Revenge Through Haunting:
Expression of Women's Anger in the Movies, *Tookaidoo Yotsuya Kaidan* and *Sundel Bolong*

Rouli Esther Pasaribu[1], Meilia Widya Ananda[2]

[1] Department of Literature Studies, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
[2] Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
Corresponding Author: rouliesther@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Tookaidoo Yotsuya Kaidan (1959) and *Sundel Bolong* (1981) are horror movies from Japan and Indonesia, respectively, about women who are oppressed by men and subsequently take revenge on them after their deaths. The key similarity between these two movies is that they have central female characters who turn into ghosts in order to express their anger towards their male oppressors. This study aimed to see how women's anger is depicted in Tookaidoo Yotsuya Kaidan and Sundel Bolong , u sing verbal and visual text analysis and the concept of power by Heilbrun, male gaze by Mulvey, and monstrous-feminine by Creed to read the meaning behind woman's anger as it is expressed in the form of a ghost in these movies. The research found that these women cannot express their anger in the real world, which is controlled by the patriarchal order. Life after death is the only space where they can express their anger. Both movies can consequently be interpreted as cultural texts that internalize patriarchal ideology in Japanese and Indonesian society.

Keywords: *ghost; horror movies; Indonesia; Japan; patriarchy; power relation; woman's anger*

INTRODUCTION

The existence of ghosts or spirits of departed souls is not scientifically proven (Bunge, 1998). However, there are still many people who believe in their existence, including Japanese and Indonesian people. The idea of ghosts or spirits in society prevails due to folklore, which has spread widely and remains deeply rooted from generation to generation.

Female main characters dominate well-known ghost stories in Japanese and Indonesian folklore. For example, Oiwa (the female ghost in *Yotsuya Kaidan* story that we will discuss further), Kuchisake onna (a beautiful female ghost with a deformed mouth by murder) and Yuki onna, (snow woman) are all female ghosts from Japan (Meyer (n.d)). Indonesia also has its well-known female ghosts, such as Sundel Bolong, Kuntilanak, and Wewe Gombel.

Of all the female ghost stories, Yotsuya Kaidan is considered one of the most popular stories in Japan (Scherer, 2014; Shimazaki, 2011; Wee, 2011), while Sundel Bolong is regarded as one of the most popular stories in Indonesia (Siddique, 2002). Yotsuya Kaidan is a Japanese ghost story written by Tsuruya Nanboku IV, which was originally written for one of the Japanese traditional theatrical plays, *kabuki*. Sundel Bolong is a ghost story from Indonesia whose writer is unknown, as the story is part of an oral literature. The stories spread widely and later adapted for different media, including movies.

The first film adaptation of Yotsuya Kaidan was directed by Itō Daisuke in 1912 and titled *Shimpan Yotsuya Kaidan*. After that, in 1949, it was made into a movie by movie director Kinoshita Keisuke, titled *The New Version of the Ghost of Yotsuya* (*Shinshaku Yotsuya Kaidan*). The most famous adaptation would be *Tookaidoo Yotsuya Kaidan* in 1959. The story was also adapted for a Japanese television drama with the title of *Kaidan Hyaku.*

Sundel Bolong has also been adapted for film. The most well-known film is *Sundel Bolong* (1981) directed by Sisworo Gautama Putra. Some other adaptations are *Telaga Angker* (1984), *Malam Jumat Kliwon* (1986), *Malam Satu Suro* (1988), *Sundel Bolong* (2007), and *Bernafas Dalam Kubur* (2018). For this study, the films *Tookaidoo Yotsuya Kaidan* (1959) and *Sundel Bolong* (1981) have been selected as research data.

There is a similarity in *Tookaidoo Yotsuya Kaidan* (TYK) and *Sundel Bolong* (SB). Both films depict a female main character who re-appears as a ghost and haunts men after her death. Even though the year of the production of both movies is a gap of some two decades, the late 1950s in Japan and early 1980s in Japan have a similar cultural context.

The late 1950s is known as the beginning of the high economic growth era in Japan. This era is characterized by "rapid industrialization, expansion of white-collar labour, increased urbanization and rising urban land prices leading to homes becoming increasingly further away from workplaces" (Dasgupta, 2000, p. 193). In this era, Japan focused on economic development and there was a rigid gender role difference between men and women. The 'salary man' or middle-class white-collar worker is a masculine ideal of Japanese men, while *sengyoo shufu* or full-time housewife is a feminine ideal of Japanese women (Dasgupta, 2000).

In the Indonesian context, the era of 1980s is a new order era when women's roles are controlled by the government through *Panca Darma Wanita* (five women's rules created by the Soeharto regime). In *Panca Darma Wanita*, it is said that one of the women's roles is to support her husband and educate her children (Suryakusuma, 2011). Similarly, in Japan, in the high economic growth era, men's and women's roles are divided rigidly based on gender. The dominant discourse of the masculine ideal for Indonesian men is as a breadwinner for his family, while the dominant discourse of the feminine ideal of Indonesian women is as a homemaker. It is similar to the *salary man* and *sengyoo shufu* in the Japanese context.

The cultural and social background in Japan and Indonesia is linked indirectly in popular culture including movies that were produced in these eras. On the surface there is no apparent direct connection between the background of Japan in the 1950s and Indonesia in the 1980s era and the two horror movies TYK and SB produced in these eras; however, at a deeper level, there is a socio-cultural context of power relations between men and women. These movies play an important role in representing how female main characters in both movies express their anger, hence why these movies were selected as research data. Through this study, both movies are compared and the deeper meaning of haunting acts as an expression of anger made by female characters is examined.

In both movies, this haunting act by female ghosts is not merely for entertainment. We argue this haunting act as a form of female anger expression. In reality, female characters in both movies do not have power in a patriarchal society to express their anger. In contrast to the ghost world, they have the power to freely express their anger to the men who had repressed them. This can be read that female anger is related to power issues in a patriarchal society.

