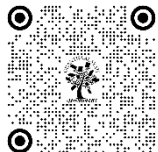


DEMONIZING MOTHERHOOD: MIRRORING THE MONSTROUS FEMININE IN THE BOLLYWOOD HORROR MOVIE *CHHORII* (2021)

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ABSTRACT

Motherhood is a profound and multifaceted experience transcending biological, emotional, and societal dimensions, traditionally idealised for love and compassion, and is venerated as the supreme soul of caregivers. For society to thrive, families play a key role, and mothers are one of the most important players in this process. This paper, on the contrary, investigates the abject terror a mother may undergo because of patriarchal structures. As the horror genre reflects societal anxieties and fears the archetype of motherhood is used by horror writers to unearth the fears associated with it as well as challenge the perceptions society has of motherhood. The prime purpose of this study is to deconstruct the archetypal image of a mother with the subversion of traditional motherhood that is culturally imposed on a woman. This research article is devoted to analysing the Bollywood horror film *Chhorii* (2021) through the lens of Barbara Creed's theory of 'Mostrous-Feminine' that challenges Motherhood through a subversion of traditional conceptions of the role. With the help of the film, the researchers aim to manifest the disruption of socio-cultural expectations imposed on a mother and thereby explore her transgression of gender roles associated with motherhood by being monstrous in the narrative.

Keywords: Motherhood, Patriarchy, Horror, Monstrous-Feminine

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of horror is a combination of terror and revulsion. An imagined horror story creates an entry point into a fictional world, one that is either brilliantly imagined or astonishingly real, where fears are heightened but can be overcome. As a result, it taps into fears that are shared by humans, such as the fear of being attacked in the dark or some fears unique to particular cultural groups. There is nothing new about horror. It is an old concern, and it is an old source of tales. Nightmares are a common human experience that plays out our greatest fears as we

sleep. Horror films can be referred to as cinema's bad dreams, although horror has been an essential genre for millennia, appearing in literature, mythology, and popular as well as academic culture. There are several ways in which we respond to the world, including horror. It is the foundation of a number of our oldest tales as well as many of our most popular films. Horror films are above all a means of conceptualizing, expressing, and dealing with the evil and frightening. Until a horror film awakens a fear that has been lying dormant for some time, some fears may be potential. It is possible to encounter evil in everyday life or in fiction, however, in movies it is most frequently portrayed as a supernatural force or as an embodiment of a supernatural being. Furthermore, it appears in humans who are unnaturally vicious, regardless of their psychological condition. The art, look, coherence, intensity, range, and overall project of the genre are influenced by fear, not only through the disgusting spectacle that may make us uncomfortable, but also by the idea, fact, or face of evil.

Though many are disgusted or frightened to watch or discuss horror films, there is a growing interest in watching and discussing them. Truth be told, horror films can serve as insightful fables about human nature as well as outstanding works of art. There are several reasons for this, including the fact that horror is difficult to formulate and unpleasant to contemplate. Despite its gloomy theme, the context is filled with elements like violence, cruelty and gore, creating nightmares that no one would ever wish to endure. It can be disturbing as it brings the characters as well as the viewers uncomfortably close to the worst that could ever happen, like the forbidden aspects of the human psychology. Horror films have the ability to transgress and transcend limits by arousing both terror and repugnance by showing the viewers things they do not want to see. Yet the repellent, terrifying and creepy things shown seem to be compelling in some manner. In addition, it can also be the home where monsters roam, a place of lost places and things that cannot exist can also be found here. It has the potential to reach the limits of violent and insane human behaviour, or it can open up a gateway for supernatural forces to infiltrate. Horror films are a common form of entertainment, deal with a variety of topics, and provide a relevant way of exploring some of the most current issues, particularly those pertaining to the representation of women. Film studies scholars have given particular attention to feminism as a component of their scholarship, and horror film has been considered as an integral part of the feminist film theory. For the study of objectified, repressed images of women in horror films, psychoanalytic and semiotic paradigms have been used as a basis for analysis [Chaudhuri \(2006\)](#), [Grant \(1996\)](#).

