



Talisman or Curse: Cultural Distortion in Horror Narrative of “The Monkey’s Paw”

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Abstract

In the famous horror short story “The Monkey’s Paw” (1902) by British author William Wymark Jacobs, the monkey’s paw, a talisman from colonial India, is given a sinister and bizarre cultural connotation and becomes a “curse” for the Whites. Drawing on concepts related to postcolonial studies, this dissertation focuses on the social and cultural symbolism of the Monkey’s Paw in the story, comparing its connotation in Indian culture with the connotation in the Oriental imagination by Jacobs. It analyzes how Jacobs uses the horror narrative to distort Indian culture, thereby revealing the dominant discourse of imperialist cultural hegemony over the East in British literature.

Key words: “The Monkey’s Paw”; Cultural distortion; Horror narrative; Culture hegemony

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INTRODUCTION

“The Monkey’s Paw” is a classic horror story by British writer W. W. Jacobs. It is a tale of superstition and terror unfolding within a realistic, Dickensian setting of domestic warmth and coziness, a British version of “Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp” that combines

everyday life and gentle humor with exotic adventure and dread, a dark allegory of magic with an O. Henry ending. The story revolves around the White family and a monkey’s paw brought by their friend Sergeant-Major Morris. The paw, got from an old Fakir in India, has the magic to grant three wishes. When the first wish comes true, things will start to get out of hand, and the consequence waiting for them is terrible and irresistible.

“The Monkey’s Paw” was well-received when first published in 1902; the story was very popular with readers, and it also garnered rave reviews from some of the most important critics at home and abroad. “The Monkey’s Paw” has been adapted for various media, such as plays, movies, TV series, operas, comics, etc. A large number of works adopt the core elements of “The Monkey’s Paw”. Many other British suspense or horror novelists, such as Stephen King, have also been influenced by Jacobs’s writing.

Most of the studies and evaluations tend to appreciate its profound inspiration and ineffable terror, focusing more on language features, selected images, suspense setting, etc. For example, in *The Monkey’s Paw and Other Tales of Mystery and the Macabre*, Grant Kellermeyer claims that “The Monkey’s Paw” ranks among the first-rate supernatural fiction, alongside the thrillers of Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe, and Peter James. Jacobs’s brand of horror continues in the literary tradition of Edith Wharton and Henry James: packing a devastating punch to human arrogance with eloquent language, shadowy happenings, and complicated characters. (Hoppenstand, 1997, p.xi)

Besides, “The Monkey’s Paw” is relatively short in length, and portrayals of India in this story are much less than those in some other colonial novels. Little attention has been paid to the hidden cultural prejudice displayed in “The Monkey’s Paw”. However, characteristics of colonial literature can find expression in “The Monkey’s Paw”. Just like Joseph Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* and

Edward Morgan Forster's *A Passage to India* and so on, "The Monkey's Paw" also engenders a subconscious concept change and even a wrong cultural cognition.

Therefore, in order to further explore how western literature misreads, negates and subverts Indian culture, this dissertation will make a comparative analysis of the monkey's paw, and analyze the suspense of the three wishes and the construction of the effect of fear, thus to demonstrate the existence of cultural distortion in "The Monkey's Paw" and probe into the way and intention of it.

1. THE MONKEY'S PAW IN INDIAN CULTURE AND WESTERN IMAGINATION

As the most essential image in the fiction, the monkey's paw has become an enduring and typical representative of terror of Jacobs' writing. When it comes to the monkey's paw, the reader can quickly think of the "three wishes", "the price of desire", "death", and other dark descriptions. However, these stereotypes are more or less due to the guidance of the story on purpose. So what will happen if we take the monkey's paw out of the context of fiction and bring it back to India and ancient Hindu writing? This part will analyze the similarities and differences of the monkey's paw in Indian culture and western imagination based on the cultural background and the text of the story.

1.1 Talisman of India

India is shrouded in mysterious and legendary religious theology as one of the four ancient civilizations. Take Hinduism as an example; religion permeates all aspects of India, making Indian literature, social customs, moral beliefs, and other unique exotic colors different from the West's. As the saying goes, "Three steps to see a god, five steps to visit a temple". Various talismans and sacred objects in India are quite common, which are respected and worshiped by people. The monkey's paw mentioned in Jacobs' fiction is a type of talisman, and it has sacred religious significance and positive functions.