As Kaplow (1973) puts it: "For a woman in our society is denied the forthright expression of her healthy anger. Her attempts at physical confrontation seem ridiculous; "ladies" do a slow burn, letting out their anger indirectly in catty little phrases, often directed against a third party, especially children. A woman has learned to hold back her anger: It's unseemly, aesthetically displeasing, and against the sweet, pliant feminine image to be angry." It means, for a woman, expression of anger is a taboo. Expressing anger is not considered a feminine trait. Compared to men's anger, women's anger is not considered as a serious matter. Kaplow (1973) goes on by defining anger as: "Thus anger is self-confident, willing to fight for itself even at the jeopardy of the status quo, capable of taking a risk and, if necessary, of accepting defeat without total demise. Above all, anger is assertive. The traditional woman is the polar opposite of this description."

From the statement above, we can conclude that expressing anger is a political act to confirm one's position about one's issue. A woman tries to take power and strengthen her position in society by expressing anger. We argue there is a social construct that impedes women from expressing their anger directly. This social construct makes people believe that expressing anger is not a proper act for a woman. This social construct is also found in ghost stories where the main female characters are ghosts expressing their anger through haunting. This social construct is the starting point for this research about

female anger in ghost stories from Japan and Indonesia.

Research about Yotsuya Kaidan has been done by a number of researchers such as Shimazaki (2011), Scherer (2014), Mansi (2018). These studies focus on Oiwa as the leading female character. A comparative study between Yotsuya Kaidan and horror stories from another region has also been conducted (Akiyama, 1985; Sorgenfrei, 2015). These comparative studies compare Yotsuya Kaidan with horror stories from America and Europe. Some comparative studies about horror movies have been done, too, focusing on re-making Asian horror movies into Hollywood movies (Wee, 2011; Lee, 2018). Similarly, research about Sundel Bolong movies has been done, focusing on the representation of the Sundel Bolong character in film (Shiddique, 2002; Pangastuti, 2019; Agustiningsih & Rostiyati, 2019).

While studies on Yotsuya Kaidan and Sundel Bolong have been done, there are no comparative studies between Japan and Indonesian horror movies. As stated above, the movies TYK and SB have a similarity in terms of their socio-cultural context even though they were produced some two decades apart. By comparing both movies, we aim to see the universality of patriarchal cultural practice especially regarding the expression of female anger in both countries. Research on female anger in both movies has not yet been conducted, so this research seeks to fill this research gap. In doing so, this article tries to see the connection between anger and power relation, more broadly, female self-expression in a patriarchal society. The research problem can be formulated into the following question: How is female anger depicted in TYK (1959) and SB (1981)?

In this article, we unpack how Oiwa and Sundel Bolong express their anger towards those who have power over them in a patriarchal system and how we read this expression of anger in the socio-cultural context of both societies. This research seeks to contribute to the scholarship on female self-expression, representation of women in popular media, and Japanese and Indonesian horror movies.

METHOD

This research employs verbal and visual text analysis methods to see how female anger is depicted in both movies. To analyze these movies, I will use a feminist perspective. According to Tyson (2006, p. 83), feminist criticism examines "the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women."

In employing text and visual analysis of both movies, the paper will focus on elements significant in these movies, namely the characterization of the leading male and female characters and shot and camera angle.

This research uses Creed's (1993) monstrous-feminine concept to see the visualization of a female ghost in both movies and Mulvey's (1975) male gaze concept to see how power relations are exercised in both films. This research will also employ Heilbrun's (1988) concept of anger and power to analyze the expression of female anger in both movies.

After analyzing both movies' textual and visual elements, we will link the analysis result to Japanese and Indonesian contexts, focusing on the social-cultural context at the time these movies were produced and seeing the ideology in both films.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In discussing how female anger is depicted in the two films, we divide this section into three parts. Firstly, we will look at how female characters in the real world do not have power and are oppressed by their male counterparts. Next, we will discuss the ways the oppressed women took revenge through haunting in the ghostly world. Lastly, our analysis of female anger expression in the supranatural world will be discussed in conjunction with patriarchal culture in Japanese and Indonesian societies.

TYK (1959) is a Japanese movie about murder, betrayal, and revenge centered on Iemon, a masterless, low-ranking samurai, and his wife, Oiwa. The title means "a ghost story from Yotsuya", a district in Edo (now Tokyo) where the characters in this movie lived. Iemon is a *samurai* (a knight clan in the Japanese Edo period (1603-1868)) whose character is evil and will do all he can to get what he wants. This becomes evident from the first minute of the movie, when Iemon killed Oiwa's father because his relationship with Oiwa was not blessed by her father. Iemon promised that he would help her to search for her father's murderer, even though he was the one who killed him. Oiwa depends on Iemon to avenge her father's death.

Oiwa is submissive and endures the difficulties in her married life with her husband, Iemon. Oiwa never came to know about Iemon's murder of her father. Oume, a granddaughter of Ito Kihei, a high-ranking samurai, falls in love with Iemon. Oume thought that she was not as beautiful as Oiwa so Oume's family then gave Oiwa a poisonous facial cream to make Oiwa's face ugly and indeed her face became ugly after she applied the poisonous cream. Seeing his wife's horrible face,

Iemon decided to divorce Oiwa. He asked Takuetsu to rape Oiwa, so Iemon would have an honorable reason to leave his wife, and he could accuse his wife of not being faithful to him. However, when seeing the Oiwa's disfigured face, Takuetsu does not have the heart to rape her. Instead, he tells her that it was Iemon who murdered Oiwa's father. Oiwa, who is already in shock seeing her disfigured face, upon hearing this news goes into deeper shock. Oiwa becomes hysterical and picks up a sword, and runs out of the house. Takuetsu tries to stop Oiwa but Oiwa accidentally stabs her own throat with the sword and dies. After dying, she turns into a ghost and then takes revenge by haunting her husband, Iemon, who had already married Oume. Oiwa haunted Iemon everywhere. Finally, Iemon was killed by Yomoshici (Oiwa's brother-in-law) and Osode (Oiwa's sister and Yomoshichi's wife).

