genre is in fact *Bride Meets Ghost* (1913) 活无常 produced by Asia Film Company 亚细亚影戏公司. However, scholars such as Qin Chen for example, incorrectly credit *Song of the Midnight* as the first horror film in China (Chen, 2016, p. 28). Although the story elements of the film are largely derived from the famous western horror film the classic *Phantom of the Opera* (1925), most commentators noticed the progress of the film and the efforts that Ma-XuWeibang had put into it. It is believed that the director did not ignore the reality that Chinese society was under the invasion of the foreign countries and people

13 Original term in Chinese: 电影检查法

were struggling with various wars (李道新 Li Daoxin, 2006), but also incorporated the theme of opposing feudalism, fighting for freedom and eradicating evil, justice and revenge (程季华 Cheng Jihua *et al.*, 1963). *Song of Mid-Night* was successful through audiences' word of mouth and the film became an unprecedented success for Chinese horror movies which triggered a new trend for these types of films.

2.2 The 17-years period

Eight years of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and three years of the Liberation War (1945-1949) had brought tremendous damage to China's economy, politics, society and culture. In this particular context, China had adopted a planned economic development approach under the new government of the P.R.C. As these films reflected society-specific values, characteristics of people in social history and practices under the leadership of the Kuomintang party, films made before 1949 were banned, as were those from Hollywood and other countries (Nowell-Smith, 2013). Shanghai Film Studio (1949), Beijing Film Studio (1948), August First Film Studio (1951) and Changchun Film Group Corporation (Northeast Film Studio 1950) initially formed the entire feature film production base in the new China (丁亚平 Ding Yaping, 2011), and they were completely owned by the state under the planned economic structure. Filmmakers were asked to turn their attention from commercial films to producing social ethics films, historical films, and main melody films¹⁴ (尹鸿 Yin Hong, 2007). These so-called mainstream film types can be classified into two categories, one is the political-historical film that promotes the national ideology; the other is light comedy and tragicomedy which incorporates martial arts and mystery elements. The horror films, which were perceived as primarily for entertainment, were gradually swept aside due to their lack of sufficient educational

¹⁴ Chinese: 主旋律电影 These are films which often depict military engagements or which are biopics of first-generation CCP leaders serve an educational purpose for socialism ideology.

and political usefulness (白雪 Bai Xue, 2012, p. 10). Only a few films which conveyed horror elements but were also considered to express ideological purpose (anti-Japanese and anti KMT spies) were released.

One of these was *The Bell Rings from an Ancient Temple* (朱文顺 Zhu Wenshun, 1958), which conveyed a strong anti-Japanese ideological element and was produced by the Changchun Film Studio in 1958. The story is about a detective who unveils a group of Japanese spies secretly conspiring in an ancient temple. In the film, the dark mountains, the horrible temples, the dead bodies, the grotesque silent monks, and the quick editing technique came together to create a sense of isolation and fear. The next year, based on the success of *The Bell Rings from an Ancient Temple*, Changchun Film Studio produced another horror film, *Outpost* (李亚林 Li Yalin, 1959). The film also used an anti-spy narrative theme while conveying much stronger horror elements such as graves, coffins, thunder, and suspense in the plot.

Later in the year (1957), the anti-rightist movement and the critical revisionist literary trend of thought severely criticized the so-called capitalist class (Nossal, 2010, pp. 1–8) and this had a strong impact on the production of films as a large number of writers and film directors were designated as ‘rightist’ and, publicly attacked for spreading ‘bourgeois thinking’ (Nowell-Smith, 2013, p. 695). This was followed by the political upheaval of the ten-year Culture Revolution which began in 1966 and caused a massive disruption to public and private life in China. The film industry suffered a major blow as several directors, scriptwriters, actors and actresses were imprisoned, and some died during the period. The most famous director at the time, Cai Chusheng 蔡楚生 (1906-1968), the director of *Song of the Fishermen*¹⁵ (1934) became one of the targets of persecution and was tortured before dying in 1968 (Carter, 2007, p. 1957). Nearly all films produced since 1949 were given a ‘anti-party,

¹⁵ It was the first Chinese film to win a prize in an international film festival (Moscow Film Festival in 1935).

anti-socialist poisonous weeds' label by the Gang of Four¹⁶ and withdrawn from circulation and finally destroyed (尹鸿 Yin Hong, 2002, p. 81). From 1967 to 1972, feature film production virtually stopped with only a few selected directors being assigned by the Gang of Four to film stage operas. The subsequent productions, known as 'eight revolutionary model films'¹⁷ were made to serve propaganda purposes (Mittler, 2010). Eight stage operas constituted the entire Chinese mainland film market during this period. Horror films were labelled as capitalist and as a result, there was no work within this genre that came out during the entire cultural revolution period¹⁸.

2.3 The 1980s

In 1979 a seminal article, *The Film Language's Modernization* (Zhang, 1979) was published. For the first time in three decades, narration, cinematography, sound and rhythm were emphasized independently of their role in political edification. The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee held in December 1978, corrected the misconception that literature and art need to obey politics. With these events, horror films along with other genre films had entered into a period of vigorous development (白雪 Bai Xue, 2012, p. 11).

With the deepening of the reform, filmmakers could now freely explore more themes. Coupled with the continuous improvement of the living standard and the cultural life due to the double-digit rates of the economic growth in China (Mbah and Ojo, 2018).

¹⁶ The Gang of Four (四人帮) was a political faction composed of four Chinese Communist Party officials. They came to power during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76).

¹⁷ Chinese term: 革命样板戏. Revolutionary opera is the model operas planned and engineered during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) by Jiang Qing. They were considered revolutionary and modern in terms of thematic and musical features when compared with traditional Chinese operas. Many of them were adapted to film.

¹⁸ See Appendix 1. Based on my research, there was no horror film was produced found on internet and national archives.

The demand for movies was greatly enhanced, leading to an increase in the output of horrors and thrillers in response to changing audience tastes. The *Mysterious Buddha* (张华勋 Zhang Huaxun, 1980) directed by Zhang Huaxun was an iconic film for the mainland horror film industry. However, as the first film (see Appendix 1), produced after the political and economic reformation led by Deng Xiaoping 邓小平, Zhang faced a lot of difficulties in getting the film distributed. After the first screening of the film, a heated discussion began on whether films should be commercially entertaining or still serve the ideological needs of the state. Some people believed that “all socialist film production should not have commodity value but should only be regarded as art” (顾耳 Gu Er, 1980, p. 217). Others who considered “commercial film as valuable, emphasized that if all entertainment films were required to have educational significance, then it will be no good for film development” (周啸邦 Zhou Xiaobang, 1997, p. 406). Although the two views were fiercely contested, it was certain that the horror films of that period had gained more attention from the critics and had influenced the wider film market.

In the second year of the implementation of the economic reform policy, a sci-fi horror film *The Shadow Of Ghost* (郭宝昌 Guo Baochang, 1981) produced by Guangxi Film Studio was released to the market. Later, led by the market requirement, more and more horror films for entertainment purposes were produced, including several well-known horror films which became successful and continued to develop mainland Chinese horror films. These include:

Xiaocui (雷鸣 Lei Ming, 1983), *Ghost Sisters* (孙元勋 Sun Yuanxun, 1985), *Confession of A Grave Robber* (孙志强 Sun Zhiqiang, 1986), *Sunset Glow* (岑范 Cen Fan, 1986), *Anonymous Phone Calls* (江海洋 Jiang Haiyang, 2009), *Golden Bird* (张易亨 Zhang Yiheng, 1988), *The Case of the Silver Snake* (李少红 Li Shaohong, 1988), *The Lonely Spirit in an Old Building* (梁明 Liang Ming, 1989),

The Mystery of the Hospital of St. Paul (米家山 Mi Jiashan, 1990), *Strange Love of a Ghost* (邱丽丽 Qiu Lili, 1992), *Ghost Policeman* (米家山 Mi Jiashan, 1992), *Hell Mountain Villa* (赵文忻 Zhao Wenxi, 1992).

As the film industry was trying to shift from a planned economy to a market economy, filmmakers attempted to pay more attention to the audience's expectations with regard to production techniques and aesthetic appreciation for story and genre. But due to the constraint that these production companies were state-owned institutions, the outcomes of their productions still showed the ideological influences controlled by the central authority. This was apparent in the remake of the classic horror film *Song of Midnight* in 1985 which was produced by director Yang Yanjin (1985) and used the same title. The remake shifted the theme of the original version from anti-aggression to the expression of the heroic love between the male and female protagonists, and it was widely welcomed by the market (黄银菊 Huang Yinju, 2012), but the horror elements were largely reduced.

Towards the end of 1980s, it became clear to Chinese people that the old ways of doing business were being replaced by new ways and living standards began to rise with increased modernization. By the late 1980s, it was obvious that socialism had become an empty signifier for most members of the Chinese Communist Party (Nowell-Smith, 2013, p. 413). Meanwhile, studios kept churning out relentlessly commercial products as they faced an array of concerns: a shrinking annual film attendance; increasing production costs; competition from western and Hong Kong films; popularity of home entertainment systems (VCD and DVDs) (李道新 Li Daoxin, 2005a, p. 356). During 1987, the state passed full financial accountability to the studios and these studios started producing entertainment films (SARFT, 1987), prompting the beginning of a market-driven commercial cinema.

2.4 The 1990s

Since the early 1990s, with the trend of the ‘commercial film’ or ‘entertainment film’ in Chinese filmmaking (Xiao and Zhang, 1998, p. 29), horror films in mainland China starts to show its ability to be a profit-driven genre of films as it’s lower cost and higher ROI compared with other genres. As the director Ah Gan 阿甘 once said on his own production of a series horror films in the 90s: “after the cost and tax deducted, the average return rate of my films is about 15%. From an economic point of view, the profit of the horror film is relatively high, and it is definitely a business worth doing” (姚萍 Yao Ping, 2012, p. 7). In order to attract more audiences’ attention and for box-office appeal, the horror films in the 90s, followed the formula of successful films from Hong Kong, Taiwan and even Hollywood, increased elements of sex, violence and abnormal characterizations within the films. This movement soon faced government concerns that forced them to look for alternative solutions – a joint production with foreign to avoid the censorship system.

In 1992, the 14th Congress of the Party called for a comprehensive transformation of China’s planned economy to a market economy. Under such circumstances, China’s film industry embarked on a completely market-oriented direction and opened its door to the world. For example, the horror film *The Yin and Yang of the Painted Skin* (1990) directed by King Hu 胡金銓 was jointly produced between Hong Kong and mainland China. The film included the famous Hong Kong director and actors and took the beautiful scenery of Wutai Mountain and Ming Tombs in mainland China as the setting. This joint-production presented an approach which was soon became popular again and adopted by many production companies (章柏青 Zhang Baiqing, 2006, p. 430). During the 1990s the Chinese film market gradually became an area of common interest for filmmakers and investors both domestically and internationally.

However, imported films from the United States, Japan, South Korea and other film-making countries had managed to get their films released in mainland China and received most of the film market and box office returns. In 1995, five Hollywood films were imported including the horror film *The Fugitive* (Bradshaw, 1986) which set a record for the highest box office grossing film for a single day in the history of the domestic market (Yi, 2010, p. 10). In 1996, the total national box office of the US sub-account films reached 400 million CNY. In 1998, the box office of the eight imported US sub-account films for that year was close to 600 million CNY, increasing by 45% from the previous year (Yi, 2010, pp. 7–26). Under such circumstances, domestic filmmakers realized the importance of producing Chinese native horror films so they too could compete for viewers and revenue. At the same time, the country introduced a series of policies aimed at encouraging the industry and further reduced the restrictions on film production

Notable horror films during this period which gained wide public attention were: *Love With Spirit* (霍庄 Hu Zhuang, 1993), *Woman Ghost During the Day* (赵文忻 Zhao Wenxin, 1994), *The Omen in Devil Town* (李启民 Li Qimin, 1993), *The Foggy House* (黄健中 Huang Jianzhong, 1994), *A Polygraph* (周晓文 Zhou Xiaowen, 1993), *Spirit in an Old Temple* (孙满义 Sun Manyi, 1994), *Legacy with Smell of Blood* (占俊科 Zhan Junke, 1994), *Devils and the Cross* (王学新 Wang Xuexin, 1994), *Don't Be Young* (娄烨 Lou Ye, 1994), *Soul Out* (海达 Hai Da, 1997) and *The Mirror* (萧荣 Xiao Rong, 1999). At the turn of the 21st century, horror film production in mainland China would reach a peak as many well-known directors and actors began to work in horror film and the production of horror films. For example, *The Door* (2007), directed by Li Shaohong 李少红 and *Curiosity Killed the Cat* (2006), directed by Zhang Yibai 张一白, came to the screen.

2.5 From 2003 to Present

As indicated in Appendix 1, with the help of international cooperation, the number of Chinese horror films in mainland China had risen sharply. In the year of 2000, there had been only one horror film released in mainland China - *Legend of Ghost Xi Fangping* (谢铁骊 Xie Yili, 2000). After the year 2000, with the increasing number of film co-productions between mainland China along with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other countries, Chinese horror films entered a period of diversified development. Due to the influence of foreign films and co-productions, the themes of Chinese horror films were no longer limited to the traditional content. Ghosts and *yao* films extended their plots and integrated with other subtypes that showed the influences from the west, such as psychological, Hitchcock-style horror, and pseudo-documentaries began to emerge. These new elements also provided a possible solution for the horror film directors to get away from the policies and restrictions that will be explained shortly. Filming techniques, like lighting and camera movement, influenced by Japanese and Korean successful horror films, also changed. After a few years of learning from Japan and other countries, there were some successful works that appeared and dominated the screen for a period of time. By 2012, there were 21 horror films released in one year (Appendix 1), accounting for 5% of the total number of films produced throughout the year (艺恩集团 ENGroup, 2015, p. 53). With the increasing quantity of production, the quality of horror films in mainland China had also improved and had created ‘classics,’ which were celebrated by the fans and the media. For example, *Suffocation* (张秉坚 Zhang Bingjian, 2005) won an award for the best director at the 22nd Hong Kong Film Awards where it was also nominated for awards in the category of best lead male and female actors. The film *Dumplings* (陈可辛 Peter Chen, 2004) received best screenplay and best art director nominations at the 24th Hong Kong Film Awards.