First of all, in terms of physical form, the paw comes from the monkey which has a very high social status in India. This originated with the monkey god Hanuman, the only entirely animal figure revered as a god in Hindu mythology. In two famous Indian epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the monkey with four faces and eight hands is mentioned as a symbol of justice, wisdom, and power. In particular, "The Monkey Kingdom" plays an integral part of the seven chapters of *Ramayana*, which demonstrates the positive image of Hanuman and monkeys in Indian culture.

Temples for Hanuman spread all over India, with an endless stream of pilgrims. According to huanqiu.com, among the top 20 tallest statues in India, Hanuman statues account for 9, and the one in the capital New Delhi are

more than 40 meters high. In addition, regarded as the embodiment of Hanuman, monkeys can roam the streets with no harm. There are two main reasons why Indians revere and worship Hanuman. One is that, based on two epics, people pray to the valiant Hanuman for help in overcoming difficulties. Second, Rama, the incarnation of the Trimurti Vishnu and the god of protection, once promised that as long as people restrain their desires, obey their duties, and enshrine and worship Hanuman, they would be protected and their wishes would be fulfilled.

Secondly, in terms of spiritual core, talismans like the monkey's paw have deep philosophical value endowed by Indian culture, which can fully reflect the values and methodology of Indian people. Monkeys have been revered so far is not solely based on result-orientation, like the paw in the story directly meeting people's needs, but rather on the spiritual drive or cultural belief of the people who makes wishes.

According to Chinese scholar Zhu Mingzhong, Indian culture can be summarized as four features: contempt for the material and devotion to spirit; worship of nature and sacrifice for god; fearlessness of death and belief in rebirth; neglect of time and indifference to history. (Zhu, 2006, p.36) This corresponds to the Indian religious philosophy of "Vairagya", which encourages people not to tamper with fate, but to accept suffering peacefully and achieve transcendence. Driven by this belief, the role of the talisman aims to make people self-examine and reevaluate their words and deeds and atone for their sins in time, so as to improve their perception of the world and moral cultivation. On the contrary, in Jacobs's story, the monkey's paw is not only a moral reminder, but also a menace, forcing people to become disillusioned afterward by imposing cruel punishment. Obviously, the two have the opposite means and effects.

So attention should be paid to recognizing the religious core of Indian culture from a dialectical perspective, and exploring the extended significance in connection with social reality. All in all, whether as inviolable sacred objects or as amulets for spiritual support, the monkey's paw always appears in a positive and beneficial image in Indian culture. Together with other elements, they constitutes a rich and meaningful image of India.

1.2 Curse on the Whites

It is common to introduce cultural factors or literary works from other countries. Nevertheless, what Jacobs did to Indian culture is unfair. It is also not objective to shape the image of the monkey's paw by stripping out the Indian cultural background, for instance, exaggerating the magic power of the monkey's paw conferred by myth, and arbitrarily equating Indian religion with feudal superstition. In *The Argumentative Indian*, here is the view on the translation and introduction of Hindu religious literature from other countries:

The difficulty does not lie in the importance of the *Vedas* or the *Ramayana*, but in the understanding of their role in Indian culture. When the Muslim Pathan rulers of Bengal arranged for making good Bengali translations of the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* in the fourteenth century, their enthusiasm for the ancient Indian epics reflected their love of culture, rather than any conversion to Hinduism. It would be as difficult to ignore their general importance in Indian culture (on some allegedly 'secular' ground) as it would be to insist on viewing them through the narrow prism of a particularly raw version of Hindu religiosity. (Sen, 2005, p.x)

By contrast, the monkey's paw in Jacobs' writing is more of a curse than a talisman. Chinese scholar Wang Chao commented that "The Monkey's Paw" has a place in the world of thrillers. The whole story is like a nightmare. (Wang, 2015, p.34) The title of the fiction is straightforward. The concrete image of the paw does not get rid of the fixed function and stereotype: such exotic objects are always considered as a kind of witchcraft which could be used for foul acts. This echoes the foreigner's view of Indian religion as a generalization stated above.

In the story, the image of the monkey's paw is totally negative. First of all, visually, such a rare stump of monkey is ugly and creepy. It is "just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy", "the dirty, shriveled little paw", "the unwholesome thing"; "it twisted... like a snake". (Jacobs, 1997, pp.19-23) In addition, the White family's reaction towards it shows their disgust, which effectively helps readers to form a general picture of this hideous paw in mind.