SB (1981) is an Indonesian movie about a woman named Alisa who used to be a commercial sex worker. At the start of the movie, Alisa married a man named Hendarto and was willing to start a new life and be a good wife. While her husband, a sailor, was away at sea, Alisa was raped by Rudi, a boutique owner and his subordinates after Rudi had asked Alisa to work for him. Alisa's former pimp, Mami, was also there and saw this rape taking place. Alisa then tried to seek justice by reporting this incident, and she went to court. But instead of making Rudi and Mami go to jail, people in the court did not believe Alisa's testimony because she had been a commercial sex worker. Mami and Rudi's lawyer argued that the incident was not a rape rather, they did it because it was consensual. Alisa became pregnant as a result of being raped, and she felt humiliated to meet her husband when he returned. She tried to have an abortion, but the doctor said that abortion is murder, and as a woman, Alisa cannot escape the responsibility of being a mother. Alisa continuously felt embarrassed, guilty, sinful, and insulted. Before her husband came back from his voyage she committed suicide. After Alisa died, she became a ghost named Sundel Bolong to avenge herself by haunting people who hurt her when she was alive. Sundel Bolong seduces and kills all men that rape. At the end of the story, a group of men consisting of Hendarto, Alisa's husband, a Muslim preacher (*Kiai*), police, and village people, calmed Sundel Bolong (the ghost of Alisa) by saying prayers. Sundel Bolong left after being calmed by this group of men led by a *kiai* and did not haunt people anymore.

Real World: Silenced Women, Vocal Men

Oiwa and Alisa were not able to express their anger in the real world because they had less power than their male counterparts. This part shows how male and female characters are depicted through gendered characterization and the male gaze.

According to Petrie and Boggs (2008), characterization can be analyzed through eight elements, namely appearance, dialogue, external action, internal action, the reaction of other characters, contrast, caricature and leitmotif, and choice of name. In this article, I will analyze characters through appearance, dialogue, and external action.

The appearance, dialogue, and external actions of Oiwa and Iemon are contrasting. From the beginning of the movie, Oiwa is depicted as a weak character. It can be seen from how she walks and how she endured a long journey. She needs a lot of rest and walks slowly. Besides being depicted as physically weak, Oiwa is also economically vulnerable and less powerful in her relationship with Iemon. Oiwa. In every scene with Iemon, Oiwa is shown in a sitting position with eyes looking down or in a position lower than Iemon or at the back of Iemon, as shown in Figures 1 to 3 below.

Figure 1. Iemon helps Oiwa who feels tired and unwell while walking (TYK, 00.12.11).

Figure 2. Iemon yells at Oiwa in a quarrel (TYK, 00.15.21).

Figure 3. Iemon kicks Oiwa when she begs Iemon to not sell a mosquito net (TYK, 00.22.32).

Figures 1–3 have a similar element in depicting Oiwa's and Iemon's positions. Each figure shows Iemon's position and appearance that are more powerful than Oiwa's. Figure 1 is taken from a scene when Oiwa feels tired and unwell on their journey. Even though Iemon does not show his power through mental or physical abuse in this scene, it also shows the power relation between Oiwa and Iemon by depicting a weak and unwell Oiwa and a strong and healthy Iemon. In this vulnerable position, Oiwa feels terrible by saying "sumimasen, gomeiwaku bakari wo kakeshite" (I am sorry for always causing trouble) (TYK, 00.12.11). Iemon here still acts as a good husband, puts his hands on Oiwa's shoulder, and says that Oiwa is his wife, so he should care for her.

In F igure 1, the exercise of power by Iemon over Oiwa is done through the act of a dependent relationship. Oiwa depends on Iemon, and Iemon responds by saying that he should take care of Oiwa. The gesture of Iemon putting his hands on Oiwa's shoulder can be read as an act of protecting Oiwa and easing Oiwa's pain. A husband who is taking care of his wife who is unwell is a good thing, but at the same time, it also shows the more powerful position of Iemon over Oiwa. It shows through Iemon's healthy and robust body, his louder voice, his gesture that protects and takes care of Oiwa, his gaze towards Oiwa. In contrast Oiwa is not meeting Iemon's gaze.

Figures 2 and 3 overtly show the exercise of power by Iemon over Oiwa. In Figure 2, Iemon yells at Oiwa in front of their house. In this scene, Iemon was angry towards Oiwa because Oiwa asks Iemon to fulfill his promise to avenge her father's death. Iemon, who was putting up an umbrella, immediately let his emotions show, stood up, and rushed out.

The scene was taken using a *full shot* (a shooting technique which fully captures the characters' body from head to toe and also used to show the surrounding objects and environment (Hayward, 2013). Iemon and Oiwa were at their residence; however, Iemon is already positioned outside their house while Oiwa was still under its roof. Iemon is standing and looking down at Oiwa, while Oiwa is sitting and looking up at Iemon. Iemon's position represents his power over Oiwa. On the contrary, Oiwa doesn't have any power over Iemon, seen in her lower position compared to Iemon. Iemon's facial gesture seen from his side profile shows a very angry face towards Oiwa. His hands are clenched at the sides of his body, indicating his fury towards her. Oiwa's facial gesture is silent and helpless while her hands are in front of her chest, indicating Oiwa's vulnerable position against Iemon.

In Figure 3, the exercise of power is escalated to physical violence. Figure 3 is the most overt exercise of power by Iemon towards Oiwa. Iemon kicks Oiwa, who falls over, emphasizing the weaker position of Oiwa. Oiwa does not kick or yell back. She only responds by crying. In Figure 3, as in Figure 2, Iemon's voice when talking to Oiwa is loud, while Oiwa responds in a weak voice.