In order to further promote the film industry, the Chinese central government launched film industrialization reforms in 2002, and it was officially implemented as policy on the 1st of December 2003. This new policy entitled: *Regulations on the Administration of Movies (2002)*, set new rules for the entire film industry and allowed privately owned film companies to enter into the market on a competitive basis. Since then, the special attention given by the government towards horror films, due to its mass propaganda function, was partially relieved. Only after this, did the Chinese film industry turn into a profit-driven industry with open competition within the domestic market and from other countries.

This shift marked the end of a period during which by the government of P.R.C. made it an obligation for films to perform the function of mass-education. Now films are officially regarded as a form of entertainment. However, the implementation of the new policy does not mean that the central government has abandoned its supervision over the film industry; rather it was an attempt by the government to commercialize the film industry and give it more freedom to encourage competition within the film industry as a whole. Horror films, again, due to their characteristics were singled out for regulation by the authorities. This resulted in more specific regulations and policies aimed at controlling the content and story of horror films being produced.

As China opened its film market to the world, a trend of co-production of horror films with foreign production companies emerged. Due to its association with the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Chinese government was forced to implement dual standards on issuing permits for domestic film production and co-production with foreign countries (Wan and Kraus, 2002, pp. 419–434). The effects of this situation were that films co-produced with foreign companies could easily obtain the relevant permission it required compared to locally produced films. While less state censorship and fewer restrictions were placed on these films, under this influence, mainland

China film companies still sought support from Hong Kong and Taiwan. For example, a horror film box office hit, *Mysterious Island* (Chung, 2011), received investment by Meiya Entertainment and Oriental Screen Pictures from mainland China and was directed by the famous Hong Kong director Zhong Jichang and starred Hong Kong actor Chen Xiaochun. Another successful film, *Bunshinsaba* (Byeong-ki, 2012), was jointly financed by Beijing Yongxu Liangchen Culture Development Co., Ltd. and the South Korean production company called MONEFF.

Another characteristic of this period was that after 2010, with production costs continuously increasing and free competition between foreign and domestic films, audiences' expectations were changing in terms of visual effects in horror films. With more strict and specified policies and regulations on horror films, horror film production companies were in a corner in which they were no longer able to attract the audience's attention through horrific plots as most of the horrific scenes were banned by the government; and they now needed to regain audiences by providing better visual effects. This situation put horror film productions into a polarizing position leading to large production companies winning the market share of box office revenue by increasing its investment in visual effects in order to refine film quality; small production companies tend to lower their overall cost on production in order to find a balance. For example, *The Painted Skin II* (2012) nearly doubled its production cost compared to its previous version (南方都市报 China Southern Daily, 2012). The result led to larger production companies winning more of the market share of box office revenue but with very low profit margins as they spent a huge sum of money on visual effects; at the same time smaller production companies were also not making money.

2.6 Conclusion

Against the backdrop discussed above, this chapter attempts to explore the nature of horror cinema in China by putting it into consideration within historical periods. It is clear that through the entire period of Chinese horror cinema, government policies and treatment towards the industry played a central role in both KMT and CCP regime. Before 1949, we see political authorities could influence film production through policies. However, due to there being no central governing body in place at that time, in some cases, film studios could still refuse to act on requests by the government. The situation sharply changed after 1949, within the new period, the state enjoyed complete control of every aspect of filmmaking, often in the most tyrannical manner and always influenced by the political situation and movement (campaigns). The development of film in the People's Republic of China was, therefore, drawn ever closer into the orbit of party politics (Xiao and Zhang, 1998, p. 21) until the party had realized the need for the open competition of the industry and commodification of the film.

The opening-up policy made it possible for the film industry to shift its function from the ideological purpose of education to a profit-driven position. However, when the Chinese horror film production entered into the competition, it was already too late compared with other well-established countries, Japan for example. Through international cooperation and interregional cooperation with Hong Kong and Taiwan, Chinese mainland horror film production started getting back to its central role in the market and it reached the peak in the year around 2000~2002, before the new policies and regulation further drag it down.

This chapter has connected pre-existing historical knowledge on the production and content of horror films to holistically trace the development of this industry over time. Thus, in a way it intersects the economy and ideology of the cinematic fact in

mainland China. This calls for the examination of what sets Chinese horror films apart from their counterparts in other countries. The next chapter reviews the traditional and cultural background of Chinese horror film.

Chapter 3 – The Study of Supernatural Narrative Traditions in China

Chinese horror cinema is rich in variety. It has multifaceted variations of the genre in which horror is combined with *kung fu* (*Chinese Martial Arts*), *wuxia* (*literally means 'martial heroes'*), *zhiguai* (*tales of the miraculous*), comedy, crime thriller, melodrama, etc. Stephen Teo (2013) has summarized two resources of these ghost storytelling traditions: one is Chinese classical literature such as *Liaozhai Zhiyi*¹⁹ and, the other is Chinese traditional religions like Buddhism and Taoism.

These traditions and religious beliefs appear in different forms such as folklore and legend which have been told from generation to generation and have formed a particular 'ghost-story' structure (Teo, 2014, pp. 95–97). Besides legends and folklore, the belief of the existence of ghosts is also rooted in the philosophical reasoning of a Confucian view of the afterlife which forms a social context for audiences before they even see the film in cinemas. Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism work together to set up a syncretic world view which takes the existence of Sukhavati (heaven) and Naraka (hell) for granted, and these two worlds are separated by the power of *Yin* and *Yang*. This world view also forms a unique characteristic found in Chinese horror films in terms of story style and the treatment of its female characters, these two aspects will be discussed in further chapters.

As a means of recording and disseminating information, film inevitably bears the historical mission of cultural heritage. The well-known Soviet director Andrei Tarkovsky once said:

Each of the arts has its own poetic meaning, and cinema is no exception. It has a role, its own destiny - it came into being in order to express a specific area of life, the meaning of which up till then had

¹⁹ 聊斋志异, published in 1740 and first translated into English by Herbert Giles as *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* in 1968

not found expression in any existing art form. Everything new in art emerged in answer to a spiritual need and its function is to ask those questions which are supremely relevant to our epoch.

(Tarkovsky, 1989, p. 348)

From Tarkovsky it is possible to see that film as a form of art is not only a form of documenting motion, but also a concentration of expressing the nation's spiritual need. And this collective consciousness is largely derived from the tradition and culture of the nation. Landmann identified this so-called tradition in his book *Philosophische Anthropologie* whereby he saw human behaviour being governed by the culture that people have acquired are all based on historical creations (Landmann, 1976, pp. 277–278).

The five-thousand-year history of China produced a prosperous Chinese culture with traditions that stretch back to ancient Chinese civilization. Chinese horror films draw inspiration from these literary traditions and historical cultures, and include religious references from Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism concepts. This absorption is conscious and unconscious and has created a unique Chinese film genre that reflects Chinese peoples' moral aesthetics. This chapter starts off looking at the long history of supernatural narrative traditions and religious beliefs in pre-modern China, and their deep-rooted effect in shaping Chinese culture, even down to today. The figure of the 'ghost' is the key persisting element here. The argument homes in on the specific characteristics and determinants of Chinese horror films, through looking at cultural preoccupations with a binary universe, the search for immortality and the pre-eminence of the Chinese family unit.

3.1 The Traditional View and the Sense of the World in Chinese Horror Films

3.2.1 History, Culture and Tradition

There is a long history of ancestral worship in China in the form of ghosts and gods dating back to ancient times. During the Song and Ming Dynasties²⁰, by the influence of Neo-Confucianist thinking, the worship of ancestors in China was moved from the altar to the popular fictions, forming a rich folk horror culture. Yuan opera²¹, Ming and Qing novels²² made the stories of ghosts and gods part of mass entertainment. The influence and vitality of those literary texts and the performing arts provided numerous materials for Chinese horror movies, further nourishing the development of Chinese horror film.

The so-called god, in the chapter of *The Law of Sacrifices* of the *Book of Rites*²³, describes spirits by saying: “mountains, forests, streams, valleys, hills, and mounds, which are able to produce clouds, and on occasion winds and rain, were all regarded as (dominated by) spirits.” The original Chinese ancestors were in awe of nature and believed that all things were spiritual and supernatural, and the original god was also a natural god. The so-called ghost, in *Book of Rites* is defined as: “the death of all creatures is spoken of as their dissolution; but man, when dead is said to be in the ghostly state.” Chinese ancestors believed that among all kinds of creatures, only human beings have souls. When a person dies, they become a ghost and continue their immortal life in the realm of death which is intertwined with the realm of life in some circumstances, thus providing a foundation for world view of modern Chinese horror films.

20 Original term in Chinese: 宋明理学

21 Original term in Chinese: 宋、元的戏曲

22 Original term in Chinese: 明、清的小说

²³*The Book of Rites* or *Lij*, 《礼记》, is a collection of texts describing the social forms, administration, and ceremonial rites of the Zhou dynasty (1050–771 BC) as they were understood in the Warring States and the early Han periods.

Archaeological discoveries have found many ritual relics and ritual objects from early societies confirming that ghost/god beliefs occupied an important role during ancient times. Beginning in the Xia Dynasty (2070-1600 BC), the ruling class used the ‘natural power of God’ to legalize its kingship. In the book *Lianshan* of Xia Dynasty and *Guicang (Return to the Hidden)* of the Yin Dynasty the ruler combines kingship and the divine power through the occupation of the monk/priest, and the monk/priest becomes a form of communication between humans and ghosts/gods. By the time of the Zhou Dynasty, human worship of ghosts and gods evolved into an idea regarding the respect of heaven and learning from the ancestor which was later adopted by Confucius in his doctrine of *Analects*²⁴. The book *I Ching*²⁵, also edited by Confucius himself, was influential in Chinese culture after it explained the belief in the relationships governing the human-ghost/gods. The ancient Chinese philosophical thoughts contained in this important book became the core of Chinese traditional culture due to its attitude towards heaven and hell and has had a tremendous impact on Chinese society till today.

Within the Spring and Autumn Period (771 to 476 BC) and the later Warring States Period (475–221 BC), various schools of thought competed with each other, this is not surprising as it was a period of great liberation in Chinese thought. The theory of post-mortem relationships between ghosts and gods was very influential in shaping what would become a national Chinese cosmology. In the chapter *Knowing the Ghost* from the book *Mozi*²⁶ the theory of the existence of ghosts and gods was confirmed. In *ZuoZhuan*,²⁷ there are also records of confessions, pledges, curses to and by ghosts which can be seen as evidence of the existence of the supernatural power. Qu Yuan’s

24 《论语》

25 《易经》

26 Original term in Chinese: 墨子, 明鬼篇

27 Original term in Chinese: 左传

(c. 340–278 BC) poem, *The Nine Songs* and *The Conjuring of the Spirit* are probably the first written records related to the description of ghosts in Chinese literary form.

An important feature of the Qin (221 BC) period was the belief in the existence of *xian*²⁸, and the pursuit of immortality. The first emperor of China, Qin Shihuang (秦始皇) had tried many times to find evidence of *xian* by sending a fleet to what today is referred to as China's eastern sea, Japan. In the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), with the rise of Taoism, the ghost/gods and *xian* culture became more prevalent. Taoism was formed on the basis of the belief in the existence of *xian*. Taoist beliefs are complex and there are many schools of thoughts combined within it, but the belief in immortality is one of the important activities of Taoism (田兆元 Tian Zhaoyuan, 1993, p. 49).

As the only religion originating from China, the roots of Taoism date back all the way to 4th century BC. Taoism cosmological notions such as *Yin/Yang*, later became a common element in Chinese horror films. The existence of the realm of ghosts and the supernatural is one of the fundamental elements of Taoism, which is represented by *Yin*. Chinese horror films also often show the content of Taoist spells and Taoist rituals. In mythology, Taoists who obtained superpower through the practice of Taoism have the ability to control nature, perform exorcism and use divination to tell

²⁸ The idea of *xian* (Chinese: 仙) developed from pursuing the spiritual “immortality and enlightenment”, to physical immortality – mortal people through practices methods such as alchemy, breath meditation, and tai chi, and eventually become physically immortal. Different to Christianity, all Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist thought believe all creatures, including human kind and others, can increase their spiritual power by performing and/or obeying religious practice. This means that during ancient China, people could train themselves to become a kind of god – a man who has superpowers, like ghosts and other supernatural creatures. The distinction between human immortals, ghost and *yao* is that the origin of *yao* is not that of human beings. For example, a tree can become *yao*, and a fox can evolve itself into *yao* through supernatural practice. When a human being obtains superpowers through training, it becomes a supernatural being; and when a human being dies, its spirit becomes ghost or zombie. *Yao* is a unique type of creature in the field of pan-Asian culture. It is not an elf because it requires practice and training to gain superpowers, and theoretically all kinds of things can become *yao*. *Xian* and *Yao* are normally in opposite position to each other as they represent different side of human moral – *xian* is generally good and *yao* is evil.

fortunes, this is a common subject in Chinese horror films as well. Taoists who conjure up spirits and fight ghosts/*yao* often appear as the ending of a Chinese horror film. A particular sub-genre of Chinese horror film – the zombie/vampire (Jiangshi, 僵尸片) films or Jiangshi fiction - is a genre in which a Taoist priest can control a reanimated corpse and turn it into a *jiangshi* to perform superpowers. The philosophical belief of *yin* and its relationship to the female and the realm of afterlife, forms a strong influence within ghost movies.

