



ASIAN CRIME THRILLERS AND SERIAL KILLERS IN CINEMA

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We have seen Asian cinema rise to prominence among the audience in the past few years after years of being in the dark. Asian films are slowly coming out of their shell to be viewed and experience by the whole world. This act as an important key to the globalisation as people throughout out the world are able to understand and accept cultures other than their own. Asia is said to be the largest producer of film worldwide in terms of volume (Ciecko 1). Asia has a varied and diverse micro- culture and due to the enormity of the continent, Asian films varied in content and topic and has different character and quality. Asian cinemas are rich in culture and tradition which is why Asian films are a good media in conveying to the world a particular country's voice and the incorporation of Asian values and traits into their film also characterise Asian cinema . Although Individual Asian films had broken the "subtitle barrier" before, the 2018-2020 saw numerous artists, directors, and creative team finding high - profile success in global charts and industry award ceremonies. The list of acclaimed Asian films are growing longer as more and more Asian films are being shown in festival around the world. While the breakthrough of Asian films into the "global mainstream" might be release by the perfect storm of talents and releases, it is by no means the start of the rise of Asian cinema.

While Asian cinema came a long way with the release of the first Chinese film, Dingjun Mountain in 1905 and the first East Asian feature film "The Life Story of Tasuke Shiobara (1912)" in Japan, they have no to little global recognition. Korea's thriller "Parasite(2019)" making history as the first Asian winner of a screenplay Oscar is a proof that the Asian film is finally regaining the recognition they deserve. Asian films

industries has seen massive production and successes in the local box office but not much impact in the West since 1997 until Hollywood chipped in. Hollywood remakes of Asian movies have always fair well not only within the Asian countries but also in the West along with other regions of the world. This gave the Asian film industry a touch of globalisation where more and more involvement by the west took more interest in the production of there Asian movies (EACS 2008). But even so, Hollywood continues to use stereotypical Asian characters in its films. Most Asian main and supporting characters in films either spoke English without an American accent or in their native tongue. By the movie's end, more than a quarter of the Asian characters had perished. Asians typically play the villain or sidekick to the more sophisticated and prominent white lead, either as a support character or as a plot device. When we talk about Asian movies and their stereotypes, we need to understand them in the lens of Orientalism. Edward Said's Orientalism is a way of of viewing and representing the non- Western world, particularly the cultures and people of Asia, as exotic, mysterious, and inferior to the Western world. Orientalism has shaped a variety of cultural forms, including literature, art, and movies.

One of the main stereotypes found in Asian films is the portrayal of Asian men as martial arts experts who are physically powerful but emotionally and sexually repressed. This stereotype reinforce the idea that Asian men are exotic and martial arts are key aspect of their culture. By promoting the fetishisation of Asian masculinity, Orientalism dehumanised Asian men by reducing them to antiquated racialised stereotypes. Another example of Orientalism in Asian movies is the portrayal of the women as submissive, exotic, and sexually attractive. These characters are frequently portrayed as helpless women who need men to protect them, reinforcing the perception that Asian women are objects of desire and sexism against women. In addition, Asian culture is frequently romanticised and oversimplified in Hollywood Asian films, with a focus on martial arts, exotic settings, and traditional rites that appeal to western audiences. This monolithic portrayal of Asian civilizations, which disregards their diversity, history, and complexity, only serves to support the idea that Asia is a mysterious, underdeveloped region that needs Western leadership and assistance. Orientalist plays a significant role in stereotyping Asian movies. It perpetuates the cultural

and racial stereotypes of Asia and the people who lives there. While not all Asian movies follow this pattern, it is important to recognise the impact that orientalism has on representation and to continually challenge these racist stereotypes and prejudices that have persisted for centuries. Montesquiere compared French absolutism to the despotism of Asia, and as the modern European state developed, Asia was increasingly regarded as the example of everything backward and despotic that European states would liberate their people from. T. Oakes in In terminational Encyclopaedia of Human Geography,2009 stated “Asia was viewed as offering with only one possible outcome, and that was centralised, authorisation and desperate rule” . One of the other reason for Asian film’s limited popularity is the film focus on home drama and love stories which is now a thing of the past. By acknowledging this, we open the door to a broader discussion about intersectionality, representation, and the complexities of race and culture in the media. While we can still find stereotypes and racism against the Asian film and the Asians in cinema, it is slowly becoming a thing of the past with the rise of the young ‘woke’ generation and the global inclusion and fetishisation of the Asian popular culture and its growing popularity with the rise of Korean drama, Chinese drama, k-pop and anime waves.