In SB's opening scene it depicts Alisa and Hendarto getting married, and they both look very happy.

Figure 4. Alisa and Hendarto on their wedding day (SB, 00.03.28).

Unlike TYK, in SB, Alisa's and Hendarto's married life is a happy one. Hendarto is depicted as a kind man who saves Alisa from prostitution. Alisa tries her best to be a good wife, but she is later raped by Rudi, a man who got acquainted with Alisa's former pimp, Mami. She was raped not only by Rudi, but also by Rudi's subordinate.

Alisa is seen as a sexual object, especially in the rape scene. In SB, Alisa's visualization is portrayed from a male perspective, or in Mulvey's words, the male gaze. Mulvey (1975, 1999, p. 804-805) stated that "as an advanced representation system, the cinema poses questions of the ways the unconscious (formed by the dominant order) structures ways of seeing and pleasure in looking." Moreover, Mulvey (1975, 1999, p. 808) argues that "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly." In other words, the act of gazing is linked with power. Women are positioned as sexual objects, looked at by men, and motivated by males' pleasure. The scenes below show how the male gaze makes a female character a sexual object.

Figure 5. Rudi who is Alisa's rapist (SB, 00.18.02).

Figure 6. Rudi's gang look on at the rape scene from a door which is slightly ajar (SB, 00.18.38).

Figure 7. Rape scene (SB, 00.18.41).

All the scenes above were shot from Rudi and his subordinates' gazes. In these scenes, Alisa becomes a sexual object. It is linked with how much power is exercised by Rudi and his subordinates over Alisa. In contrast, Alisa is depicted as powerless and shown in a lying position, and her hands are tied up. Alisa's position, Rudi's gaze, and how the camera is used to film this rape scene can be seen as female sexual objectification. In these three scenes above, the camera always frames Alisa as the object of the gaze. By gazing at Alisa, Rudi and his gang sought sexual gratification. Gazing here functions as an exercise of power. An act of gazing escalates to rape, an act which shows males are more powerful than females and a physical control over females.

Alisa got pregnant after being raped. She felt ashamed to tell her husband, Hendarto, who didn't know that she was raped due to being away at sea. When she sought an abortion, the doctor refused because he thought it was the same as killing the child in Alisa's womb.

Alisa also reported this rape incident and it went to court. But at the court hearing, Rudi and Mami's lawyer told of Alisa's past as a commercial sex worker and said that Alisa's testimony could not be trusted. Here we can see that Alisa is oppressed by powerful institutions, namely medical, legal, and even religious institutions that were all directed by men.

The first part of SB portrays Alisa's position in Indonesia's patriarchal society. A man saved her through marriage to get a better life. She is seen by Rudi and his subordinates as a sexual object and subsequently raped. She is judged by doctors, and lawyers as complicit rather than as a victim of male power (rape). These scenes show how Alisa is positioned as inferior and powerless in society.

Even though Alisa is positioned lower than men in society, it doesn't mean that she is weak. She drove by herself, fought back when Rudi's subordinates attacked her, and resisted Rudi when Rudi tried to rape her in Rudi's office. She also tried to fight when Rudi's subordinates tied her up before she was raped. But even though she is portrayed as a brave female, her position in society is still inferior.

In contrast, Oiwa is portrayed as a weak and submissive female from the story's beginning. She does not fight, and she always accepts her fate. The similarity between TKY and SB is that both female characters are oppressed by their society. No matter how justified their dissatisfaction or even anger are, they cannot express it freely. It doesn't count as an essential matter due to their position in a patriarchal society.

Both female characters die during the story and in the second part the female character becomes a ghost. These female ghosts take revenge on male characters that oppressed them in the real world. The role of the female ghosts is examined further in the next section.

Supranatural World: Silenced Men, Vocal Women

The analysis in this section focuses on how both main female characters take revenge by haunting men and the meaning behind female ghost revenge from a feminist perspective. The similarity of both TKY and SB is that the oppressed female character dies during the story and becomes a ghost that haunts men. The argument is

made that the acts of revenge by female ghosts confirm the rules of patriarchal society where women are not allowed to express anger in the real world and only allowed to express anger in the supernatural world. This act of revenge in the supranatural world can be read as a mechanism to silence women's voices and perpetuate patriarchal norms regarding female anger.

There is a contrast between Oiwa in the real world and the supernatural world. It can be seen in the scenes below.

Figure 8. Oiwa haunts Iemon in his room (TKY, 00.52.14).

Figure 9. Oiwa haunts Iemon in his room (TYK, 00.54.01).

Figure 10. Oiwa haunts Iemon in the river (TYK, 00.58.46).

Oiwa haunts Iemon in a variety of places. She haunts Iemon from the ceiling of his room, she positions herself beside Iemon, and she appears at the river, haunting Iemon from below. We can see the contrast here between Oiwa before becoming a ghost and Oiwa after becoming a ghost. Before Oiwa died, her space was limited. She mostly stayed at home, and if she went out, Iemon accompanied her. Oiwa is also depicted to be positioned behind Iemon or lower than Iemon. But after Oiwa becomes a ghost, she is placed higher or equal with Iemon.

For example, Figure 8 shows us that Oiwa is positioned higher than Iemon. Oiwa haunts Iemon from the ceiling, and Iemon is positioned to sit on the tatami floor, lower than Oiwa. This can be read that now Oiwa has power over Iemon. Figure 8 uses *medium close-up* (a shooting technique showing the character's head to chest to emphasize someone's or an object's profile), and both frames of the scene depict Oiwa's position on the ceiling of Iemon's room. So she is positioned above Iemon and he needs to look upward to see Oiwa. The gestures of the ghost of Oiwa are also different from her gestures when she was alive. Her facial expressions are much more sinister, with her eyes glaring at Iemon, her mouth open, and her head tilted to the side. These are all to represent that she is now the one who people fear.