Buddhism believes that life is bitter and human beings are suffering because of this, while also focusing on karma, reincarnation, and faith in the afterlife (冯友兰 Feng Youlan, 1952). This idea of focusing on the spiritual part of a human being is deeply in conflict with the Taoist pursuit of immortality of the physical body. From the Wei Jin, and Southern-Northern Dynasties (220-589 AD) to the Sui (581-619 AD) and Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), the disputes between Taoism and Buddhism increased and decreased, however the main trend of the ghost and god culture continued well throughout and beyond this period. After the Song (960-1279 AD) and Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 AD), the conflicts between Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism gradually eased with the formation of Neo-Confucianism in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD). It marked the completion of the integration of the three religions which formed the foundation of modern Chinese beliefs. This syncretic world view continuously influences Chinese society even after moving into China's modern period.

After the abolishment of the imperial system with the end of the Emperor's rule in 1928, the official ritual systems were abandoned, but folklore and ghost culture remained active and this continues still today within a unique Chinese folk-horror culture. It existed firstly, in traditional Chinese festivals through the rituals of

commemorating the death of ancestors, the Ching Ming Festival²⁹ and the Hungry Ghost Festival³⁰, for example. Secondly, it existed in those traditions of funeral customs across China.

These cultural traditions and customs have been incorporated into Chinese horror films through story devices such as the use of Buddhist and Taoist priests who commonly play an important role in these movies because they have power to communicate with the dead. The vast Chinese ghost/gods or *xian/yao* culture also becomes the perfect source for Chinese horror films and forms a unique referencing system for its audiences.

3.2.2 The Influence of Confucian Cultural Tradition on Chinese Horror Film

During the Han Dynasty a movement to “dismiss the hundred schools, revere only the Confucian” (Mai, 2012, pp. 101–108), led to Confucianism becoming the only officially supported ideology over two thousand years and Confucianism also found support from the central government of the successive dynasties.

Moral consciousness is one of the important principles of Confucianism, and it is also a distinguishing feature of other religions. It can be said that moral ontology constitutes the foundation of Confucianism and has a dominant position within it. During the course of the development of Chinese-language films over the past 110 years, this spirit of emphasizing moral perfection as the value of life has always been the dominating position, with it having a tremendous impact on the production of Chinese horror films. Although horror films depict fantastic (unreal) worlds of the supernatural, this does not necessarily affect the advocacy of moral perfection in Chinese horror films enforced by Confucianism. Confucius himself spoke about

²⁹清明节

³⁰中元节

respecting “spiritual beings” even though he warned that it was best to avoid them (Backus and Soothill, 1969). This view of the supernatural by Confucius has two major influences on Chinese culture: 1) it confirms the existence of the ghost and 2) it marks out the principle of Confucianism that focuses on the mortals over that of the immortals. Confucianism is rooted in the deep structure of national psychology and, although film began in the West, the profound influence of Confucian cultural traditions is self-evident in Chinese horror film (郑家栋 Zheng Jiadong and 叶海烟 Ye Haiyan, 1995, p. 37). This is seen in the Chinese horror film’s attention to morality, and the judgment of right and wrong, good and evil which are major themes that are constantly revisited in the stories and characters of these films.

Most of the early Chinese horror movies used a binary opposition in plot construction. The story usually saw evil being defeated by justice where the good people always won, and the wicked people were punished and ate the evil fruit in the end. After 2003, with the influence of international horror movie trends, some attempt were been made in Chinese horror film by adopting open endings or antihero themes, but normally without success. This can be seen as the influence from the traditional Chinese aesthetics, in which the harmony between morality and beauty is the most important concept. Confucius said in the chapter of *Sinology* in the *Analects*: “There is a beauty, but moral is good.” Confucian pursuit of benevolence, emphasizing the moral education concept as the same time punishing evil and promoting goodness has always had a profound influence on Chinese horror film. This characteristic can also be seen in most of wuxia films as well.

Different from the Western concept of the individual as the smallest unit in society, the smallest unit in Chinese society in Confucianism’s view is the family.

What are the things which men consider right? - Kindness on the part of the father, and filial duty on that of the son; gentleness on the part

of the elder brother, and obedience on that of the younger; righteousness on the part of the husband, and submission on that of the wife; kindness on the part of elders, and deference on that of juniors; with benevolence on the part of the ruler, and loyalty on that of the minister - these ten are the things which men consider to be right.

Liyun- the *Book of Rites* (c.5 Century B.C.)

The Confucian concept of family ethics includes not only the relationship between parents and children, but also the order within every aspect of societal relations. In Chinese horror films, there are many examples which evoke horrific feelings by disrupting these relationships. This concept of family ethics directly influences the female protagonist's action line in the Chinese horror film, which will be explained in the case study through an examination of traditional gender roles from the perspective of the monstrous-feminine theory.

3.2.3 Conclusion

Marxism believes that all religions are nothing but a reflection of the fantasies of people's daily lives in their minds. In this reflection, human power is transformed to a form of superhuman power (欧大年 Ou Danian, 1993, p. 21). The power of religion is not only manifested in people's faith, but also in its ability to partially change the subjective consciousness of a nation (范纯武 Fan Chunwu, 王见川 Wang Jianchuan and 高致华 Gao Zhihua, 2009, p. 473). Buddhism, Taoism and many other religious cultures have spread to varying degrees in the history of China for five thousand years. However, from the perspective of horror films, Buddhism and Taoism are undoubtedly the two driving forces that influence representation in Chinese horror films. These two religions not only provide many themes for Chinese horror movies, but also bring a different aesthetic style to Chinese horror films.

Religious elements such as ghost/gods, spells (magic), hells, *xian/yao* provide enough cultural elements in Chinese horror films, constitute the world view and story patterns into the films. Moreover, these materials exist in religious cultures that are well known to the Chinese community which make it easier to trigger the audience's resonance and create a horrible effect through this already built-up referencing system. For a long time, they have formed and conveyed the spiritual Chinese traditional culture, and significantly shaped the national character of Chinese films even when it encounters the policies and regulations set up by the Chinese government in the P.R.C.

3.3 Horror Film Genre and Its Close Relation to Policies in Post-socialist China

Most Chinese scholars tend to define horror film by comparing it with other types of genre films. For example, Hao Jian, in his book *Typography of Film*, marked the difference between horror and thriller by stating that horror films are a journey into an irrational world while thriller films are a horrific journey into a rational world (郝建 Hao Jian, 2002). In her essay, *Not Just Horror – Research of Three Dimensions in Horror Film*, Shen Zhuangjuan claims that from a diachronic perspective, a horror film is a type of film in which the primary purpose is to arouse extreme fear and a feeling of disgust from the audience through *mise-en-scène* (沈壮娟 Shen Zhuangjuan and 高月峰 Gao Yuefeng, 2006). What all scholars writing about the horror genre share is a common understanding that the core of a horror film is designed to frighten the viewer.

After the examination of the previous chapters, we can see that Chinese horror film is nationally and culturally related within a semi-closed community. For example, the image of a snake may cause a feeling of fear to audiences from some countries, but it represents rebirth and life in ancient Egyptian culture. In Chinese culture the dragon

means good luck but normally it has been used to represent evil in Western stories and myths. The nature of this national-cultural relation to horrific feelings requires a referencing system through representations on a filmic fact level. On cinematic fact demission, I will argue that the horror film genre is defined more by government policy than market performance in the Chinese context.

The study of genre for market and production success is explained by Rick Altman in his book *Film/Genre* (1999) and suggests the following formula:

1. From box-office information, identify a successful film.
2. Analyze the film in order to discover what made it successful.
3. Make another film stressing the assumed formula for success.
4. Check box-office information on the new film and reassess the success formula accordingly.
5. Use the revised formula as a basis for another film.
6. Continue the process indefinitely

(Altman, 1999)

According to his formula, filmmakers are continuously emulating the generic film in order to maximize its market potential through meeting the audience's expectations. The most important factor missing when applying this formula to the Chinese context when we consider horror film as a genre film in the Chinese market, is the governmental regulatory policy. Like in many other countries, the Hollywood system is also affected by censorship such as the moral restrictions imposed by the production code or through McCarthyism and its black-listing of perceived 'communist' sympathizers in the USA. However, due to the lack of a clear Motion Picture Association of America Film Rating System, which has become standardized in the USA, the policies and regulation on film censorship in China are much more under control of the officials instead of the market. This results in a 'hidden' influence that insidiously and efficiently changes the representation of narrative patterns,

character types and thematic aspects of horror film and constitute the specific cinematic fact in post-socialist China.

It could be argued that a film policy based on anti-superstition is idiosyncratically Chinese. Firstly, the concept of the ghost is a pre-modern folk idea that the PRC as a now modern day socialist country claims to have eschewed; secondly, due to their connection with different realms, ghosts are politically charged (Pang, 2011, pp. 461–476). In the following chapter, I will examine this close relation between Chinese horror film and the major influence of the context of production in mainland China – policies and regulations.

Chapter 4 – The Study of Policy Frameworks in Post-socialist China

This Chapter unpacks several recent cinema policy frameworks and looks specifically at how the post-socialist Chinese government maintains control over domestic film production. This is done with the hope of explaining the mechanics of cultural power in China today and pointing out several ways in which filmmakers have developed strategies to legitimate their use of ‘ghosts’ in this constraining governmental environment.

4.1 Introduction to the Chinese Film Policies

As with any other country, China’s earliest censorship was focused on the screen images perceived. The initial film regulations focused on elements such as brutality and sexual intercourse within a film (Wall, 2011, p. 38). According to the film scholar Xiao Zhiwei 肖志伟, China’s first official attempt to manage film exhibitions was conducted by Shanghai Autonomous Bureau in 1910 when, in an attempt to stop “men and women from sitting together in the darkness,” the viewing of movies “in the open field” was also prohibited (Xiao, 1997, p. 3).

In the 1920s, detective films and crime films filled with violent and bloody images from Hollywood flooded into Shanghai, causing serious risks to the audience and society who at that time was not used to those images. From 1920s to the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the social situation in China was extremely chaotic and the ruling authorities responded by paying more attention to this emerging new form of media which also conveyed moral and social values. This situation thus required an effective censorship system to standardize the film market. Various relegations and policies came out under these situations³¹. Some of them focused on

³¹ The Regulations on Film Censorships, Interim Provisions on Film Censorship, Policy on Literary and Art, Rules for the Inspection of Films, Procedures for Film Productions by Foreigners in China, Establishing the

the restrictions of horror films, such as the *Interim Rules for the Inspection of Movies*³², the *Rules for the Inspection of Films*³³ and the *Film Inspection Act*³⁴. The film censorship system on horror during this period mainly focused on the content of superstition and eradicating of representation of evil religions in a film. Scenes in a film such as “perform god, worship Buddha, make wisher in front of God, promote evil religion and defamation of certain religions, perform ghosts, perform superstitious, playing grotesque records” were officially banned (蒋中正 Jiang Zhongzheng, 1930).

After the establishment of the P.R.C. in 1949, film was identified as a tool of propaganda and education. The film industry was thus under the dual command of both Radio, Film and Television Department of the State Council and the Culture Department of the State.³⁵ All film production and distribution now fell under the direct control of the government. Film policies and regulations thus became the responsibility of departmental policies regulated by different authorities over the distribution channels. The Film Bureau set up a distribution office and set up six large administrative district film manager companies in six major cities across the country to implement unified management (Qian, 2003). Subsequently, in January 1951, the Chinese Film Management Company was established by the Bureau, and later changed to the Chinese Film Distribution Corporation, which had taken over the

Party's Literary and Art Policy, Cinema Inspection Law, The Rules for the Implementation of the Film Inspection Act, Organization Rules for the Film Inspection Committee, Provisional Standards for Film Inspection, Implementation Rules for the Interim Procedures for Film Inspection etc.

³² 检查电影暂行规则

³³ 检查电影片规则

³⁴ 电影检查法

³⁵ On October 1, 1949, the Administrative Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China established the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China in accordance to the Organic Law of the P.R.C. at the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on September 27, 1949. There were 6 bureaus and offices which were under direct govern by the Ministry by law and, film bureau was one of them. Shanghai Film Studio (1949), Beijing Film Studio (1948), August First Film Studio (1951) and Changchun Film Group Corporation (Northeast Film Studio 1950) initially formed the entire feature film production base in the new China. After the completion of the socialist transformation (1956), Shanghai Art Film Production, Zhujiang Film Studio, Xi'an Film Studio, Emei Film Studio, Shanghai Film Translation Studio, and Youth Film Studio were established and enlarged the feature film production system (丁亚平 Ding Yaping, 2011). It is valuable to be noticed that all the film production studios at the time were entirely owned by the state.

various businesses managed by the Film Bureau including its authority of distribution (Wang, 2013, p. 62). The Fourth Session of the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress of 1986 approved the proposal of the State Council to request the Ministry of Radio and Television to be changed to the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT). The Film Bureau was transferred from the Ministry of Culture to the leadership of the newly formed SARFT. On the 29th March 1998, the SARFT was upgraded to directory level and became the direct agency of the State Council.

With the gradual improvement of the market economic system and the development of the film industry more recently, the problem of mismanagement of the film industry has become increasingly prominent, affecting and restricting the further development of the industry. To deepen the reform of the film administrative management system and further rationalize the film market, it was necessary to adjust the management functions and responsibilities. In 2002, almost 25 years after opening-up in 1978, the film sector in mainland China finally went into the its own post-socialism period.

4.2 Film Industry and Regulatory Policies in the Post-socialist Period

With the rapid development of economic and globalization, China's film authorities had to rethink the significance of film as a commodity. In the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2002), the cultural industry was explicitly included in the *Grand Strategic Vision of the National Development Plan*, and the film industry was regarded as the part of the cultural industry that bore the brunt of this planning. In late of year, the SARFT issued *Regulations on the Administration of Movies (2002)* which was intended, in parallel with the economic reforms in other sectors, to

commercialize the film sector to a profit driven model. This regulation was officially implemented in 2003.