Second, as with other curses, the paw's origins are unusual. In particular, it is from somewhere being considered culturally backward, primitive, ignorant, and evil, which carries cultural stigma from the outset. It was brought by a friend who had spent 21 years in a remote area and had been exposed to exotic landscapes and appliances inaccessible to ordinary people. In his words, the monkey's paw originates from India, a country with "wild scenes and doughty deeds; wars and plagues and strange peoples". (Jacobs, 1997, p.18) The White family knew even less about India. For instance, Mr. White directly linked India with "old temples and fakirs and jugglers". (Jacobs, 1997, p.19) In their eyes, India is one of the overseas colonies, a wild and mysterious wasteland, an interesting topic for dinner parties. Lacking rigour and impartiality, they use their fancy to cover up their smattering of knowledge about India.

Most importantly, Jacobs defines the evil concept of the paw from the perspective of the functional particularity, which directly contributes to the curse. The bizarre magic of the paw was attributed to an old Fakir, who put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it. But his intention is that "he wanted to show that fate ruled people's lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow". (Jacobs, 1997, p.19) That is to say, the paw's advantage is

to grant wishes, but the side effect is to impose a price on people regardless of means. Such a setup makes the paw unpredictable, unsettling, and tantalizing.

However, even though the possible consequences have been informed, for example, the death of the first beneficiary and Morris' personal experience have double verified the authenticity of the wish, this does not stop people from using it to satisfy their desires. After the first wish, the Whites got 200 pounds and the death of their only son Herbert. The second wish they made is to resurrect Herbert who accidentally died. The third one is untold but implied to have a bearing on the vanishing knock on the door. Each wish is tied together like a spider's web, tightly entwining its prey and making it hard to escape.

Taken as a whole, the existence of such a monkey's paw in the context of western culture bears a great deal of resemblance to the devil's lure and witch's curse. Taking advantage of a common cultural background, it readily resonates with westerners, evoking their superstitious panic about such taboos. Once you fall into the trap, things become dangerous and uncontrollable, manipulated by this curse. This is a stigmatization of Indian culture as represented by the paw.

2. ORIENTAL IMAGE OF THE MONKEY'S PAW IN HORROR NARRATIVE

This story's high reputation not only benefits from the image of the monkey's paw, but also the three layers of suspense skillfully set by Jacobs, as well as his excellent narrative skills and language style. Although "The Monkey's Paw" is not generally classified as colonial literature, its horror genre is better at distorting other cultures in a particularly hypocritical way, indirectly promoting colonial ideas. Through suspense, mystery, fear and other elements, horror narrative becomes a powerful means to shape the oriental image of monkey's paw at will, highlighting the strong discourse power and arbitrary domination of Western literature on Indian culture.

2.1 The Suspense of the Three Wishes

In "The Monkey's Paw", Jacobs wraps suspense around three wishes, bringing the story to a climax step by step in the repeated setting and releasing of suspension. This process fully launched the publicity of the dark magic of the monkey's paw, so that the reader's curiosity about it can be satisfied.

Suspense can exist reasonably in the logical development of the story and the strong emotions of the characters, which depends on the following elements: the crisis lurking in the character's fate; the possibility of two outcomes; the conflict between different sides. (Chen, 2013, p.89) Therefore, corresponding to these three elements, the suspense in "The Monkey's Paw" can

also be divided into the following three categories: the suspense of the origin and experience of the monkey's paw; the suspense of whether the wishes can be realized; the suspense of the final outcome.

Firstly, where did the paw come from and what is the story behind it? At the beginning of the story, Jacobs gives clear information about the source of the monkey's paw, and sets up anticipation. It is a kind of suspense created by making good use of readers' expectations when they have a certain understanding and premonition of course of events. Jacobs appears to seriously introduce readers the monkey's paw, but his equivocation raises more doubts for readers, for example:

a. Why the first wish-maker committed suicide and what had happened to him?

b. Sergeant Morris as the second person to get the monkey's paw, what did he wish for? Why was he afraid of the paw and eager to get rid of it?

c. Sergeant Morris is the one who bring the evil paw to the White family, but he repeatedly urges Mr. White to burn it. Is there an agenda behind his inconsistencies?

The existence of these doubts greatly increases the mystery and plasticity of the monkey's paw, presupposes the impression of its evil power and induces readers to have more imagination about it. Therefore, readers can be successfully led into the exploration of the second layer of suspense.