Figure 9 shows Oiwa's position parallel to Iemon. It contrasts with Figures 1–3, where Oiwa is never positioned equal to or higher than Iemon. Figure 10 shows Oiwa's position as being lower than Iemon (Oiwa was floating in the river, and Iemon was standing at the riverside), but the depiction differs from F igures 1-3. In Figure 10, even though Oiwa is positioned lower than Iemon, she has power over Iemon, proved by Oiwa pulling Iemon's legs towards the river from her floating position.

Verbal signs in the dialogue emphasize the change where there is a transfer of power from the man to the woman. One of which can be seen in the following dialogue.

Oiwa : *Kono urami. Kanarazu koroshimasu zo.* ("With this grudge. I will kill you.")

(TYK, 00:52:04 – 00:52:16)

This dialogue shows Oiwa daring to convey her lifelong buried anger from the supernatural world. The clause "with this grudge" signifies that she has held an unexpressed grudge throughout her life. Once she became a ghost, she now dared to express her anger, while Iemon, to the contrary, became silent. It shows how eventually Oiwa has control and power.

In the end, Iemon is killed by Oiwa's sister, Osode and Osode's husband, Yomoshichi. Before he died, Iemon asked for forgiveness from Oiwa.

Before he dies, Iemon says, "Oiwa, yurushitekure…" (Oiwa please forgive me, TYK, 1.15.20). Finally, after being haunted many times by Oiwa, Iemon asks for forgiveness. Figure 11 shows Iemon's position looking up to Oiwa, symbolizing that Iemon is powerless. There is no verbal response from Oiwa showing she forgave Iemon.

Figure 11. Iemon begs forgiveness from Oiwa before he dies (TYK, 01.14.37).

Figure 12. Oiwa dressed in white carrying her child (TYK, 1.15.55).

Figure 13. Oiwa fading from view (TYK, 01.16.22).

TYK ended with the depiction of Oiwa as a mother carrying her child. She is no longer a ghost with a frightening face. The camera frames a white-dressed Oiwa in a close-up shot, and gradually, she fades from view, becoming smaller and smaller until she disappears.

This last scene occurs after Iemon has died. Oiwa arguably now feels satisfied because she had successfully taken revenge against Iemon. But, on the other side, this scene can be interpreted as a beautiful woman not being allowed to express her grievances or anger. In other words, Oiwa is allowed to express her anger through haunting as an ugly ghost.

This pattern of what kind of woman is allowed to express her anger can be traced in Japanese classic literature, namely *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) written by Murasaki Shikibu in the early 11ᵗʰ century and the *Noh* drama play *Aoi no Ue* (Lady Aoi) written by Zeami Motokiyo in the Muromachi (1336–1573). In *Genji Monogatari*, Prince Hikaru Genji's former lover,

Lady Rokujo, is jealous of Genji's official wife, Lady Aoi. Unable to express her jealousy directly, she uses evil spirits or *mono no ke*. In *Noh* drama, it is more obvious that when Lady Rokujo expresses her jealousy and hatred for Lady Aoi, she tells it through the evil spirit symbolized by *Noh* mask *hannya*, a jealous female demon mask. In other words, a woman can express her anger, jealousy, hatred in the form of a demon, not a woman. Bargen (1997) observes:

> Under the Taiho Code (702), a woman's jealousy was grounds for divorce. Popular Buddhist and Confucian views of the time adduced jealousy as one of woman's evil attributes. The result of these attitudes is that women who have no other options repress their emotions-if they can. (Bargen 1997, p. 4)

Female jealousy in Buddhism and Confucianism are constructed as being evil attributes. It is even legitimated as a reason for divorce. A woman cannot express jealousy, hatred, and anger in all aspects, namely culturally, socially, religiously, and lawfully. Shirane in Bargen (1997, p. 6) argues that in Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji Monogatari*, "evil spirits, or mono no ke, become a dramatic means of expressing a woman's repressed or unconscious emotions." Or, as Bargen (1997, p. 153) put it, "They are a way of telling what cannot be told."

This idea of prohibited female jealousy can be seen in TYK too. While Oiwa lived in a patriarchal society, she must adjust to the norms and not protest or express her anger to Iemon. But once she passed away, she expressed her anger in the form of an ugly ghost. When the revenge has been completed, her appearance changes to a beautiful mother in white, carrying her child. This pattern is similar to the *Aoi no Ue* Noh drama play, when Lady Rokujo changed her female mask to a *hannya* mask, or jealous demon ghost mask. To express her anger, she must change her appearance to that of a demon (in TYK as a ghost).

Similar to Oiwa, Alisa in SB also became a ghost after she killed herself. Alisa takes the form of a Sundel Bolong ghost. The pattern in SB is similar to TYK, where Sundel Bolong takes revenge by haunting and killing every man that had made her life miserable. In SB, as in TYK, Alisa is free to go anywhere after becoming a ghost, as seen in the figure 14 to 16.

The three figures (14-16) show how Sundel Bolong acted on her anger and took revenge. When Alisa was still alive, she was raped by men, and every man gazed at her, making her a sexual object. Here in the form of Sundel Bolong, Alisa stares back at every man
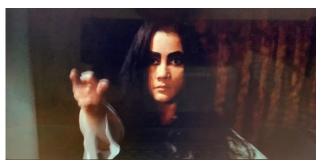
Figure 14. Sundel Bolong makes her first appearance (SB, 0. 49. 49).

Figure 15. Sundel Bolong takes revenge on Gadung, one of her rapists. (SB, 1. 05. 07).