Following the 16th National Congress, the relevant departments issued a series of powerful policies to support the reform and development of the film industry and promote the innovation of filmmaking as a profit driven industry. Accordingly, the following policy documents were issued:

2002	1. <i>Regulations on the Administration of Movies</i>
2003	1. <i>Interim Provisions on the Access of Operational Qualifications for Movie Production, Distribution and Projection;</i> 2. <i>Interim Provisions on Foreign-invested Cinemas;</i> 3. <i>Regulations on the Administration of Films Produced by Chinese and Foreign Co-ops;</i> 4. <i>Interim Provisions on the Archival Filing of Film Scripts (Abstracts) and the Administration of Films</i> ³⁶
2004	1. <i>Interim Provisions on Operation Qualification Access for Movie Enterprises;</i> 2. <i>Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Film Industry; Regulations on the Administration of Chinese and Foreign Cooperative Films;</i> 3. <i>Interim Provisions on Foreign Investment Cinemas</i> ³⁷
2005	1. <i>Supplementary Provisions to the Interim Provisions on Operation Qualification Access for Movie Enterprises;</i> 2. <i>Supplementary Provisions on the Interim Provisions of Foreign Investment Cinemas</i> ³⁸
2006	1. <i>Interim Provisions on Foreign Investment in Cinema (Supplementary Provision 2);</i> 2. <i>Provisions on the Archival Filing of Film Scripts (Abstracts) and the Administration of Films</i> ³⁹

³⁶ Original titles in Chinese: 《外商投资影院暂行规定》、《中外合作摄制影片管理规定》、《电影剧本（梗概）立项、电影片审查暂行规定》、《电影制片、发行、放映经营资格准入暂行规定》

³⁷ Original titles in Chinese: 《关于加快电影产业发展的意见》、《中外合作摄制电影片管理规定》、《电影企业经营资格准入暂行规定》、《外商投资电影院暂行规定》

³⁸ Original titles in Chinese: 《电影企业经营资格准入暂行规定》（补充规定）、《外商投资电影院暂行规定一的补充规定》

³⁹ Original titles in Chinese: 外商投资电影院暂行规定（补充规定二）、《电影剧本（梗概）立项、电影片管理规定》

2008	1. <i>Notice on Further Rationalizing the Local Film Management System</i> ⁴⁰
2015	1. <i>Interim Provisions on Operation Qualification Access for Movie Enterprises (2015 Revision)</i> ; 2. <i>Supplementary Provisions to the Interim Provisions on Business Qualification Access for Film Enterprises (2015 Revision)</i> ⁴¹
2016	1. <i>Film Industry Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China</i> ⁴²
2017	1. <i>Provisions on the Archival Filing of Film Scripts (Abstracts) and the Administration of Films (2017 Amendment)</i> ⁴³

Table 1

These policies and regulations, on one hand, open up the film market to the private companies; for example, Article No. 3 of *Interim Provisions on the Access of Operational Qualifications for Movie Production, Distribution and Projection* (Table 1: 2003-1) encourages that the domestic state-owned and non-state-owned entities to establish production companies. On the other hand, these policies form a censorship system that controls film production from pre-production to the distribution; from film script to advertisement – this system is built through the *Interim Provisions on the Archival Filing of Film Scripts (Abstracts) and the Administration of Films (2003)* and its reversion in 2006 and the latest amendment in 2017. Chinese film censorship system thus distinguishes itself from the commonly used Motion Picture Content Rating System in other countries due to the emphasis on ideological control. It takes the film industry as a whole and regulates every aspects of the film related under only one authority. This is mainly reflected in the following three aspects of control: 1) pre-assessment of film script - clearly states that all kinds of films (including filmed movies, digital films and telemovies etc.) as features films, documentary films,

⁴⁰ Original title in Chinese: 《关于进一步理顺地方电影管理体制的通知》

⁴¹ Original titles in Chinese: 《电影企业经营资格准入暂行规定(2015 修正)》、《电影企业经营资格准入暂行规定》的补充规定(2015 修正)

⁴² Original titles in Chinese: 《中华人民共和国电影产业促进法》

⁴³ Original titles in Chinese: 《电影剧本(梗概)备案、电影片管理规定(2017 修正)》

popular science films, cartoons, and special topic films are required to submit the film script (abstract) for examination before project initiation (Table 1: 2003-3/4, 2004-1, 2006-2, 2017-1); 2) regulations on foreign investment into the film industry - *Interim Provisions on Foreign Investment Cinemas* for an example, and 3) admission conditions for film distribution agencies (Table 1: 2015-1/2). The Permit for Movie Production is the first gate keeper that focuses on script content. The regulations on foreign investments in the film industry pays particular attention to the foreign enterprise's political background. This policy asks questions about the ideological standards of the foreign company and interrogates whether these will interrupt communist beliefs and how they might manipulate film plots which could introduce negative influences into Chinese society. The admission conditions for film distribution agencies is the last gatekeeper before the film is presented to the public and as a result only those companies that comply with government requirements receive permission to project films to the public. These regulations and policies are enforced through a very strict censorship system.

In detail, the censorship system mainly focuses on a comprehensive review of the content (topic, theme, story, plot etc.) and technical quality of finished films in accordance with the *Provisions on the Archival Filing of Film Scripts (Abstracts)* and the *Administration of Films* (Table 1: 2003, 2006, 2017) by the film review committee under the SARFT. Films that have not been examined and approved by the SARFT may not be produced, exhibited, imported or exported. Film importation shall be operated by the film import business unit designated by the administrative department of SARFT and shall be submitted to the film review committee for inspection before importation. Any film that is publicly exhibited in China, whether it is a domestically made film or an imported film, must first pass the film censorship.

The procedure for approval is briefly illustrated in Chart 1 below to provide an

example of the bureaucratic and regulatory environment that film productions are subjected to in the current production context in China.

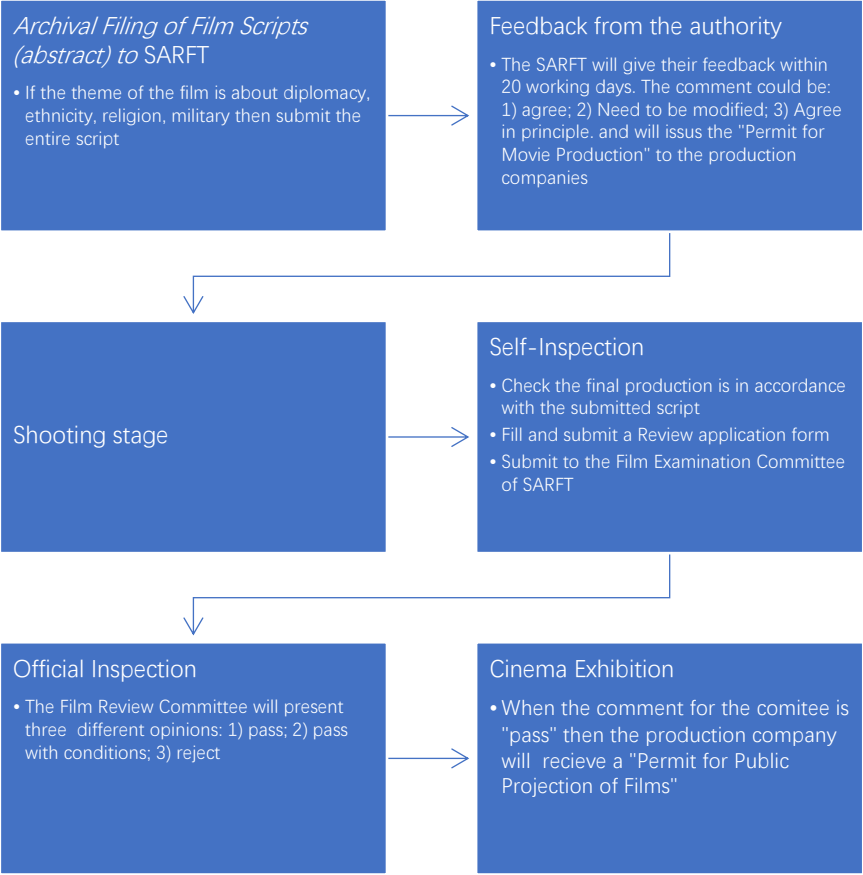


Chart 1

As Chart 1 shows, SARFT is the national administrative department responsible for the operation and regulation of film production, distribution, exhibition (projection), import and export. A company, enterprise or other economic organization inside China who intends to produce a film must apply for the Permit for Film Production (for single film). This company needs to fill out an application letter, a photocopy of the business license, a proof on the sources of funds, the outline of the screenplay (abstract, should not be less than 1000 words) to SARFT. The SARFT will examine the production qualification under the application and the film abstract within 20 working days. If it qualifies, a Permit for Film Production for each film will be issued

to the company; if it does not qualify, the SARFT will reply in writing to explain the reason thereof. Then the film enters its actual shooting stage. When the film production is complete, the company needs to fill out another application for the examination of the finished film. The Film Examination Committee of SARFT gives feedback within 20 working days upon receipt of the complete film⁴⁴ and other relevant materials. The Committee will issue a Film Examination Decision and the Permit for Public Projection of the film if it qualifies. If not, the committee provides an explanation of the reasons and the company can make amendments and resubmit (SARFT, 2017).

In terms of film content, the censorship of films rely on three perspectives: 1) socialist ideology (for example, Article 3 of *Film Industry Promotion Law 2017* stipulated that film activities shall be conducted in adherence to serving the people and the socialism, giving priority to social benefits, and realizing the unity of social and economic benefits.). 2) violating other laws (for example, in Article 13 of *Provisions on the Archival Filling of Film Scripts and the Administration of Films 2017* stipulate that no film may carry any of the content that is prohibited by any law, administrative regulation, or provisions of the State.); 3) contain content that is prohibited (for example, all the regulations listed in Table 1 stipulated that horror, murder, blood, violent elements are prohibited).

Those regulations and policies have profoundly influenced film production in China, in particular, the third perspective has the strongest impact on horror films. Due to the likelihood of violence and superstitious elements in these types of films, it is more difficult for horror film to get these permits. This requires that filmmakers working in the horror genre need to pay more attention to such policies and regulations. There are three documents that should be considered closely here, the *Film Industry Promotion*

⁴⁴ Original term in Chinese: 混录双片

Law 2017 which provides a legal framework, the administrative regulations contained in the *Regulation on the Administration of Movies 2001*, and the departmental rules related in the *Provisions on the Archival Filling of Film Scripts and the Administration of Films 2017*. Besides these three, the SARFT frequent issues notifications to regulate the industry with more detailed orders. The relevant terms contained in these three documents and notifications that are of particular concern to the regulation of horror or supernatural films are listed in Appendix 2.

Chapter 5 - Case Studies

In summary of the above Chapter 2, 3 and 4, we reach a picture that Chinese horror cinema finds itself within a polysystem as Fig. 1 shows below. This unique cinematic fact in mainland China differentiates itself from other countries by its ideological tendency and cultural influences which shape its censorship system through government policies and regulations.

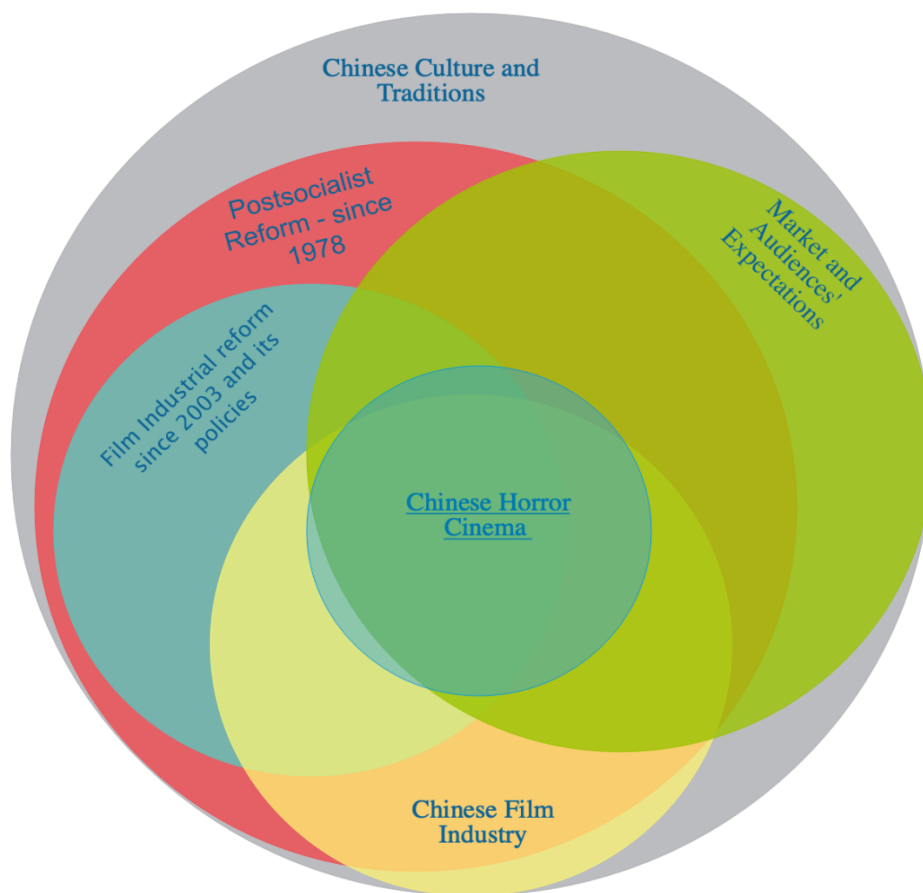


Fig. 1

In this chapter, we focus on the policy influences on horror film production in the form of case studies in order to illustrate what and how the state mechanism impacts on a real case scenario. Two western film theorists, Tzvetan Todorov in relation to plot structure and Barbara Creed in her analysis of the female characters in horror

films have been selected to illustrate how this narrative subject is shaped by policies and regulations. The reasons for my focus on these aspects are two-fold. First, as has already been explained, the ghost-story structure has been the dominant form of Chinese horror film from its literal and folklore traditions. Secondly, as many scholars have noticed, among various supernatural phenomena and images, the female ghost remains a dominant figure in Asian horror cinema (Lee, 2011, p. 291). It needs to be pointed out that the focus of those two theories does not mean there are only two theories existing in western scholarship on horror films nor are they the only theories this study is concerned with. They are applied here in order to offer an understanding of how Chinese horror cinema in the post-socialist period is impacted by Chinese film censorship and policy regulation.