Secondly, can the monkey's paw fulfill people's wishes? Along the way, Jacobs has an excellent grasp of his characters' mental journeys: from incredulity to indifference, and then to fear. When Mr. White wishing for two hundred pounds, the reader's sense of tension and dread were filled up with two details: The monkey's paw wriggled like a snake in Mr. White's hand as if it was responding. He even saw a monkey's face emerge from the fire. In contrast to Mr. White's credulity, Mrs. White and Herbert were skeptical and deriding, regarding the whole paw's story as *Arabian Nights*. The son asked his father to "wish to be an emperor... then you can't be henpecked", and said the ill-earned money "might drop on his head from the sky". (Jacobs, 1997, pp.21-23) Mrs. White also sneered at her husband, "don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me", "... how could two hundred pounds hurt you". (Jacobs, 1997, pp.21-23) In spite of all these being said, there is a hint of expectation, for Mrs. White was as disappointed as readers when the postman brought the tailor's bill instead of two hundred dollars.

With the lengthening of the rhythm, the reader's mood, just like the Whites' gloomy house, is greeted by the bright sunshine in the next day morning. Great calm and relaxation are achieved. Instead of being hold seriously, the paw was casually placed on the sideboard, which shows the Whites' attitude became more nonchalant. However, at this time, the news of their son's death was

suddenly brought to the old couple and readers. The mystery is mercilessly uncovered, and the suspense of the magic has reached the deepest level of tragedy.

So far, the monkey's paw is completely maligned by Jacobs' accusation. The answer of questions left in the first layer of suspense is now not hard to guess, for whether the person making the wish is now alive or dead, bad luck had entered their lives. The grief and despair of death led directly to the second wish: the resurrection of the beloved son, which brought weird successive knocks at the door.

A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive... at the same moment a knock came so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door... He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house... (Jacobs, 1997, p.28)

As the knocking repeated again and again, the confrontation between Mr. and Mrs. White about whether to open the door became more and more urgent and suffocating. Mr. White shouted "For God's sake don't let it in" (Jacobs, 1997, p.29), but Mrs. White cried out frantically, "You're afraid of your own son... Let me go! I'm coming, Herbert; I'm coming." (Jacobs, 1997, p.29) In the heat of the moment, as Mr. White flustered his last wish, "the knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house". (Jacobs, 1997, p.29) With his wife's "long loud wail of disappointment and misery", the door opened finally. (Jacobs, 1997, p.30) Outside, only "the street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road". (Jacobs, 1997, p.30)

This cliffhanger ending brings the temptation of suspense to the extreme. The question of what the third wish was, and who was knocking at the door, remains a perpetual conundrum.

All in all, Jacobs captures people's bias of heterodoxy, allowing the mystery of the unknown to evolve into an infinitely inflated fear. At the beginning, the monkey's paw was disgusted and disregarded by the White family, whose image remained in the mysterious and primitive stage. And then, the monkey's paw has been upgraded to an evil incarnate as it squirmed like a snake and emerged a monkey's face from the fire. After that, a series of bizarre events intertwined to form the paw into a real horror.

2.2 The Construction of the Effect of Fear

"The theory of unified effect has been consciously or unconsciously adopted in novels that use all materials to express the theme and sense of unity. The success of 'The Monkey's Paw' has a lot to do with the theory." (Wang, 2015, p.34) The structure, language, theme, writing devices, and other aspects of "The Monkey's Paw" contribute to the construction of the effect of fear.

"The Monkey's Paw" is short, suspenseful, and impressive, which follows the insights of Allan Poe:

"If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression – for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed... It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art." (Poe, 2009)

In addition, Jacobs' language is concise and precise, focusing on the description of the horrific environment. He is very good at using sound, light and color to arouse readers' senses and create an immersive and gloomy atmosphere. The settings of "The Monkey's Paw", just like Edward Wadie Said defined, "in some cases names only, half-imagined, half-known, monsters, devils, heroes; terrors, pleasures, desires." (Said, 2003, p.63) In the rendering of the macabre atmosphere, he skillfully uses layers of suspense and plenty of character dialogues, supplemented by various psychological descriptions, to control the pace and plot direction of the story. Some writing devices, such as symbolism, contrast, foreshadowing, and metaphor and so on, double the horror effect. In the treatment of the ending, "The Monkey's Paw" is different from most Southeast Asian mythology with a happy ending, such as *Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp* and *The Ramayana*. Under the background of magic, "The Monkey's Paw" confirms the authenticity of wish fulfillment, but deprives the corresponding fairy tale ending, making it more inclined to become a dark fable with endless aftertaste. Besides, the theme of the story is very didactic, is a peremptory and mandatory warning that misfortune will come to those who resist fate.