There has been a long tradition of gender roles, which persists even today, particularly for mothers who must fulfil their duties in accordance with the principles and ideologies of patriarchy, such as not stepping outside the box and not shifting the position of men in controlling the family. In other words, as the 20th-century British critic and novelist [Woolf \(n.d.\)](#) propagated, women are expected to be "the angel in the house" reflecting on the picture of the woman as a perfect mother and wife who was unable to fight for her rights and did as perceived by the society. It was the patriarchal ideology that interfered with the role of mothers. As a manifestation of the patriarchal ideology the mothers' roles are determined, which in turn has led to the concept of patriarchal motherhood. The 2021 Bollywood horror movie *Chhorii* is one such visual representation where the role of the mother as a caregiver comes into question. When a woman attempts to subvert the specific roles culturally assigned to her and still is repressed due to patriarchal ideologies, voicing against the authority gives birth to the concept of the monstrous feminine. The monstrous feminine notion may be attributed to Barbara Creed's important text

The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis (1993), where she contends horror films frequently depict women as hideous characters, expressing society's fears about the female body and its powers. These grotesque depictions are based on deep-seated anxieties about female authority, especially in the spheres of reproduction and motherhood. In *Chhorii* the concept of the monstrous feminine is highlighted as motherhood itself transforms into a harbinger of terror.

The film tells the story of a pregnant woman who becomes entangled in the eerie and supernatural occurrences surrounding a dilapidated house in a remote village. Directed by Vishal Furia, the film is a remake of the Marathi movie by Furia himself *Lapachhapi* (2017) and delves into the complex intersection of gender, motherhood, and societal expectations. This movie takes place in the midst of a large sugarcane field where one can easily get lost in the towering reeds. The house serves both as a temporary getaway from debt collectors for the young couple Hemant (Saurabh Goyal) and Sakshi (Nushratt Bharucha), an eight-month pregnant woman. They have been staying at the home of their driver, Kajla (Rajesh Jais) and his wife, Bhanno Devi (Mita Vashisht), who are actually her in-laws as her husband married her in disguise. Sakshi unwarily gets entrapped in the village as a victim of a vicious plan devised by her in-laws. Their initial hospitality is soon accompanied by gender-based prejudices. *In addition to dealing with phantoms of the paranormal, Sakshi is faced with the horrors of one's past and social evils that are far more frightening. The struggle of the protagonist to save herself and her unborn child sets up the premise for a haunting story that is rooted in patriarchy and superstition. As weird images and noises begin to abound, the shelter transforms into a terrifying location, engulfing Sakshi in the centre of ghostly manifestations, tragic familial history, and even shamanic ceremonies.*

1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this paper is to examine the portrayal of the roles of women in the Bollywood Horror movie *Chhorii* (2021) using the concept of the 'Monstrous Feminine' in a qualitative manner. The study will explicitly focus on motherhood which is archetypally attributed to love and nurture but is subverted in this particular story, thus giving rise to the monstrous side of the feminine nature. This study explores the social operation of gender as it is reflected in popular culture through the application of the monstrous feminine as a critical and thought-provoking analytical tool. In this film, representations of the monstrous feminine enable us to understand the abjected dimensions of subjects that lie beyond the boundaries of designated gender roles by exposing the politics of gender. This paper gives a fresh perspective to dig deep into the horror genre employed in the Bollywood film industry.

1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is an attempt made on the part of the researchers to highlight the underlying patriarchal norms followed by the women themselves and make other women walk on the same path. The focus of this paper is to understand how superstitions and ignorance blind people making them monstrous.

1.3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review basically focuses on the use of the theoretical concepts which have been employed in other papers to understand how the theories can be