Female Ghosts in the Shadow of the State – the Adaptations of the “*The Painted Skin*”

As we already learned from Chapter 3, the most famous and perhaps the most influential literal source of the Chinese ghost story in films is Pu Songling’s *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (聊斋志异, *Liaozhai Zhiyi*), a collection of supernatural folklores in late Qing dynasty. The first case film we are going to look at closely in this chapter – “The Painted Skin” (画皮, *Huapi*) – is one of the most popular stories from the book to be adapted to film in China. Various adaptations of the story into films were produced in association with mainland China under the following titles: *Painted Skin* (1966, dir. Bao Fang), *Painted Skin* (2008, dir. Gordon Chen), *Painted Skin: The Resurrection* (2012, dir. Wu Ershan)⁴⁵. A comparative study on those different adaptations of the same story offers a better opportunity for us to understand the policies of Chinese horror cinema at the different times. In looking at different

⁴⁵ 画皮 (1966, 鲍方), 画皮 (2008, 陈嘉上), 画皮II (2012, 乌尔善)

treatments of the same story plot and characters in different context of adaptations, this section aims to investigate how Chinese film policies in mainland China turned itself to a national specific horror cinema in the post-socialist period.

In the original story in *Liaozhai*, Wangsheng 太原王生, the protagonist, met a homeless beautiful girl who claimed to be an ill-treated concubine on his way home. He takes the girl home and hides her in his study. A few days later, Wang's wife Chen, discovers this affair but fails to change Wang's mind. One day at the market place, a Taoist priest stops Wang and informs him that he is possessed. Wang does not believe the priest. As he returns home, he finds the gates locked. Wang manages to find a way into the window where he makes a startling discovery. He sees the girl is actually an ugly monster. Shocked by the discovery, Wang returns to the Taoist for protection. The priest gives him a magic fly-whisk meant to wipe out the evil, but this does not work and the girl turns to evil and rips out Wang's heart. Wang's wife asks help from the priest, but the Taoist loses the battle against the demon when it reverts to its original form. Later on, the priest tells Chen to visit a lunatic who may have the power to save her husband. The lunatic treats her with disrespect and continuously insults her, but Chen does not give up. Finally, the lunatic coughs out a pill which turns into a live beating heart and saves her husband's life.

Director Bao Fang's adaptation of the *Painted Skin* in 1966, follows the common plot of the story in the configuration of traditional ghost stories. The basic plot is structured around three main characters and four acts. Three characters appear in the following order: a young scholar, a female ghost or a disguised ghost as a young innocent woman and a person who plays the exorcist (a Taoist). The four acts are: 1) the protagonist and the heroine meet each other, 2) they are falling in love with each other, 3) approaching danger but resist to believe the reality and 4) in the fourth act the Taoist performs an exorcism. The most interesting part of Bao's version is that he

intentionally trimmed the plot of Wang's wife, Chen. In the original story in *Liaozhai*, Chen appears as a submissive subject and loyal wife to her husband, and finally, saves his life by putting herself through mistreatment by the lunatic. To understand the reason behind this change, we need first to look at the production environment of the film.

The film, which was a co-production in 1966 with Hong Kong, was only imported to mainland China later in 1979 after the political chaos in the mainland. The film had more of a political function because of the timing of its release to mainland public as it coincided with major political and social disruptions in China at the time. The film was originally produced in 1966, immediately after, mainland China entered the period marked by the Culture Revolution which lasted until 1976. All the movies for entertainment purpose were banned for political reasons during this period as we have already learnt in Chapter 2. The year 1979 marks the end of the Gang of Four and the start-over of Deng Xiaoping's economic reform. Bao Fang's *Painted Skin* (1966) is notable from this period as it was the first horror film shown to the public in January 1979 following the start of the Cultural Revolution to the beginning of Deng's reforms (大米电影 Dami Film, 2017). Thus as a horror film, it carries certain political metaphors associated with the timing of its release. Consequently, the ghost, in a disguised female body, was assumed to be a representation of Jiang Qing, the leader of Gang of Four. The image of the scholar Wang can be seen as the representation of Mao Zedong at the time, who is misled by Jiang Qing, his wife, through her disguised behaviour. The propagandising of the film by matching Jiang's image to the ghost and Mao to the scholar, allowed the central government to correct the bad reputation Mao had during the revolution by putting the blame on the disguised Jiang. However, the film was quickly banned by the authorities, who claimed it was "too [horrifying] and will scare many people" (Hu, 2015, p. 9).

In terms of the plot, when comparing it with the original *Huapi*, the changes to the role of the wife, Chen, is fundamentally a response to the new ideology and policies in the new P.R.C. During feudal society, Chinese women's social status was much lower than that of men and they were considered as the property of men – a submissive subject to their husband. Under this social structure, women were unable to control their own life. They are required to sacrifice themselves first to their father, then husband and, when the husband died, their son. This is called *Sancong Side* 三从四德 (threefold obedience and four virtues) (Lin, 2017). It is in this context that Chen endured the mistreatment of the lunatic to save her husband in *Huapi*. Within the socialist ideology, women have the same rights and responsibilities as men do. Article No. 96 of *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* stipulates that women in the PRC enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of political, economic, cultural, social and domestic life (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 1955, pp. 78–80). This law has been reinforced later in the film industry through the Article 3 of *Regulations on the Administration of Movies* which emphasizes that people engaged in the activities of production, import, export, distribution and projection of films will abide by the Constitution and relevant laws and regulations while serving the people and socialism (SARFT, 2001). The impact of those regulations on the adaptation of the story was the large deduction of the function of the character Chen, Wang's wife. Due to the reason that a woman cannot be seen as a subject to the man, the plot of Chen begging the lunatic in order to save her husband was completely deleted in Hu's version. Wang is eventually saved by his brother's master, a priest. This treatment of female characters by the policies of new China is reinforced in 2008 and 2012's version of *Painted Skin*.

The first adaptation of the literary story of "The Painted Skin" in the 21st century was the one directed by Gordon Chan in 2008. The film was again co-produced and distributed by both Hong Kong and mainland China film companies and adopted a

mixed cast and crew from two sides. The actors structured as the same as the original work of *Huapi*. Wangsheng, Peirong (Wang's wife) and disguised spirit in a form of beautiful young woman, Xiaowei. The difference is that the evil female Xiaowei in this adaptation is no longer in the form of a ghost but a fox-spirit - *yao*. This change can be seen as the filmmakers' strategy to avoid trouble with Chinese censorship as listed in the last chapter. Compared to a ghost, a *yao* is more of a fairy-tale creature which is less human and lives far removed from daily life – thus less associated with superstition (Chen, 2016, p. 286).

The plot of Gordon's *Painted Skin* is different from the original story or Bao's version. First, it changes the characters' setting of social identities. Wang is no longer a scholar but a soldier leader. Wang rescues Xiaowei in the desert and she falls in love with him. Xiaowei goes to the castle with Wang and soon she discovers that Wang is already married to Peirong who later finds out Xiaowei's true identity - a *yao* with a painted skin. Ignoring the reality (Xiaowei is a *yao*), Wangsheng blames Peirong for her mistreatment of Xiaowei. Afraid of the threat that Xiaowei will kill Wangsheng and everyone in the castle, Peirong come up with a plan whereby Xiaowei assumes the position of being Wang's wife. The film peaks at the end when Wang kills Peirong and at the same time kills himself. But different to the original story and Bao's version, the restoration of order is not delivered by an external power, the Taoist, but comes from Xiaowei's sacrifice of her own life to save Wangsheng and Peirong, after she learned what true love is.

Secondly, the most interesting change in Gordon's version is its treatment of the two female characters. The change of social identity of Wangsheng – from a scholar to a soldier – serves no different function to the original setting from an ideological perspective. Both a scholar and a general are government officials in a male-dominated society of ancient China. However, the action line of Wang's wife,

Chen or Peirong, in the new story has been modified. In the original story, she sacrifices herself in order to save her husband; but in 2008's version Peirong sacrifices her life by threatening that Xiaowei will kill everyone in the castle and be willing to be treated unfairly by the people whom she is going to save. This change enlarged Peirong's role from being seen only as Wang's wife to a heroine that serves her society. This can be seen as an advanced treatment of Chen, the wife, from Bao's film, to emphasize the equal social status of the men and women in the post-socialist period.

Compared to the slight change of the wife's position, the changes in the treatment of the female-ghost, Xiaowei, is much more fundamental. In the original *Huapi* and Bao's adaptation, the figure of the disguised female ghost fits the profile of a monstrous-feminine in horror cinema. Barbara Creed's analysis of the 'monstrous-feminine' in horror cinema points out that the female is often represented as an abject victim. Creed (1993) has emphasized that images of "blood, vomit, pus, shit, etc., are central to our cultural/socially constructed notions of the horrific" and that they "signify a split between the two orders: the maternal authority and the law of father...[t]hey also point back to a time when a fusion between mother and nature existed" (Creed, 1993, p. 13).



Fig. 2 Female ghost in Bao Feng's *Painted Skin* (1996)



Fig. 3 Xiaowei in Gordon's *The Painted Skin* (2008)

The female ghost in 1966, after it takes off the disguised skin, appears in a horrible or rather disgusting image (Fig.2). Xiaowei, on the contrary, presents a beautiful outlook that matches up to contemporary aesthetical standards. This monstrous-feminine versus femme fatale not only reveals the changing of the audiences' expectations through time but also illustrates the filmmakers' attempt to comply the policies by emphasizing *yao's* human aspect in order to promote gender equability and decriminalize superstitious element. Xiaowei's action line turns from eating Wang's heart to become Wang's wife and finally sacrifices herself to save Wang's life as Wang's wife does. Thus, the female ghost protagonist in Gordon's adaptation is neither an abject figure nor a victim of man. This indicates ways in which the monstrous-feminine figure has gradually faded from view in mainland Chinese horror cinema in the post-socialist period for a similar purpose. Most of the horror films listed in Appendix 1 dated after 2002 tend to avoid using monstrous feminine figures but rather emphasize the equality and humanity of their female ghost protagonist. This characteristic becomes even clearer in the last adaptation of the same story from *Huapi - Painted Skin: The Resurrection* which was produced in 2012.

The emphasis of humanity (human identity) in a supernatural creator is the central theme of *Painted Skin: The Resurrection* (2012). Xiaowei, the *yao* female in this version found black magic in the powers of resurrection that would switch her spirit from a *yao* to a truly human body. Princess Jing (Chen in 1966, Peirong 2008) agrees

to switch skins with Xiaowei in order to get away from the burden of her identity (being a princess of an empire to marry someone she does not know) and be together with Huo Xin (Wangsheng). The director Wu Ershan, by changing the conflict from supernatural-human to identity-humanity, turns a pure horror film to one concerned with social issues. Other scholars have linked Xiaowei's search for identity to the Hong Kong people looking for identity after 1997 when mainland China assumed authority over the area from British rule (Chen, 2016, p. 294). In order to balance the loss of the superpower element from the original story and to further meet audience's expectation of watching a horror film, this adaptation introduces another traditional element, black magic, into the film.

Common Strategies Employed by the Filmmaker to Comply with Censorship - *The House That Never Dies (2014)* as case study.

In this section, we are going to look at another film - *The House That Never Dies (2014)*. This film earned \$25 million at the box office in three days (搜狐娱乐 Sohu Entertainment, 2014), reaching nearly 4.5 million admissions (艺恩集团 EnGroup, 2014). It broke the box office record for the opening day of any Chinese language horror film and is the highest grossing Chinese horror film to date with 25.8 million USD (艺恩集团 EnGroup, 2014). As part of the aim of the research is to consider how film policies have influenced the commodification of the horror film in post-socialist China, this film represents a perfect case to study. Especially the fact that the plot of the film is inherited not only from Chinese literature and folklore elements, but rather is a new invention with new elements that were created in the context of the regulations and policies. For this reason the film merits a closer study since it can be seen as challenging the traditional structure of the Chinese ghost story canon.

According to Tzvetan Todorov's (1975) structuralist definition, the ghost story style generally involves two different structures on the level of *fantastic-uncanny* and *fantastic-marvellous*. According to him, on the level of the fantastic-uncanny, the existence of ghosts is gradually introduced to the protagonist and the appearance of ghosts is not seemingly real or has physical power at the beginning of the story; the audience, through the development of the protagonist generally experiences a 'hesitation' in accepting that the ghost exists. "[T]here is an uncanny phenomenon which we can explain in two fashions, by types of nature causes and supernatural causes. The possibility of a hesitation between the two creates the fantastic effect" (Reeder, Todorov and Howard, 2006, p. 26). However, on the level of the fantastic-marvellous, the characters in the film world take the existence of the ghost for granted. They accept the ghost to be physically real and they can do marvellous things. Therefore, the Chinese horror film falls into the category of the fantastic-marvellous as can be understood from the long tradition of portraying supernatural events and entities that extend from a long cultural history as we have discussed in earlier chapters.