Figure 16. Sundel Bolong kills Rudi, the first of the rapists (SB, 1.39.29).

that raped her. Like Oiwa, Sundel Bolong is positioned higher or on the same level as a man. Sundel Bolong is also depicted as physically strong. She can among other things move a car, make a building crack, and push over a fence. She also eats an enormous amount of food. For example, she ate 200 chicken skewers and one big pot of chicken soup. She also yells at the men who raped her, for example she says to Gadung, "Gadung, sekarang giliranmu kuperkosa" (Gadung, now it's my turn to rape you, SB, 1.05.07) and to Rudi, "Kenapa lari, takut? (Why are you running away? Afraid?, SB, 1.36.29).

The dialogue above shows Alisa's bravery, daring to say these words to the men who raped her. In the real world, rapists are male, but in this supernatural reality, it is the other way around. Although as the story progresses,

the female raping of malesdoesnot occur, Alisa's words show the shift incontrol from male to female.

These actions show the reversal of power relations. Alisa, in the form of a ghost, is more powerful than themen who raped her. She also makes fun of these men by first seducing them in the form of a beautiful woman, and after she seduces these men, she changes her appearance to the Sundel Bolong ghost. In the sexual relationships, she is the one that leads, lures, and attracts the men.

Sundel Bolong is depicted as a strong masculine character which contrasts with Alisa's character which is womanly and submissive to her husband. From these depictions, we can see that a female who expresses her anger is considered to have masculine traits. In other words, anger is not recognized as an appropriate female gender trait. The pattern here is the same as it is in

Figure 17. Hendarto, Alisa's husband, and a kiai reciting Al Quranic verses to calm Sundel Bolong (S B, 1.40.25).

Figure 18. Hendarto (center), a kiai, policemen and others, reciting Al-Quranic verses to calm Sundel Bolong (SB, 1.40.30).

Figure 19. Sundel Bolong becomes calm, and her appearance changes to an elegant lady in a white dress (SB, 1. 40.35).

TYK. An aggrieved female character must change her appearance into the form of a ghost or an evil spirit to express her anger.

SB's ending has similarities but also differences with TYK. This can be seen in the figures 17 to 19 above.

A similarity with TYK is the ending in which Sundel Bolong also is no longer a grotesque creature but becomes more like an innocent lady who appears in a white dress. This appearance indicates that Sundel Bolong no longer takes the form of a ghost and no longer gets angry. It strengthens the argument that a woman must take the form of a ghost when she gets angry.

The use of a religious figure and a *deus ex machina* in the form of a religious leader is one of the features of an Indonesian horror movie (Suyono and Arjanto in Van Heeren, 2012, p. 138). As a *deus ex machina*, the function of the appearance of this religious leader in the form of *kiai* is to suddenly solve the problem being confronted in the movie. His role can be seen in the final scene of SB where a kiai leads a group of men in reciting Quranic verses to calm Sundel Bolong. Before that, Alisa's husband, Rudi, advised Alisa to let go of the desire for revenge and let go of all the material things of this world. In the end, while a group of men recite Quranic verses, Sundel Bolong suddenly disappears. It can be interpreted that she has ended her revenge, and from now she will not haunt anyone again.

While a group of men recite Quranic verses, Sundel Bolong is crying. Her action shows that she regrets what she has done, taking revenge and killing the men who had raped her. This indirectly positions Sundel Bolong as a sinner who needs to repent. In other words, her anger is not acknowledged as a valid feeling. Sundel Bolong is represented as bad, and her revenge and expression of anger is not legitimated.

Female Anger in Supernatural World: Representation of Patriarchal Culture in Japanese and Indonesian Societies

Female anger in the movies discussed can only be manifested in the supernatural world. This finding can be interpreted as a reflection of a patriarchal ideology rooted deeply in both societies.

This depiction where women can only speak as a ghost and not as human beings emphasizes how female anger is taboo in both Indonesian and Japanese society. This is in line with what Heilbrun (1988, 2008, p. 13) says: "And, above all other prohibitions, what has been forbidden to women is anger, together with the open admission of the desire for power and control over one's life (which inevitably means accepting some degree of power and control over other lives)." Giving space for women to express their anger can be read as a first step to undermining the status quo of power and hierarchy in a patriarchal society.

Heilbrun's definition of power below provides a framework for connecting power and anger.

"The true representation of power is not of a big man beating a smaller man or woman. Power is the ability to take one's place in whatever discourse is essential to action and the right to have one's part matter." (Heilbrun 1988, 2008, p.18)

In this case, as explained by Heilbrun, power is the ability of someone to express themselves verbally and be heard in formulating action. This power is related to expressing an opinion, expressing their attitude towards something, and is the opposite of silence. Further, Heilbrun said that "If one is not permitted to express anger or even to recognize it within oneself, one is, by simple extension, refused both power and control." (Heilbrun, 1988, p.15).

From the findings in the first two sections, we can compare Oiwa and Alisa's attitudes before and after becoming ghosts. The contrast is obvious, from being in positions as women with no power to confront men's attitude towards them to becoming female ghosts that freely expresses their anger.

Using the image of a ghost to visualize female anger, TYK and SB can be read as a tool that perpetuates the perception of female anger as ugly. By doing so, it puts female anger in the periphery, even out of the real world.

Creed (1993, p. 11) argues that "female monsters populate the horror film, many of which seem to have evolved from images that haunted the dreams, myths and artistic practices of our forebears many centuries ago." In her book *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, she coined the term 'monstrous-feminine' to differentiate male monsters from female monsters in horror films. She argues that "all human societies have a conception of monstrous-feminine, of what is about a woman that is shocking, terrifying, shocking, abject." (Creed, 1993, p. 11). Although her research focused on western movies, this concept of monstrous-feminine is also applicable to discuss female monsters in Asian horror movies.

Creed developed the concept of monstrous-feminine from Kristeva's work *Powers of Horror* (1982). Creed (1993, p. 16) stated that although Kristeva's study "is concerned with psychoanalysis and literature, it

nevertheless suggests a way of situating the monstrous-feminine in the horror film in relation to the maternal figure and what Kristeva terms 'abjection'."