utilised in Bollywood Hindi films. In the article by Meraj Ahmed Mubarki “The Monstrous ‘Other’ Feminine: Gender, Desire and the ‘Look’ in the Hindi Horror Genre”, he talks about the role of the female monster in Hindi horror cinema which cannot be considered as a part of the abject mother archetype but as an ‘other’. However, this paper takes a stance on the concept of the monstrous feminine infused in motherhood as a product of the Indian patriarchy. Since no previous study has been conducted on the film *Chhorii*, critical or otherwise, this paper is the first to take the critical initiative.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The horror genre has been extensively used to explore social fears and anxieties. One intriguing characteristic of this genre is its potential to provide nuanced depictions of womanhood. Women's portrayal in horror films has frequently been linked with complicated issues that question society's standards and beliefs. The concept of the ‘Monstrous-Feminine’ was first introduced by Barbara Creed in her text *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993), where she interprets horror films and the women characters in them. As per Creeds’ theory, the feminine represents the Other, and in horror films, it is the monster that is the Other which needs to be repressed or tamed. This depiction of the female as monstrous has been done since time immemorial due to reasons relating to their bodies, gender and sexuality: “The reasons why the monstrous-feminine horrifies her audience are quite different from the reasons why a male monster horrifies his audience” Creed (2007), p. 3. A monstrous feminine is characterised by the crossing of boundaries and borders and therefore resulting in an abject state. In this context, Creed states, “The possessed or invaded being is a figure of abjection in that the boundary between self and other had been transgressed” (p. 3). Particularly, the concern pertains to the female body itself crossing these borders through a particular transformation, whether it is death, mutilation, vampirism, witchcraft or possession. Throughout the narrative, the film disrupts socio-culturally based gendered meanings associated with motherhood and transgresses the gender norms that regulate gender roles.

Monstrous-Feminine has a close association with abjection, a concept introduced by Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980). The term abjection refers to the feeling of discomfort and revulsion that occurs when one encounters something that blurs the boundaries between what is considered accepted and what is not. A sense of discomfort and anxiety is caused by the Monstrous-Feminine’s disruption of traditional gender norms. The depiction of biological functions such as menstruation, childbirth or ageing can be upsetting because it challenges the idealised and sanitised image of femininity. The Monstrous-Feminine challenges conventional customs and beliefs about female bodies, particularly those about beauty, purity and control. The relationship with abjection stems from society’s anxiety and uneasiness when confronted with features of femininity that stray from established norms. The Monstrous-Feminine incorporates and accentuates these aberrations, creating fear and revulsion. It reveals the unease and concerns that develop when confronted with the untidy, unmanageable, and sometimes taboo parts of feminine living. Creed (2022)

3. ANALYSIS

3.1. SUBVERSION OF MOTHERHOOD AND FORMATION OF THE MONSTROUS FEMININE

The representation of motherhood in films has been a recurrent topic, typically applauded and romanticised. However, there are times when this conventional portrayal of motherhood fails to resonate, resulting in the formation of the monstrous feminine. The Bollywood horror film *Chhorii* (2021) is one such intriguing examination. Bollywood, India's thriving film industry, has long been recognised for its portrayal of motherhood because its films' archetypal concept of the self-sacrificing, loving, and virtuous mother has remained a recurrent cliché. Mothers are frequently presented as the family's moral compass, selflessly committed to their children's well-being ultimately promoting an idealised image of the Indian mother, who is admired for her selfless sacrifices and undying devotion. Indian culture is a rich fabric of traditions, customs, and belief systems that have formed through thousands of years. The notion of motherhood, which retains a holy and treasured role in Indian civilization, is one of its core characteristics. Motherhood is a complicated and varied notion that is intricately entwined with cultural, social, and historical settings. For generations, the patriarchal system placed males in positions of power and control, relegating women to subservient duties. Motherhood was not just a personal and domestic affair in this context, but also an institution of culture that reinforced gender norms and power relations. Women were expected to fulfil the responsibilities of wives and mothers, putting their family's needs ahead of their own. In simple terms, patriarchal motherhood means that a woman's role as a mother is determined and influenced by the traditional beliefs and values of a society controlled by men. This concept stands fit according to the feminist Adrian Rich who in her text *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976) talks about how all the forms of a woman's movement in the domestic sphere are controlled by the man in one form or another: "Men have been able to give us power, support, and certain forms of nurture, as individuals, when they choose; but the power is always stolen power, withheld from the mass of women in patriarchy" (p. 249). This reflects the idea that patriarchy has been in charge of motherhood for a long time and has made sure it stays that way in order to keep the patriarchal system strong and intact. [Cohen \(1996\)](#)

Chhorii explores the idea of patriarchal motherhood through the character of Bhanno Devi (Mita Vashisth) who constantly addresses Sakshi's unborn child as 'Chore' meaning boy, highlighting the impression that sons should be chosen over women, and here this mature woman is encouraging the notion that men should be considered superior and women to be subordinate. She subtly introduces Sakshi to the customs and traditions of Haryana, like braiding her hair in their particular style and drawing traditional tattoos on her hand, under the veil of a loving and caring mother which Sakshi acknowledges as a bliss bestowed upon her since she is an orphan and expressing her happiness she says, "Today, for the first time I experienced a mother's love" (00:43:38).