The government policies discussed previously seek to control all supernatural elements within any film production in China. This has long created a troubling situation for horror films in general and certain plot patterns specifically. As we have already studied in previous chapters, Chinese culture and traditional beliefs form the foundation for the worldview represented in horror films, namely the existence of the ghost entity. Most Chinese audiences will take this worldview for granted from the moment they enter a cinema, even unconsciously. Thus, Chinese horror films were expected by the audience to be in the structure of fantastic-marvellous. This expectation soon became problematic for horror filmmakers when they were limited and controlled in the way they could construct a worldview that contains superstitious elements but at the same time fulfil audiences' expectation – seeing the ghost. *The*

House That Never Dies (2014) appears as a good example on the balancing of audiences' expectation (seeing the ghost) and state censorship (no superstitious allowed).

The story of *The House That Never Dies* (2014)⁴⁶, directed by Raymon Weiming Yip is derived from an urban legend in Beijing of a haunted mansion located on No.81 Chaoyangmen Inner Street. The film uses a dual narrative technique to tell two interconnected stories. One story begins in modern time: a Taiwanese female writer, Xu Ruoqing (许若卿, starring Ruby Lin Xinru), who has decided to move back to her grandmother's house in Beijing - the Chaonei No. 81, to be able to reunite with her husband, Zhao Yitang (赵奕堂, starring Francis Ng Chun Yu) who had left her alone in Taiwan with their daughter, Xiao Meng. A series of supernatural events starts happening from the first night they move in. Ruoqing begins to believe that the house is haunted as rumoured, until one day she finds a box of letters from 100 years ago. The narration from those letters takes the audience to the film's second story that happened in the century before.

After reading the letters, Ruoqing becomes more suspicious of the building. She starts to see illusions and believes that her husband is cheating on her. After the investigation, she learns that she is actually the one that her husband is cheating with. Yitang married another woman (starring Patricia Ha) a long time ago and they have a

⁴⁶ The film was directed by a Hongkong director Raymond Yip (叶伟民), jointly produced by Fujian Hengye Film Distribution Co., Ltd, Chong Qing Film Group Co., LTD, Wanmei Xingkong Media Co. Ltd, TIK Films (Beijing) Pictures Co., Ltd and Beijingshi Film Co., Ltd. The film was distributed by Eastern Mordor and Beijing Hongma Media Co., Ltd. Chong Qing Film Group Co., LTD, TIK Films (Beijing) Pictures Co., Ltd, Beijingshi Film Co., Ltd and Eastern Mordor are all state-owned companies. According to Chen Hui, the president of Fujian Hengye, the production cost of the film was 3.2 million USD (22 million CNY), and the marketing cost was 2.6 million USD (18 million CNY) (张瑶 Zhang Yao, 2014).

daughter as well. It turns out the illusion Ruoqing recently saw were the effects of the drugs that Yitang's real wife put in her food. In the last scene of the film, Ruoqing sees the corpse of Lianqi's body in the house. The body begins to slowly dissolve and turns into ashes after seeing Dieyu's reincarnation, Ruoqing.

The story starts in a normal, modern world with no supernatural signs. For the entire first act and most of the second act, the female protagonist does not believe in any supernatural existence. She seeks help from her best friend who is a psychologist. When more and more evidence is gathered, she is on the verge of believing that the ghost may actually exist. This is typical of the fantastic-uncanny structure of the horror film. Towards the end, the film turns to a scientific explanation – the female protagonist is poisoned by drugs; therefore, she had the hallucination of ghost.

These story choices, resisting-believing-explaining, can be seen as the direct influence of policy and regulation on horror films in the post-socialist period due to the government's endeavour on eliminating superstitious elements in films. These choices form a common strategy employed by filmmakers trying to avoid the restrictions on presenting supernatural or ghost entities in their films by providing a scientific solution/ending to offer a rational explanation for the series of supernatural events. For example, at the end of the story in the award-winning horror film, *Dumplings*⁴⁷ (陈可辛 Peter Chen, 2004), the heroine is discovered to be suffering from mental diseases which provides a reason for the various supernatural elements she has experienced in the story. In another film, *The Great Hypnotist* (Chen, 2014) which reached a total of USD 45.6 million internationally (艺恩集团 ENGroup, 2014), the scientific explanation of hypnosis was provided as the cause of all the supernatural scenes. This approach resists the classic structure in Chinese ghost story tradition of fantastic-marvellous as the supernatural existence is not taken for granted but rather

⁴⁷Best Supporting Actress at the 24th Hong Kong Film Awards in 2005

the fantastic element is explained in a Marxist worldview that favours scientism⁴⁸ in order to circumvent the censors. This approach fulfils the audience's expectations of seeing the fantastic element but also avoids the risk of being blacklisted by the censors. Another narrative strategy is the location of the fantastic elements in *The House That Never Dies* within the second storyline – the one that happened 100 years ago which allows for a lot of Chinese traditional elements that are borrowed from Chinese traditions and folklore culture to be integrated into the story without raising the concern of the censors who are more focused on contemporary society.



⁴⁸Scientism is an ideology that promotes science as the purportedly objective means by which society should determine normative and epistemological values.



Fig. 5 Francis Wu plays Huo Lianxiu and Ruby Lin plays Lu Dieyu – in the second story lines that happens 100 years ago in the film



Fig. 6 Francis Wu plays Zhao Yitang and Ruby Lin plays Xu Ruoqing in the first story line at present time set in the film

These plot ideas are borrowed from Chinese customs, but with a slight modification to get around the policies listed in Appendix 2. For example, the idea of reincarnation violates the policy of “advocating religious extremism, provoking contradictions and conflicts between the religious and sectarians, between the religious and non-believers, and hurting the feelings of the masses” (Table 2, point 4, Appendix 2). However, the *The House That Never Dies* did not provide any religious explanation but rather hinted towards the family relationship instead – Dieyu being Ruoqing’s grandmother is strong evidence of *samsara*. It also employed film techniques in order to build up

the mysterious feeling in the audience's mind. For example, Lianxiu and Yitang were performed by the same actor and their wives were performed by the same actress as well. These elements are repeated metaphorically on screen to give the audience a strong sense of the supernatural and build up a referencing system in the audience's mind of a horror world setting that never oversteps the regulated policies by avoiding the implication that these elements might exist in the film world in a real sense. However, the ongoing concern, partly as a result of lacking a film rating system, is that the boundaries for the utilization of the supernatural elements from these Chinese cultural traditions and the effectiveness of providing a scientific solution in any horror films, when confronting state policy, remains unclear.

There is a common problem when one interprets those policies and regulations, as they do not clearly list the definitions/degrees of the forbidden elements. For example, Article 16(2) in Table 2 in Appendix 2, prohibits any film containing any content instigating the disruption of the religious policies of the state or propagating cults or superstition (*Film Industry Promotion Law 2017*). However, it does not specify what elements can be defined as superstition and the interpretation of such terms by the Film Inspection Committee. This leads to another problem that the possibility of getting permission from the committee also relies on the public/personal relationship of the production company to the governance authority. As in *The House That Never Dies*, the folklore elements in the film can be seen as superstitions and also can be interpreted with a scientific explanation. This fact requires the filmmaker either to be smart enough to “fool” the committee or maintain a good relationship with them. This situation becomes more important when the Chinese horror film enters the commercial stage as the company needs to obtain the permit in order to generate box-office.

The second strategy used by the filmmaker to “soften” the censorship in the film is to shift the focus in the film from appealing to the supernatural horrific scenes to focusing attention on real-life people. This strategy is also in accordance with Confucian ideas relating to the values of people. In *The House That Never Dies*, the supernatural elements which might create suspense through the conflicts between this life and the after-life are reimagined around the conflicts of a character representing a real person – Dieyu’s willingness of continuing her love story with Lianqi makes her reincarnation and granddaughter, Ruoqing to finish her story with Yitang. In this way, horror films function as representing human relationships within the society which might play out through distrust, betrayal, greed and other human emotions. These emotions replace the suspense that is normally created by the ghost entity. This is the same technique that was used in the recent two remakes of *The Painted Skin* – to emphasize supernatural creatures’ humanity rather than their superstitious ability.

The different outcomes for the same character, Dieyu and Ruoqing, also show the implication of the Chinese film policies on female characters and the ideological standard set up by the communist government regarding women. Both Dieyu and Ruoqing are mistresses of men and both were poisoned by the wives of these men. However, Dieyu could not fight for her own life when she was alive and could only take her revenge when she turned to a superpower - ghost. Different from Dieyu, when Ruoqing finds that there is something unusual, she immediately takes action. She looks for help from a doctor and then she starts investigating her husband. The destiny for Dieyu is that she turns into a typical abject female, but Ruoqing fights with the law of a patriarchal society and finally sets herself free from being monstrous-feminine. This can be seen as another clear influence of Communist ideology of woman on film production through policies and regulations. As explained previously, within the socialist ideology, women have the same rights and responsibilities as men do as inscribed in Article No. 96 of *Constitution of the*

People's Republic of China and Article 3 of *Regulations on the Administration of Movies*. The ideas of the strong-willed female in Chinese revolutionary ideology and in the law of the country contradict the idea of the female protagonist turning into the monstrous-feminine. Where this is allowed, it appears only in the time period before the founding of the P.R.C which might be during the period of the Kuomintang' Republic of China as depicted in *The House That Never Dies*. The outcomes for Ruqing suggests a women in present-day China who has the power to control her own fate, which was impossible for Dieyu when she was in the imperialist regime.

Chapter 6—Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the major findings and it also attempts to demonstrate how this study addresses its objectives and aims. It is hoped that filmmakers and investors who are interested in Chinese horror films can benefit from this study.

Summary of the study

This research report began by discussing the background of the horror filmmaking in China, from its emergence in 1905 to present day China; applying a diachronic analysis by considering the film industry within the country's political and economic history. Then, after introducing aspects of Chinese culture and tradition and its influences on Chinese horror films and recent interconnection with film policies and regulations, the research identified the main findings as follow:

1. The Chinese cultural tradition, and its philosophical and religious thinking form a national discourse for its cinema which is reflected in horror films through the direct influence of the ghost-story telling structure that is located in a worldview that takes the existence of the supernatural for granted.
2. The post-socialist era starting around 1978, in which the government introduced official policy with regard to economic transformation from a totally planned-economy to one that included aspects of free market economy. The study identified ways in which this also changed the context of filmmaking during this period. However, the research acknowledges how the film industry remained heavily state-owned due to its mass propaganda function.
3. When a series of policies and regulations came into effect in late 2002 and early 2003, production companies were forced to turn their attention to the market and focus on revenue. The audience's expectations became the

dominant element for film production, along with film policies. In horror cinema, meeting the market's expectations and at the same time coordinating with policies became crucial.

4. The poly-system in Figure 1 of Chapter 5 illustrates the constant change in response to political and economic circumstances which filmmakers of horror films need to contend with and respond to in the contemporary context of production in China. The later part of this research report offered various case studies in order to engage with the development and changes that have confronted horror filmmaking in China from the 1960s and up to the current era. As with earlier responses to policy and ideological perspectives enforced through the apparatus of state censorship and regulation, the new cinematic era of horror cinema in mainland China is explained through its response to market and policy changes over time.

This research combines the content and the context into a poly-system of mainland China horror films and marked out the horror cinematic fact – which is a combination of a focus on market expectation represented by its ghost-story telling tradition and its political-economic environment represented by its film policies.

Conclusion

The regulations and policies of Chinese horror film are imprinted with the characteristics of the times. Every change and adjustment of the film censorship system is related to various factors of the corresponding era, and to serve the general purpose – the need to serve the ruling authority. The influence of film as a tool for mass education is still reflected in the policies of the post-socialist P.R.C, even as the state enters into a commercial relationship with cinema under the economic transformations of an emerging free-market socialist structure. These regulations and policies, on horror film in particular, have not only influenced the cinematic fact

through the whole value chain of production, financing and distribution, but also in the filmic fact through a reading of story and character. In this way, the regulations and policies of the mainland Chinese film industry has created a different type of nationally specific horror film.

It could be argued that a film policy emphasized in post-socialist period which is essentially ‘anti-superstition’ is idiosyncratically Chinese, in terms of its breadth, variation and relevance as we have discussed in previous chapters. The rules of ‘no ghost can appear in a horror’ presents a lot of difficulties for Chinese filmmakers. As a result, they have to look for other solutions to satisfy audiences’ needs. Apart from bringing more horror references from Chinese tradition and literature, they have found other ways to integrate other genre elements into their films such as romance, historical, magic, detective and thrillers. In terms of plot, horror films in post-socialist period normally combined with *yao*, zombie, crime, psychological suspense and tomb raiders to diversify their horrific scenes in order to pass the censorship. Utilizing other genres to disguise horror film elements is a common technique employed by Chinese filmmakers and results in a tendency to shift supernatural horror film to a scientific horror film which complies with the ideological foundation of the state. This tendency, it is argued, is the result of the influences of the policies and regulations and is essential to understanding the specificity of Chinese horror films in the post-socialist period.

