



Narcissism, Melancholia and the Manifestation of Suffering in Shutter

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Abstract

Figures of vengeful female ghosts are commonly visualized in Asian horror cinema as an allegorical response to patriarchal injustice. Banjong Pisanthanakun and Parkpoom Wongpoom's *Shutter* (2004) utilizes this trope by highlighting the psychological subjectivity of the central protagonist Tun as he deals with the loss of a love-object while sustaining a desire to bolster his egocentricity. By utilizing psychoanalytic knowledge informed by Freudian concepts of melancholia and narcissism, this essay will examine how the character's psychological burden emerges as a complex allegory that reflects on culturally specific gender ideology. Framed against the larger metanarrative of gender inequality that underscores contemporary Thailand's social landscape, Tun's relationship with his love-object is representative of the way in which men continue to oppress, (ab)use and construct women for their own desires and ends. The manifestation of male psychological damage further underlines the unjust gender ideology that remains entrenched in the patriarchal-inflected Thai-Buddhist belief system.

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