Figure 1



Figure 1 Source <https://www.gadgets360.com/entertainment/chhorii-movie-104583>

Figure 2



Figure 2 Source <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12861212/mediaviewer/rm732950017/>

The character of Bhanno Devi disguised as the image of a perfect mother is a form of monstrosity. Her change in behaviour, especially her kindness provides an assessment that it is every woman's obligation to be a good mother. When she ties up Sakshi and asks her to stay alive in the house all alone for the next three days so that the curse is lifted from her family, this behaviour portrays Bhanno Devi as a terrible mother. Women who take on maternal responsibilities are thought to be adhering to patriarchal beliefs and ideologies. Bhanno Devi does this, but it presents her as a monster in front of Sakshi, who at the end points out that "A woman's biggest enemy is another woman" (1:58:32), calling her an enemy due to her actions. Patriarchy is a term generally associated with men but strictures of patriarchy imposed upon women for centuries have made them more patriarchal than men. In a country where women are brainwashed that the ideals that men preach are always superior to those of others, they try to conform to those in order to assert their authority in a distorted manner, getting sadistic pleasure from condescending to other women making them suffer in the same manner they had undergone in the hands of their in-laws. Bhanno Devi still carries on the age-old traditions and expects

Sakshi to adopt them as well like eating food after the men have eaten and not calling the husbands by their names.

As the story progresses three ghostly-looking boys are shown to be mischievously playing with Sakshi, which is reprimanded by Bhanno Devi. After constant requests of the latter towards Sakshi not to get involved with them, she defies her and this angers Bhanno Devi resulting in the dialogue “Didn’t I tell you to stay away from them? Don’t you get it!” (1:03:08). This reflects the authoritative agency displayed by the mother of the house and that Sakshi being a girl must listen to her. The patriarchal ideology is heavily carried out by Bhanno Devi which intertwines patriarchal motherhood with the monstrous feminine. This is again reflected whenever Bhanno Devi talks about her first daughter-in-law, Rani (Pallavi Ajay) as ‘the wretched’ as she was unable to deliver a child due to an accident. This highlights the patriarchal ideology of a woman’s sole purpose in life is to continue the lineage. Barbara Creed justifies how women are represented in horror films as monstrous in her book *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993) with the help of the theory of abjection put forward by Julia Kristeva. She states “...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', that which does not 'respect borders, positions, rules', that which 'disturbs identity, system, order' Kristeva (1982)” (p.8). When Sakshi retorts back to Bhanno Devi with the words “For me, she is a woman, like any other woman, just like me” (1:03:58) she mirrors the ‘new woman’, who is considered monstrous for her stand against the said patriarchal norms. Sakshi’s defiance against the rules set by the patriarchal society for women to be obedient and submissive makes her a headstrong and outspoken woman which is not appreciated by society and thus makes her an object of the monstrous-feminine. This is noticed at the very end of the film when Kajla says “Do not forget your place. You are a girl, so behave like one.” To which she replies “You are forgetting your place. Every woman is a mother. And no one is above a mother” (1:58:40-50).

Figure 3



Figure 3 Source <https://www.gadgets360.com/entertainment/chhorii-movie-104583>

The film *Chhorii* challenges and subverts the traditional representation of motherhood. Despite the horrific circumstances surrounding her, Sakshi is not a passive victim, but one who is resilient and determined to confront the horrors that surround her. It challenges the standard notion that motherhood equates to vulnerability by emphasizing her agency and strength. Throughout the movie,