The term 'abjection' itself "refers to the human reaction (horror, vomit) to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of distinction between subject and object or between self and other." (Felluga, 2011). Physical waste such as blood, urine, corpse is an abjection that disturbs a symbolic order. In Japanese and Indonesian contexts, it can be said that symbolic order refers to the structure of a patriarchal society.

Creed (1993, p. 18) argues that "the concept of a border is central to the construction of monstrous in the horror film; that which crosses or threatens to cross the 'border' is abject." Moreover, Creed states the function of the monstrous-feminine in horror films, "to bring about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability." (Creed, 1993, p. 18). One of these examples can be seen in "a construct of the border between what Kristeva refers to as 'the clean and proper body' and the abject body, or the body which has lost its form and integrity." (Creed, 1993, p. 18).

In TYK and SB, both Oiwa and Sundel Bolong construct a ghost with the abject body, contrasting with 'the clean and proper body.' Oiwa's face is depicted as horrible because of poisonous cream. Her face is far from the beautiful face defined by the patriarchal norm. Sundel Bolong has a big hole full of blood and maggots in her back, caused by giving birth from her back in her grave (Pangastuti, 2019).

The construction of Oiwa and Sundel Bolong as an abject body signifies a border between what is normal and what is abnormal in the symbolic order. As female ghosts, Oiwa and Sundel Bolong are depicted as powerful. Still, at the same time, their powerful depiction only occurs in the supernatural world, not in the real world ruled by patriarchal society. Moreover, it links the notion that for females, expressing anger can only be done in an abnormal body, in this case, in a horrible female ghost body, not in a 'clean and proper body' recognized as a normal standard in a patriarchal society. In other words, the expression of anger itself is considered abnormal, deviant, and improper in a patriarchal society. Thus, while both Oiwa and Sundel Bolong are depicted as powerful female ghosts that take revenge through haunting and murder, at the same time, it perpetuates the patriarchal notion that anger is not a female virtue because revenge can only be done through the form of an abject body, a body that is abnormal and unclean.

The ending of both movies hints as to what is considered the border between normal and abnormal.

After revenge is enacted, Oiwa and Sundel Bolong change into a beautiful lady wearing a white dress. In SB, the religious ritual is practiced by a group of men led by a *kiai* to calm Sundel Bolong and so put an end to her revenge. These depictions strengthen the notion of a border between what is normal and abnormal or considered abjection.

The border between normal and abnormal can also be seen in giving Alisa the name 'Sundel Bolong'. In SB, when the female character is still a woman in the real world, she is called Alisa. But after she becomes a ghost, she is no longer Alisa but named Sundel Bolong. The name 'Sundel Bolong' is derived from two words: 'sundal' (a prostitute) and 'bolong' (a hole). This name itself hints at a symbolic meaning that this form of ghost is depicted negatively, not as a good woman, but as a prostitute who has a hole in her back full of maggots and blood, emphasizing a repugnant body. She is presented as a ghost, a prostitute, and as havingan unhealthy and abnormal body. All resemble deviancy according to patriarchal norms.

The period when these movies were produced provide a clue as to why these movies have such a strong patriarchal ideology. The year 1959, when TYK was produced, is the beginning of Japan's post-war high economic growth era. In this era, the gender role difference between men and women is reproduced by putting the *salaryman* (full-time white-collar worker) as a, borrowing Connell's (1987) term, a vehicle of hegemonic masculinity and *sengyo shufu* (full-time housewife) as a vehicle of femininity in Japanese society. This rigid gender role created a hierarchy of power between men and women (Dasgupta, 2000). The dominant discourse of idealized women as submissive, passive, and silent is internalized in society.

On the other hand, the year 1981, when SB was produced, it was the New Order era under the Soeharto regime. In this era, men and women had rigid gender roles. Men were the breadwinners for their families and the heads of the households. As written in Panca Dharma Wanita (five women's duties formulated by the Soeharto regime), a woman's role is to support her husband and educate and take care of children (Suryakusuma, 2011). Instead of protesting or getting angry, she must obey and submit herself to her husband. As a movie produced in this era, SB also internalized this patriarchal ideology of permissive women and indirectly hints that a woman's anger is not appropriate in the depiction of a female's expression of anger through a ghost.

A patriarchal system that is acculturated in Japan can be observed in the nineteen points in a guidebook

to teach morality to girls and women (De Barry, Gluck, Tiedermann, 2001) named *Onna Daigaku* by Kaibara Ekken. *Onna Daigaku*. It was written in 1829, four years after the *Yotsuya Kaidan kabuki* play was written. Some of its guidance includes that women are not allowed to be angry in this guidebook such as 1) Do not be jealous of your husband and talk calmly. 2) Obey, do not be angry, and do not speak ill of others. From this *onna daigaku* guidebook, originating in the Edo period, it is obvious that women's anger is prohibited.

In Indonesia, the patriarchal system has also been rooted socially and culturally (Hermawati, 2007), such as in Javanese culture, which is the background for SB. Some Javanese sayings illustrating this patriarchal system are 1) *Manak, macak, masak*, stating that women should be able to produce offspring, make themselves up to look good (for their husband), and cook. 2) *Kanca wingking*, a friend in the back of the household, implies a friend whose role is to take care of the children, cook, wash, and do other domestic chores. 3) *Swarga nunut neraka katut*, which means if one goes to heaven, then the other will join to stay, while if one goes to hell, then the other should follow as well. In other words, "The fortunes of a wife fluctuate with those of her husband." (Horne, 1974, p. 581). Wives then are expected to show submission towards their husbands as the head of the household.

Thus, constructing the expression of anger in female ghosts in TYK and SB can be read as perpetuating patriarchal ideology about female anger which is prohibited in a patriarchal society. It links to the internalization of a message that only an ugly, abnormal woman expresses her anger. In contrast, a "normal" woman will repress this angry feeling to be accepted in a patriarchal society.