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Appendix 1 – Chronological List of Chinese Horror Film

Periods	Year of Release	Director	Title
The pre-1949 period	1913	张石川 Zhang Shichuan	<i>Bride Meets Ghost</i> 活无常
	1921	任彭年 Ren Pengnian	阎瑞生 Yan Ruisheng
	1922	张石川 Zhang Shichuan	张欣生 Zhang Xinsheng
		管海峰 Guan Haifeng	红粉骷髅 The Pink Skull
		任彭年 Ren Pengnian	清虚梦 The Dream of A Taoist Priest
	1927	朱瘦菊 Zhu Shouju	乌盆记 The Wu-pen Story
		余清泉 Yu Qingquan	唐皇游地府 Emperor Visits the Hell
	1928	张石川 Zhang Shichuan	火烧宝莲寺 Burning the Lotus Temple
		张石川 Zhang Shichuan	火烧红莲寺 Fire on Red Lotus Temple
	1930	朱少全 Zhu Shaoquan	梵灯鬼影 Evil Shadows in the Temple
		叶一声 Ye Yisheng	金岛魔王 The Evil of the Golden Island
	1934	大金龙公司 Golden Dragon Film Company	月下魅影 Phantom of the Moon
		艺海影片 Art Sea Film	爱克斯光 X-Ray
	1935	李英源 Li Yingyuan	黑影 Shadows
	1936	邵醉翁 Shao Zuiweng	马介甫 Ma Jiepu
	1937	马徐维邦 Ma-xu Weibang	夜半歌声 Song at Midnight
	1938	杨小仲 Yang Xiaozhong	地狱探艳记 Play Dead
		吴永刚 Wu Yonggang	潘金莲 Pan Jinlian
		马徐维邦 Ma-Xu Weibang	古屋行尸记 Mummy in Old House
		马徐维邦 Ma-Xu Weibang	冷月诗魂 Poet's Soul in the Cold Moonlight
	1939	马徐维邦 Ma-Xu Weibang	麻风女 Leper
	1940	杨小仲 Yang Xiaozhong	女鬼 Female Ghost
		杨小仲 Yang Xiaozhong	僵尸复仇记 Zombie Revenge
	1941	梅阡 Mei Qian	女僵尸 Female Zombie
		龚稼农 Gong Jianong	黑夜孤魂 Dark Night Lonely Soul
		张石川, 龚稼农 Zhang Shichuan, Gong Jianong	艳尸 Beautiful Corpse
		马徐维邦 Ma-Xu Weibang	夜半歌声续集 Song at Midnight 2

		孙敬 Sun Jing	新隐身术Invisibility
		何兆璋 He Zhaozhang	鬼恋 A Girl in Black
	1942	王引 Wang Yin	黑夜魅影The Night of the Phantom
		马徐维邦Ma-Xu Weibang	寒山夜雨Cold Mountain Night Rain
		马徐维邦Ma-Xu Weibang	鸳鸯泪 Lover's Tear
	1943	马徐维邦Ma-Xu Weibang	秋海棠 Begonia
	1947	屠光启 Tu Guangqi	月黑风高 It's A Dark Night
	1948	岳枫 Yue Feng	杀人夜 Killing Night
		徐昌霖 Xu Changlin	十三号凶宅Sinister House No.13
		徐欣夫 Xu Xinfu	古屋魔影 Shadows In The Old House
		屠光启 Tu Guangqi	芳魂归来 Return of the Soul
	1949	屠启光Tu Guangqi	玩火的女人The Girl Who Played with Fire
		屠启光Tu Guangqi	血溅姊妹花Murderer Among The Sisters
		叶枫 Ye Feng	杀人夜 The Night for Killing
The 17-years period	1958	朱文顺 Zhu Wenshun	古刹钟声The Bell Rings from an Ancient Temple
	1959	李亚林 Li Yalin	前哨 Outpost
The 1980s	1980	张波 Zhang Bo	雾都茫茫 The Fog City
	1981	张华勋 Zhang Huaxun	神秘的大佛Mysterious Buddha
		郭宝昌 Guo Baochang	潜影The Shadow Of Ghost
	1983	雷鸣 Lei Ming	精变 Xiaocui
	1985	孙元勋 Sun Yuanxun	鬼妹Ghost sisters
		郝伟光 Hao Weiguang	深谷尸变Death Twice
		杨延晋 Yang Yanjin	夜半歌声 Song At Midnight
	1986	岑范 Cen Fan	碧水双魂Sunset Glow
		孙元勋 Zhang Yuanxun	狐缘Fox Yao
		孙志强 Sun Zhiqiang	古墓惊魂 Confession of A Grave Robber.
	1987	江海洋 Jiang Haiyang	匿名电话匿名电话 Anonymous Phone Calls
		鲍芝芳 Bao Zhifang	午夜两点Two in the Morning
		周晓文 Zhou Xiaowen	最后的疯狂 The Last Frenzy
		李叶宇 Li Yeyu	罪恶惊魂录The Jade Bottles
	1988	张易亨 Zhang Yiheng	金鸳鸯Golden Bird
		豫梅 Yu Mei	无罪杀手 The Innocent killer
		毛玉勤 Mao Yule	恐怖夜The Horror Night
		徐纪宏 Xu Jihong	死亡客栈Death Inn
		李少红 Li Shaohong	银蛇谋杀案The case of the silver snake

	1989	胡刚 Hu Gang	夜走鬼城 <i>The Opium Smugglers</i>
		梁明 Liang Ming	黑楼孤魂 <i>The Lonely Spirit in an Old Building</i>
		胡庆士 Hu Qingshi	凶宅美人头 <i>Haunted House Beauty Head</i>
		蔡元元 Cai Yuanyuan	夜盗珍妃墓 <i>Night Thief in Zhenfei's Tomb</i>
The 1990s	1990	常彦 Chang Yan	鬼楼 <i>Hounted House</i>
		米家山 Mi Jiashan	圣保罗医院之谜 <i>The Mystery of the Hospital of St. Paul</i>
		贺米生 He Misheng	野店幽灵 <i>The Remote Inn</i>
	1991	谢铁骊 Xie Yili	古墓荒斋 <i>Inside an Old Grave</i>
		强小路 Zhang Xiaolu	豺狼入室 <i>A Wolf Enters the House</i>
		徐纪宏 Xu Jihong	夜半惊魂 <i>Midnight Horror</i>
		陈国星 Chen Guoxing	情惑 <i>Midnight Horror</i>
	1992	胡金铨 Hu Jinqian	画皮之阴阳法王 <i>Yin and Yang of the Painted Skin</i>
		邱丽莉 Qiu Lili	幽魂奇恋 <i>Strange Love of a Ghost</i>
		米家山 Mi Jia Shan	飞魂刑警 <i>Ghost Policeman</i>
		赵文忻 Zhao Wenxi	地狱山庄 <i>Hell Mountain Villa</i>
		陈兴中 Chen Xingzhong	毒吻 <i>The Poison Kiss</i>
	1993	霍庄 Huo Zhuang	痴男狂女两世情 <i>Love With Spirit</i>
		李启民 Li Qimin	鬼域凶梦 <i>The Omen in Devil Town</i>
		黄健中 Huang Jianzhong	雾宅 <i>The Foggy House</i>
		周晓文 Zhou Xiaowen	测谎器 <i>A Polygraph</i>
		徐伟杰 Xu Weijie	仇恋 <i>Foes and Lovers</i>
	1994	赵文忻 Zhao Wenxi	白日女鬼 <i>Woman Ghost During the Day</i>
		孙满义 Sun Manyi	古庙倩魂 <i>Spirit in an Old Temple</i>
		顾晶 Gu Jing	青铜狂魔 <i>The Bronze Madness</i>
		占俊科 Zhan Junke	情人的血特别红 <i>Legacy with Smell of Blood</i>
		王学新 Wang Xuexin	十字架下的魔影 <i>Devils and the Cross</i>
		娄烨 Lou Ye	危情少女 <i>Don't Be Young</i>
		李育才 Li Yucai	寻仇阴阳界 <i>Seeking Yin and Yang</i>
		黄健中 Huang Jianzhong	雾宅 <i>The Foggy House</i>
	1997	海达 Hai Da	灵魂出窍 <i>Soul Out</i>
	1999	萧荣 Xiao Rong	古镜怪谈 <i>The Ancient Mirror Talk</i>
	2000	谢铁骊 Xie Yili	聊斋席方平 <i>Legend of Ghost Xi Fangping</i>
	2001	阿甘 A Gan	闪灵凶猛 <i>The Cameraman</i>

From 2003 to Present	2002	阿甘 A Gan	凶宅幽灵 Ghosts
		彭顺 彭发 Peng Shun Peng Fa	见鬼 The Eye
	2003	陈建 Chen Jian	蒸发疑云 Disappear
		李歇浦 Li Xiepu	午夜惊魂 Midnight Ghost
		徐成林 Xu Chenglin	海角惊魂 Fatal Training Course
	2004	阿甘 A Gan	天黑请闭眼 The Game Of Killing
		陈可辛 Peter Chan	饺子 Dumplings
	2005	张秉坚 Zhang Bingjian	窒息 Suffocation
		张菁 Zhang Jing	七夜 Seventh Night
		李虹 Li Hong	诅咒 The Curse
		邱礼涛 Qiu Litao	疑神疑鬼 The Ghost Inside
		张加贝 Zhang Jiabei	陶器人形 Pottery Shape
	2006	张一白 Zhang Yibai	好奇害死猫 Curiosity Kills the Cat
	2007	李少红 Li Shaohong	门 The Door
		张番番 Zhang Panpan	信箱 The Mail Box
		滕华 Teng Hua	心中有鬼 The Matrimony
	2008	张琦 Zhang Qi	救我 Help Me
		赵天宇 Zhao Tianyu	双食记 Deadly Delicious
		张菁 Zhang Jing	荒村客栈 The Deserted Inn
		陈嘉上 Chen Jiashang	画皮 Painted Skin
	2009	张江南 Zhang Jiangnan	午夜出租车 Midnight Taxi
	2010	靳鑫鹏 Jin Xinpeng	致命请柬 Fatal Invitation
		张加贝 Zhang Jiabei	午夜心跳 Midnight Beating
		蒋国权 Jiang Guoquan	异度公寓 Illusion Apartment
		钟继昌 Zhong Jichang	孤岛惊魂 Mysterious Island
	2011	潘恒生 Pan Hengsheng	紫宅 The Purple House
		于博 Yu Bo	水落石出 The Answer
		叶伟信 Ye Weixin	倩女幽魂 A Chinese Ghost Story
		张琦 Zhang Qi	夺命心跳 The Devil Inside Me
		若般 Ruo Ban	镜中迷魂 Lost in the Mirror
		何建军 He Jianjun	B区32号 No. 32 In B Zone
		许斌、王立涛 Xu Bin, Wang Litao	夜惊魂 He Lives by Nights
		非行 Fei Xing	守望者: 罪恶迷途 The Man Behind the Courtyard House
		叶伟英 Ye Weiyang	午夜凶梦 Nightmare
		阿甘 A Gan	北纬31度录像带 Video Cassette of 31 Degrees North Latitude
		黄柏基 Huang Boji	新月魅影 Moon light: The Vampires
	2012	乌尔善 Wu Ershan	画皮2 Painted Skin 2

	梁婷 Liang Ting	诡爱 <i>Haunting Love</i>
	郑来志 Zheng Zhilai	恐怖旅馆 <i>Terror Hotel</i>
	夏咏 Xia Yong	无间罪：僵尸重生 <i>Zombie: Reborn</i>
	安兵基 An Bingji	笔仙 <i>Bunshinsaba</i>
	邱礼涛 Qiu Litao	青魇 <i>Nightmare</i>
	陈建 Chen Jian	魅妆 <i>The Mask of Love</i>
	朱闽江 Zhu Minjiang	查无此人 <i>To Forgive</i>
	牛朝阳 Niu Chaoyang	半夜不要照镜子 <i>Who In The Mirror</i>
	关尔 Guan Er	笔仙惊魂 <i>BiXian Panic</i>
	叶伟民 Ye Weimin	绣花鞋 <i>Blood Stained Shoes</i>
	方亚熙 Fang Yaxi	夜店诡谈 <i>Any Other Side</i>
	周耀武 Zhou Yaowu	惊魂游戏 <i>Harpoon</i>
	陆可欣 Lu Kexin	绝路求生 <i>Run</i>
	牛朝阳 Niu Chaoyang	床下有人 <i>Who Under the Bed</i>
	林黎胜 Lin Lisheng	百万巨鳄 <i>Million Dollar Crocodile</i>
	彭发 Peng Fa	追凶 <i>Fairy Tale Killer</i>
	吴耀权 Wu Yaoquan	地域无门 <i>Death Zone</i>
	盛志民 Sheng Zhimin	十二星座离奇事件 <i>The Zodiac Mystery</i>
	过华 Guo Hua	致命替身 <i>The Lookalikes</i>
	钟继昌 Zhong Jicahng	孤岛惊魂 2 <i>Mysterious Island 2</i>
2013	许斌 Xu Bin	少女灵异日记 <i>Black Mirror</i>
	江澄 Jiang Cheng	步步追魂 <i>Chasing</i>
	蒋国权 Jiang Guoquan	冷瞳 <i>Cold Pupil</i>
	宋胤熹 Song Yinxi	禁忌游戏之迷藏 <i>The Game Of Hide And Seek</i>
	黄明升 Huang Mingsheng	蝙蝠别墅 <i>Murcielago</i>
	刘辉 Liu Hui	古镇凶灵之巫咒缠身 <i>Dead Sign</i>
	车悦 Che Yue	诡魇 <i>Nightmare</i>
	佟秀玄 Tong Xiuxuan	模特魅影 <i>Ghost of a Model</i>
	关尔 Guan Er	校花诡异事件 <i>The Supernatural Events on Campus</i>
	赵小溪 Zhao Xiaoxi	咒丝 <i>The Deadly Strands</i>
	梁德森 Liang Desen	人间蒸发 <i>The Incredible Truth</i>
	李远 Li Yuan	楼 <i>The House</i>
	张江南 Zhang Jiangnan	午夜火车 <i>Midnight Train</i>
	邓科 Deng Ke	午夜微博 <i>Midnight Microblog</i>
	宁敬武 Ning Jingwu	电梯惊魂 <i>Lift to the Hell</i>
	丘处机 Qiu Chuji	女蛹之人皮嫁衣 <i>The Chrysalis</i>
	安兵基 An Bingji	笔仙II <i>Bunshinsaba 2</i>