Sakshi's character undergoes a transformation as she becomes entangled in the dark mysteries of the village. This result blurs the boundaries between victim and perpetrator. This transformation is a manifestation of the development of the monstrous feminine, a concept that stems from the concept that women who violate social norms are regarded as monstrous. Sakshi's path parallels the change from a conventional mother to a monstrous feminine. She transforms into a symbol of the strange, defying social conventions and expectations. The film investigates the premise that women who violate established norms are frequently labelled as monstrous, evoking terror and uneasiness in the audience. The film explores themes of female empowerment, retaliation, and the effects of societal tyranny as Sakshi declares, "This girl won't leave till she exposes all the characters of this story" (1:52:52). Sakshi's persona represents the suppressed feminine wrath that arises when women are pushed to their breaking point. It rejects the typical image of women as victims in horror stories and alternatively empowers the female protagonist to take ownership of her fate. This is well reflected in Sakshi's proclamation after she became aware of the wrongs done to the ghost when she was alive. She says, "I will raise my voice for every mother who has been wronged" and "It's a promise of one mother to another" (1:54:14).

On the other hand, Bhanno Devi represents the figure of the mother who refuses to fit into the ideal role of a mother which "demands of women maternal instinct rather than intelligence, selflessness rather than self-realization, relation to others rather than the creation of self" Rich (1976), p. 42. Through this defiance, she upholds the role of patriarchal motherhood, which also paints her as monstrous. As a woman who has murdered numerous girl children, she violates the symbolic identity of a mother. Towards the end of the film, both Kajla and Banno Devi talk about the tradition of female infanticide:

Kajla: Boys carry forward the lineage. And girls...

Bhanno Devi: Rajbir, keep the tradition alive, son. (1:48:02-10)

It is through this deviation from dominant gender perceptions that the subjectivity of the mother figure in *Chhorii* is materialized. Due to her status as a woman, she challenges the normalized associations that exist between violence and patriarchy, and, more importantly, its incompatibility with the idea of an ideal woman. It is quite logical that the mother figure falls into the category of abject, as defined by Kristeva as something "which crosses or threatens to cross the border" (1980, p.11).

Figure 4



Figure 4 Source <https://www.bollywoodmdb.com/movies/large/chhori/16696/35803>

3.2. WOMANHOOD AND WOMEN'S SOLIDARITY BEYOND TRADITIONAL MOTHERHOOD

Chhorii is also inspired by Indian folklore and traditions, with mystical aspects such as a haunted place and the spirit of a woman who may hold the answer to the horror that unfolds. These components contribute to the reinvention of the monstrous feminine in Indian culture, demonstrating how deeply ingrained such myths may be in society's collective mind. The location of the film, a haunted village, is consistent with India's long-standing history of ghost stories and superstitions surrounding cursed areas. It plays on the terror and mystery associated with abandoned or secluded sites in Indian tradition, where hostile ghosts are said to dwell.

The ghostly woman in the film is Bhanno Devi's younger sister-in-law, Sunaini (Yaanee Bharadwaj), who is time and again addressed by the former as a 'Dayan' (witch) because of her inability to give birth to a male child. It is revealed that Sunaini was burnt alive after she accidentally killed her husband, which was incited by Bhanno Devi herself. In that state itself, she gives birth to her daughter, who is later thrown in a well to fulfil a village-wide ritual of good harvest. This act of killing a newborn girlchild which is justified under ritual and custom, reflects patriarchal traditional dogma where superiority and importance are given to a male child only. Sunaini's attempt to save her daughter by jumping into the well and accepting death by drowning with her girlchild mirrors motherhood and ethics of care. Moreover, seeing this the three younger sons of Bhanno Devi also jump to save their beloved "Chotti Mayi." Sunaini and the three boys came back as ghosts and began tormenting Bhanno Devi's family. Sunaini's return to the house as a spirit to avenge her girlchild as well as her death connotes the birth of the monstrous feminine within herself. This justifies Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's theory about the formation of the monster, "The monster is born [. . .] as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment—of a time, a feeling, and a place" (1996, p. 4).