CONCLUSION

Even though both Tookaidoo Yotsuya Kaidan (TYK) and Sundel Bolong (SB) were produced at different times (1959 and 1981, respectively), in different countries (Japan and Indonesia), and with different storylines, cultural contexts, and characters, they both share a similar portrayal of female anger in the form of a ghost. TYK and SB depict how the anger of women has no place for its expression in the real world. Such expression, however, is allowed after they move into the supernatural world. In this supernatural world, angry women are depicted as monstrous-feminine creatures, terrifying women with great power, whereas in the real, living world, they are obedient and calm. Women's anger in the supernatural world furthermore emphasizes that female anger is taboo

and unacceptable in the real world. Women are allowed to be angry, but not as human beings. They take the form of a female ghost, an abjection that crosses the border between what is normal and abnormal. It disturbs but simultaneously perpetuates the symbolic order.

We can conclude that popular media such as film can be used to spread, normalize, and perpetuate ideology, in this case patriarchal ideology about power relations and anger. Instead of men preaching or saying directly what a woman should and should not do regarding her emotions, showing expected behaviors indirectly through popular media achieves a more internalizing effect. It comes to be seen as a part of daily life, wherein the audience is not cognizant that the use of a female ghost as a medium for the expression of anger strengthens the dominant discourse of the power relations between men and women. This underscores the necessity of a feminist perspective on the issue of popular media, so as to unveil gender problems that are often hidden.

A limitation of this research is that it only compares these two movies. To gain a deeper understanding of this topic, further study on the female ghosts in other horror movies from Japan, Indonesia, and other countries is needed.

REFERENCES

Agustiningsih, D.D. & Rostiyati, A. (2019). Konstruksi perempuan dalam film hantu *Sundel Bolong*. *Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya* 5 (1), 58-76.

Akiyama, M. (1985). James and Nanboku: a comparative study of supernatural stories in the west and east. *Comparative Literature Studies* 22(1), 43-52.

Bargen, D.G. (1997). *A Woman's Weapon: Spirit Possession in The Tale of Genji*.University of Hawaii Press.

Boggs, J.M. & Petrie, D. W. (2008). *The Art of Watching Films*. 7th Edition. McGraw-Hill.

Bunge, M. (1998). *Philosophy of Science: From Problem to Theory*. London: Routledge.

Connell, R.(1987). *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics.* Palo Alta: University of California Press.

Creed, B. (1993). *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. Routledge.

Dasgupta, R. (2000). Performing masculinities? The 'salaryman' at work and play. Japanese Studies 20 (2), 189-200.

De Bary, T., Gluck, C., Tiedemann, A. (2001). *Sources of Japanese Tradition.* Columbia University Press.

Felluga, D. (2011, January 31). Modules on Kristeva: on the abject. *Introductory guide to critical theory.* https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/english/theory/

psychoanalysis/kristevaabject.html

Hayward, S. (2013). *Cinema Studies: The Key Concept*. 4th Edition. Routledge.

Heilbrun, C. G. (1988). *Writing a Woman's Life*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Hermawati, T. (2007). Budaya Jawa dan kesetaraan gender. *Jurnal Komunikasi Massa*, 1(1), 18-24.

Horne, Elinor C. (1974). *Javanese-English Dictionary*. Yale University Press.

Kaplow, S. (1973). Getting Angry. http://www.feminist-reprise.org/docs/kaplow.html

Kristeva, J. (1982). *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Columbia University Press.

Lee, H. (2018). Transformations of the monstrous feminine in the new asian female ghost films. Diogenes 62 (1), 100-114.

Mansi, R. (2018). *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan's Oiwa: Analysis of a kabuki vengeful ghost*. [Master Thesis, Leiden University]. https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/

Meyer, M. (n.d). *Kuchisake onna.* https://yokai.com/kuchisakeonna/

Meyer, M. (n.d). *Yuki onna*. https://yokai.com/yukionna/

Mulvey, L. (1975, 1999). "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford UP, 833-44.

Nakagawa, N. (Director). (1959). *Tookaidoo Yotsuya Kaidan*. [Film]. Shintoho.

Pangastuti, A. (2019). *Female sexploitation in Indonesian horror films: Sundel Bolong (A Perforated Prostitute Ghost, 1981), Gairah Malam III (Night Passion III, 1996), and Air Terjun Pengantin (Lost Paradise – Playmates in Hell, 2009)*. [Master Thesis, Auckland University of Technology]. https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz

Putra, S.G. (Director). (1981). *Sundel Bolong*. [Film]. Rapi Films.

Scherer, E. (2014). Haunting gaps: gender, modernity, film and the ghosts of Yotsuya Kaidan. *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese* 12 (1), 73-88.

Shiddique, S. (2002). Haunting visions of the Sundelbolong: vampire ghost and the Indonesian national imaginary. *Axes to Grind: Re-Imagining the Horrific in Visual Media and Culture*, 22(2), 24-33.

Shimazaki, S. (2011). The end of the "world": Tsuruya Nanboku IV's female ghosts and late-Tokugawa kabuki. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 66(2), 209-246.

Sorgenfrei, C.F. (2015). 'Supernatural soliciting': pathways from betrayal to retribution in *Macbeth* and *Yotsuya Kaidan*. *New Theatre Quarterly* 31 (1), 28-32.

Suryakusuma, J. (2011). *Ibuisme Negara-State Ibuism: Konstruksi Sosial Keperempuanan Orde Baru*. Komunitas Bambu.

Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* 2nd Ed. Routledge.

Van Heeren, K. (2012). *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirits of Reform and Ghost from the Past*. KITVL Press.

Wee, V. (2011). Patriarchy and the horror of the monstrous feminine: a comparative study of *Ringu* and *The Ring*. *Feminist Media Studies* 11(2), 151-165.