One of the most popular genre in the film industry is the crime genre with the earliest crime film believed to have traced back to the silent epoch of 1897-1927 during the progressive era in the united state. Crime films have seen the recent surge in popularity and is coming as the most pervasive genre in contemporary cinema. The rise in popularity of the Crime films are not only during the recent years but also during the 1950s to the 1970s as new genre like courtroom drama, police genre, slasher, serial killers and psycho genre emerged. Crime films have evolve through the passage of time in terms of theme styles and characters. In the early days of cinema, crime films are often simplistic and formulaic with clear cut heroes and villains. However, over time we have seen the development of the crime films becoming more complex and nuance and exploring themes of morality and power. Crime films have adapted a variety of styles from gritty realism to stylised noir. In this study I will be particularly focus on the serial killers. The serial killers film see a rise during 1970s to 1980s to recent years with a surge of public interest in crime stories and a fascination with the darker side of human nature. The first serial killer film “M” (1931) directed by Fritz

Lang set standard for future crime and thriller films. Then term 'serial killers' itself was popularised in the 1970s by the film industries. The film noir has a higher set of audience and aims the young audience with new and brighter thriller, better technicolour and wide screen. The imagery of the films are mostly haunting yet intriguing and keeps the suspense afloat. Serial killer films portray cerebral thinking character and their consistent way of committing crime and this film noir emerge during the time when conservative criminal justice policies were dominant and society viewed criminals inherently evil. This films has greater need for research in term of criminology and psychology. This rise of serial killer films contribute to the sensationalisation and glamorisation of the serial killers and they are transformed into celebrities of some sort through law enforcement , news and entertainment media and the public appetite for macabre. Crime attracts vast attention and arguably captivates the interest of many(Roberts, 1992).

Crime speaks specifically of the mass American pop culture but while though of a more western genre, the East Asians rich tradition explore all facets of crime like the boom in darker , grittier Japanese crime movies during the 1970s, the string of Chinese and Hong Kong set action movies with cops using martial arts to solve the case during the 1980s and 1990s and also Korean films dealing with police, criminals and crime has become an international phenomenon. Asia has explored and produced many crime films over the years as early as the 1920s. Some of the notable early Asian crime films includes "Stray Dog" (1949) from Japan, "The Big Heat" (1953) from Hong Kong and "The Criminals"(1957) from China. When talking about Asian crime films, the global or common comprehensions are always associated with martial arts starring popular Asian actors like Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee, etc. while there are much more than that. The most earliest and influential Asian film on serial killer was "The Beast must die"(1959) from Jean directed by Toshio Masuda based on the true story of a serial killer who terrorised Tokyo during the 1940s and the 1950s. The serial killers films in Asia saw a rise during the 1990s to early 2000s. One of the most influential serial killer movie was "Memories of Murder" (2003), which is based on the true story of Korea's first serial killer, this movie helped to inspire a wave of similar film across Asia. Other famous serial killers film includes "The Chaser" (2008) from South Korea. "Cold Fish"(2010) from Japan and "The Snow White Murder Case"(2014) from Japan. The people's continual need for excitement gets extended

and fulfilled especially when films are based on true events. While serial killer movies can be purely fictional, there are lots of films that are based on true life events or inspired from real life combining cinematic realism and formalism and also from an angle of psychoanalytic film theory on serial killer films to feed the curiosity of the audience and to feel the thrill and the suspense and their believed in justice and also the mystery of human nature.