Figure 5



Figure 5 Source <https://www.gadgets360.com/entertainment/chhorii-movie-104583>

Sunaini's figure is based on the timeless archetype of the 'Dayan' or 'chudail' from Indian folklore. For millennia, the 'Dayan' or 'chudail' archetype has been a repeating element in Indian mythology and narrative. These supernatural beings are frequently depicted as women who went through a dark change as a result of unsolved conflicts or curses, and they are said to haunt and harm the living. "The

witch, of course, is a familiar female monster” Creed (2007), p. 2. In Indian tradition, their relationship with the monstrous feminine corresponds to society's worries and anxieties about the female gender, power, and the supernatural. *Chhorii* deftly employs the ‘Dayan’ or ‘chudail’ archetype to highlight the deeply embedded character of these traditions in Indian society, while simultaneously questioning and rethinking the notion of ‘Monstrous Femininity’ amid this cultural framework. Sunaini’s character is complex, for she seeks justice through hauntings and killings making herself monstrous as she lies at the border “between the normal and the supernatural, good and evil” (p. 11). Through visions and the lived circumstances of Sunaini’s ordeals before her death, Sakshi learns the truth behind the former purpose of killing the unborn children and causing havoc in Bhanno Devi’s household during her forced stay in the haunted house revealing the very existence of Sunaini’s spirit in the ‘in-between’ state.

Sunaini only shows herself to the pregnant women in the house. She tries to show them their future for they were pregnant with a girl child. Kajla and Bhanno Devi would kill their daughters soon after her birth with the belief that they are offering her to get a good harvest and only boys can carry the lineage not girls. Sunaini having gone through the same fate more than once before her untimely death was in a manner trying to save those women. It was only Sakshi who understood her and promised her justice. Providing the woman with a voice from beyond the grave, she becomes the medium through which Sunaini expresses her pain, fear, and longing. Despite the projection of Sunaini’s character as demonic, her longing for solidarity that a woman finds in another reflects the trust that women normally find among themselves. The link between Sunaini and Sakshi being that of a mother, creates a bond between them which transcends the concept of womanhood from the living to the spectral and, thereby, it sheds attention on the problems experienced by innumerable women who strive to satisfy societal norms while reconciling their own aspirations and objectives due to cultural pressures and expectations on women.

4. CONCLUSION

Chhorii as the name of the movie suggests, unearths the grim issues of female infanticide masked by the narrative of supernatural manifestations. This cinematic gem explores the essence of womanhood from beyond death, transcending traditional horror tropes. The film portrays the strength, resilience, and agency of women through the character of Sakshi. As well as providing a social commentary on the challenges women face in society, it contributes to the discussion of the need for gender equality in society and the recognition of the experience of women. The film, in conclusion, presents an engaging portrayal of a monstrous female character that challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes in horror films. As a result, the film subverts the notion that women are passive victims in favour of empowering them as active agents of change and resilience. Taking a unique perspective on the horror genre and the role of women within it, the movie explores the themes of motherhood and female solidarity. The film challenges us to confront our own anxieties and stereotypes about women, parenting, and the supernatural, making it an intriguing addition to the genre. As we continue to investigate the depiction of women in horror films, *Chhorii* exemplifies the ability of narrative to confront and reinterpret society's conventions and expectations, eventually broadening our knowledge of the monstrous feminine in all her complexities. It questions conventional concepts of parenthood and provides a new viewpoint on the intricacies of women's lives. As the Indian film industry evolves, it serves as a

testament to cinema's potential to drive societal change and shape cultural narratives.

In essence, the film emerges as a thought-provoking cinematic masterwork that questions the Bollywood industry's cultural conceptions about parenting. The film pushes away from old preconceptions by portraying a mother as a complex figure, paving the path for more inclusive storylines. This truthful and nuanced representation strikes a chord with the audience, spurring vital discussions about gender roles and societal standards. In addition, *Chhorii's* cinematography, sound design, and visual effects all contribute significantly to the depiction of the monstrous feminine. These aesthetic components combine to produce an immersive experience that spectators remember long after the credits have rolled.

Finally, the movie exemplifies the ever-evolving character of horror cinema in India. The film contributes to the genre's continued growth by elegantly blending traditional ideas with modern narrative. It demonstrates horror's capacity to cross cultural barriers and connect with various audiences while remaining anchored in the unique cultural setting from which it takes inspiration. *Chhorii* is a striking illustration of how horror may be used to explore cultural issues and instil deep-seated fears and superstitions in a modern film setting. Overall, *Chhorii* is a film that goes beyond the horror category.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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