2014	李克龙 Li Kelong	花咒 <i>Flower's Curse</i>
	石井辉仪、王冰 Shijing Huiyi, Wang Bin	怨灵人偶 <i>Bloody Doll</i>
	佟亦坚 Tong Yijian	怨灵 <i>Haunted Road</i>
	曹弄 Cao Nong	黑月 <i>Black Moon</i>
	廉涛、王琨皓 Lian Tao, Wang Kunhao	孤岛 <i>Lonely Island</i>
	袁杰 Yuan Jie	恐怖电影院 <i>The Haunted Cinema</i>
	李锦航 Li Jinhang	诡替身 <i>Double Exposure</i>
	严嘉 Yan Jia	食人虫 <i>The Bugs</i>
	张力 Zhang Li	诡八楼 <i>The Eighth House</i>
	王烟 Wang Yan	碟仙诡谭 <i>Death Ouija</i>
	叶伟民 Ye Weimin	京城 81 号 <i>The House That Never Dies</i>
	安兵基 An Bingji	笔仙3 <i>Bunshinsaba 3</i>
	吴国勇 Wu Guoyong	虐面人之死灵面膜 <i>Face Hunter</i>
	王松 Wang Song	怖偶 <i>Enchanted Doll</i>
	关尔 Guan Er	笔仙惊魂 3 <i>Death Is Here 3</i>
	钱人豪 Qian Renhao	诡镇 <i>The Apostles</i>
2015	塔韦华温泰 Tawei Huawentai	索命暹罗之按摩师 <i>Massagist</i>
	谢庭菡 Xie Tinghan	尸忆 <i>The Bride</i>
	刘崇崇 Liu Chongchong	诡娃娃 <i>The Doll</i>
	项海明 Xiang Haiming	诡影迷情 <i>Deception Obsession</i>
	张平元 Zhang Pingyuan	僵尸王爷 <i>Zombie King</i>
	张帆 Zhang Fan	鬼点灯 <i>Disappeared Girl</i>
	刘宝贤 Liu Baoxian	灵臆事件 <i>Chinese Horror Story</i>
	陆诗雨 Lu Shiyu	半夜叫你别回头 <i>Midnight Whisper</i>
	彭发 Peng Fa	探灵档案 <i>Blind Spot</i>
	关尔 Guan Er	笔仙魔咒 <i>Campus Mystery</i>
	游松 You Song	诡打墙 <i>Circle</i>
	刘观伟、辛成江 Liu Guanwei, Xin Chengjiang	人皮拼图 <i>The Puzzle of Human Skin</i>
	郑来志、来喜 Zheng Laizhi, Lai Xi	枕边诡影 <i>Bedside Cry</i>
	杨竞泽 Yang Jingze	诡劫 <i>Doomed Disaster</i>
	关尔 Guan Er	红髅 <i>The Buried Secret</i>
	彭发 Peng Fa	通灵之六世古宅 <i>The Strange House</i>
	徐正超 Xu Zhengzhao	张震讲故事之鬼迷心窍 <i>Chang Chen Ghost Stories</i>
	王鸣 Wang Ming	惊魂电影院 <i>Admission by Guts</i>

	过华 Guo Hua	异种Monsters
	黄正杰 Huang Zhengjie	死亡之谜The Mystery of Death
	叶伟民、田蒙、咸旭初 Raymond Yip, Tian Meng, Xian Xuchu	怪谈Tales of Mystery
2016	朱湮心 Zhu Yanxin	灵魂纸扎店 Paper Folder Shop
	陈蔚尔 Chen Weier	失心者Lost Minds
	刘殊巧 Liu Shuqiao	凄灵室Room 704
	张少军 Zhang Shaojun	荒村怨灵Strange Battle
	郭大雷 Guo Dalei	恶灵之门The Apparition
	蒋国权 Jiang Guoquan	诡娃 The Wired Doll
	尚永峰 Shang Yongfeng	床下有人 3 Under the Bed 3
	王良 Wang Liang	恐怖禁忌之红旗袍Red Cheongsam
	皮查衣塔玛杰拉 Patchanon Thammajira	骇故事之恐怖殡仪馆Funeral Home
	周浩晖 Zhou Haohui	骇故事之凶宅 Huanted House
	皮查衣塔玛杰拉 Patchanon Thammajira	骇故事之招魂 Conjuring
	李庆城 Li Qingcheng	恐怖照相机Music And Dream
	叶伟民 Ye Weimin	魔宫魅影Phantom of the Theatre
	周阁 Zhou Ge	别开门Don't Open The Door
	高育新、刘峰 Gaoyuxin, Liu Feng	笔仙诡影Bloody House
	姜军 Jiangjun	死亡笔记The Death Note
	黄军 Huang Jun	整形师脸Plastic Surgeon·Hunted Face
	柯瑞、吴宗强 Ke Rui, Wu Zongqiang	妖医Witch Doctor
	麦子 Mai Zi	死亡游戏The Death Game
	邢博 Xing Bo	隔壁惊魂Ghost Neighbor
	姬雨 Ji Yu	筷仙The Curse of Chopsticks
	摩撒利 Mo Sali	笔仙撞碟仙When Pen Ghost Meets Plate Ghost
	戴金浣 Dai Jinhuan	丧尸屠城 2 The End of Doom 2
	彭鹏华 Peng Penghua	魔都凶音The Whisper
	周晓鹏 Zhou Xiaopeng	催命符之劫后重生Warrant the Reborn
	张江南 Zhang Jiangnan	古曼The Golden Doll
	李红建 Li Jianhong	七月半2: 前世今生Mid-July Days 2
	王健 Wang Jian	诡新娘The Weird Bride
	陆诗雷 Lu Shilei	夜半哭声Who is Crying at Midnight

	陆诗雨 Lu Shiyu	荒村凶间Horrible Masion In Wild Village
	邓安东 Deng Andong	诡梦凶铃The Nightmare Call
	殷国君 Yin Guojun	幽灵医院Ghost Hospital
	赵小溪 Zhao Xiaoxi	枕边有张脸 2 Mysterious Face II
	皮查农塔玛杰拉 Patchanon Thammajira	育婴室 The Nursery
	闵晋涛 Min Jintao	恐怖笔记Scary Notes
	摩撒利 Mo Sali	聊斋新编之画皮新娘The Bride With Painted Skin
	赵小溪 Zhao Xiaoxi	猫脸老太太Mother's Revenge
	李凯 Li Kai	食人岛Ghost
	钟萱 Zhong Xuan	白云桥Bridge In Clouds
	马凯 Ma Kai	中邪 The Possessed
2017	王俊潋 Wang Junlin	一双绣花鞋 Frightening Embroidery Shoes
	陈凯歌 Chen Kaige	妖毛传Legend of the Demon Cat
	钱人豪 Qian Renhao	京城81号2 The House That Never Dies II
	雷宇扬 Lei Yuyang	碟仙诡谭 2 Death Ouija 2
	李永昌 Li Yongchang	怨灵 2 Haunted Hotel 2
	汪俊林 Wang Junlin	惊魂绣花鞋Frightening Embroidery Shoes
	邓安东 Deng Andong	笔仙咒怨 Pen Curse
	杨真 Yang Zhen	窦娥奇冤Snow in Midsummer
	摩萨利 Mo Sali	通灵姐妹Hunted Sisters
	张洋 Zhang Yang	借眼Through The Eye
	陆诗雷 Lu Shilei	恐怖理发店Ghost in Barber's
	李斌 Li Bin	诡域新娘Ghost Bride
	司徒永华 Situ Yonghua	深宫怨灵Palace of the Damned
	陆诗雨 Lu Shiyu	碟仙之毕业照The Haunted Graduation Photo
	王良 Wang Liang	七月半3: 灵触第七感Mid-July Days 3: Spirit Touch Seventh Senses
	陆诗雷 Lu Shilei	怨灵宿舍之白纸女生Haunted Dormitory: White Paper Girl
	高育新 Gao Yuxin	碟仙前传Disc Fairy
	陆诗雷 Lu Shilei	恐怖电影院 2 The Haunted Cinema 2
	陆诗雨 Lu Shiyu	恐怖毕业照 2 The Haunted Graduation Photo 2
	王良 Wang Liang	午夜惊魂路Taboo Terror of Going

		<i>Back</i>
	李克龙 Li Kelong	<i>撞邪31号Encounter Evil</i>
	李耀东 Li Yaodong	<i>午夜凶铃 Ring</i>
	欧阳奋强 Ouyang Fenqiang	<i>诡眼Spy Eyes</i>
	邢博 Xing Bo	<i>画室惊魂The Incubus Studio</i>
	朱林森 Zhu Linsen	<i>血伞凶灵An Umbrella Conspiracy</i>
	蒋国权 Jiang Guoquan	<i>诡异酒楼Fascinated Love</i>
	陆诗雷 Lu Shilei	<i>怨灵宿舍之人偶老师Haunted Dormitory: Marionette Teacher</i>
	常阳 Chang Yang	<i>诡井Deep Well</i>
	百丽丽 Bai Lili	<i>惊悚小说Inside: A Chinese Horror Story</i>
	邢博 Xing Bo	<i>夜闯寡妇村Intrude The Widow Village at Midnight</i>
	喻彬 Yu Bin	<i>惊魂七夜Seven Fright Nights</i>

Appendix 2 – Legal Articles Impacting on Horror Film Productions

*Film Industry Promotion Law 2017*⁴⁹

Article 1 This Law is enacted for the purposes of promoting the sound and thriving development of the film industry, advocating the socialist core values, regulating the film market order, and enriching the spiritual and cultural life of the people.

Article 3 Film activities shall be conducted in adherence to serving the people and the socialism, giving priority to social benefits, and realizing the unity of social and economic benefits.

Article 4 The state shall adhere to the screenwriting orientation that centers on the people, adhere to the policy of all flowers blooming together and all schools of thoughts contending for attention, respect and guarantee the freedom of screenwriting, advocate screenwriting close to the reality, life, and the people, and encourage excellent screenwriting that unifies thought, art, and enjoyment.

Article 16 A film shall not include:

- (3) any content defaming fine national cultural traditions, instigating ethnic hate or discrimination, infringing upon ethnic customs and habits, distorting national history or national historical figures, hurting national sentiments, or undermining national solidarity;
 - (4) any content instigating the disruption of the religious policies of the state or propagating cults or superstition;
 - (5) any content jeopardizing social ethics, disrupting the public order, undermining social stability, advocating obscenity, gambling, or drug abuse, highlighting violence or horror, instigating crimes or teaching methods for committing crimes;
-

Table 2

*Regulation on the Administration of Movies*2001

Chapter III Examination of Movies

...

Article 25 The following contents are prohibited from being recorded in a film:

...

- (5) that which propagates evil cults or superstition;
 - (6) that which disturbs the public order or destroys the public stability;
 - (7) that which propagates obscenity, gambling, violence or instigates crimes;
-

Table 3

⁴⁹ It needs to be noticed that all those Chinese laws, regulations and polices have no official translation from Chinese authority. In the article, I have used the word-to-word translation strategy to translate those legal documents in order to keep the original meanings of it. However, it cannot be seen that those articles have the same legal meaning as its source text.

Chapter III Examination of Films

Article 13 No film may carry any of the following contents that will:

- (5) Oppose the state policies for religion, and advocate cult or superstition;
- (7) Propagate obscenity, gambling or violence, or instigate others to commit any crime;
- (10) Other contents prohibited by any law, administrative regulation, or provisions of the State.

Article 14 If a film is under any of the following circumstances, the relevant contents shall be deleted or altered:

(3) Mingling up with pornographic or vulgar contents; displaying promiscuity, rape, prostitution, whoring activities, sexuality or sexual perversion, male or female sex organs or other private parts; or mingling up with dirty or vulgar actor's lines, songs, background music or sound effect;

(4) Mingling up with the contents of murder, violence or terrorism, confounding true and false, good and evil, or beautiful and ugly; confusing justice and injustice; deliberately displaying the rampancy of illegality or crime, particularly showing the details of crime, divulging special investigation means; having very irritant plots of murder, blood, violence, drug taking or gambling, etc., having plots of abuse of

prisoners, extorting confessions by torturing criminals or criminal suspects; or having excessively frightening or horrific pictures, actor's lines, background music or sound effect;

(5) Giving publicity to negative or decadent outlook on life, the world or values, or deliberately piling on or magnifying national ignorance or backwardness or social dark side;

(6) Preaching religious extremism, enkindling contradictions and conflicts between different religions, rites, believers and non-believers, or hurting the feelings of the masses;

Table 4

Notifications

Notice to public from the SARFT on Strengthening the Content Management of Internet Audiovisual Programs (2009):

1. According to Article 16 of the Regulations on the Administration of Internet Audiovisual Program Services, Internet audiovisual programs shall not contain the following contents:

(5) preaching cults and superstitions;

2. Each Internet audio-visual program service unit shall promptly cut and delete the audio-visual programs with the following circumstances:

(5) Advocating religious extremism, provoking contradictions and conflicts between religious and sectarians, between religious and non-believers, and hurting the feelings of the masses;

(6) Promoting feudal superstition activities such as the truth/fortune telling, fengshui, divination, and exorcising evil spirits;

(14) There are murders, blood, violent, suicide, kidnapping, drug addiction, gambling, spirituality

and other circumstances;

(15) Having excessively scared images of horror, subtitles, background music and sound effects;

(16) Specifically showing the killing of animals, killing and eating national protected animals;

Notice to public from the SARFT on Reiterating the Film Censorship Standards 2008:

1. Movies are prohibited from containing the following contents:

(4) Containing murder, violence, horror, ghosts, spirituality, etc., reversing the value orientation of true and false, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, confusing the basic nature of justice and injustice; deliberately showing illegal crimes and arrogance, showing details of criminal behavior, expose special investigative means; have violent murder, bloody, violent, drug abuse, gambling and other plots; plots of ill-treatment of prisoners, torture of criminals or criminal suspects; images of excessive horror, lines, background music and sound effect;

Notice to public from the SARFT on Strengthening Content Management of Internet Audiovisual Programs 2009:

2. Each Internet audio-visual program service unit shall promptly cut and delete the audio-visual programs with the following circumstances:

(7) Depiction of major natural disasters, accidents, terrorist incidents, wars, etc. by spoofing

(15) having excessively scared images of horror, subtitles, background music and sound effects;

Table 5