Therefore, Jacobs is successful in creating horror. The unity and coordination of all elements ensure the full play of the horror effect of "The Monkey's Paw". However, the scarier the story, the more shadow the monkey's paw brings to the reader, and the more negative and prejudiced the reader is towards it.

3. CULTURAL DISTORTION IN "THE MONKEY'S PAW"

The confidence or identification of the national culture can affect the centripetal force of the country and the national community. Persistent concern about the decline and distortion of culture in a specific literary context has a universal significance beyond time and space. The cultural distortion in "The Monkey's Paw" reflects the cultural hegemony of imperialism.

3.1 The Degradation of the Colonized Culture

In the famous anthropological work, *The Golden Bough*, James George Frazer proposed that witchcraft preceded religion, and attributed the development of human thought to three stages: magic-religion-science. Fraser demonstrates the relationship between the three as follows:

In magic man depends on his own strength to meet the difficulties and dangers that beset him on every side. ...when he recognizes sadly that both the order of nature which he had assumed and the control which he had believed himself to exercise over it were purely imaginary, he... throws himself humbly on the mercy of certain great invisible beings behind the veil of nature, to whom he now ascribes all those far-reaching powers which he once arrogated to himself. Thus in the acuter minds magic is gradually superseded by religion...But as time goes on this explanation in its turn proves to be unsatisfactory... Religion, regarded as an explanation of nature, is displaced by science. (Frazer, 2009, p.1659)

The monkey's paw, which should have been classified into the religious aspect, is relegated to a symbol of witchcraft and forced to associate with black magic and the resurrection of the dead. The original religious and philosophical significance of the paw was completely discarded. Colonial writers refused to recognize the true meaning of the monkey's paw; they also disdained examining the colonized culture. Starting from their own culture, colonial writers criticized the cultural others at will, denouncing related objects they do not appreciate as "ignorant" and "evil". What's more, on the basis of their own imagination, these westerners add vicious meaning to others' culture, turn it into "black magic" that their people are familiar with, and symbolize it as "witchcraft". Jacobs's definition of the monkey's paw was almost identical to Fraser's description of some witchcraft, for instance, magic about the transference of evil. "...the evil of which a man seeks to rid himself need not be transferred to a person; it may equally well be transferred to an animal or a thing, though in the last case the thing is often only a vehicle to convey the trouble to the first person who touches it." (Frazer, 2009, p.1261) This is why although Mr. White made the wish in the story; it was his son who ended up being cursed.

Moreover, instead of creating a fictional country to serve the fiction, Jacobs cleverly conceals the information gap between imaginary India and reality, and reconstructs people's perception of Indian religious culture to resonate with them. This approach fits perfectly with Randall's views on magic and social control: "Through a complex interweave with other stigmatized identities and behavior, magic has been configured as one further marker in the chain of Otherness against which the ideals of modern social order have been articulated." (Styers, 2004, p.17) It fully embodies the abuse and domination of Indian culture.

Furthermore, without mentioning any political and cultural ideology, some reviews unstintingly appreciate the scientific logic and excellent inspiration of the idea of Jacobs' fiction, saying, "Fate and magic cannot be compatible, which means that believing in both may not make a lot of sense because one tramples the other." or "Weakness and vulnerability can make people gullible and thus inclined to believe in virtual things such as magic

and the power of fate." (Ivypanda, 2020) Such a statement is a total repudiation of Indian religious belief and is disrespectful and belittling to a religious country. India is one of the four ancient civilizations, and its religious culture has formed a relatively well-established system. It is national faith and personal ambition that encourage Indians to maintain strong religious beliefs, not the cowardice of backward primitive tribes. It is shallow and reckless to take science as the only orthodoxy and then to ascribe all religions to the essence of witchcraft. In view of this argument, we should treat it dialectically and not take it lightly.

The reason of enlightenment was originally to get rid of superstition and myth, so as to make the world sober, but when it started, it turned into a new myth and superstition. Because of this rationality, man's power to control and dominate nature is constantly increasing, making him have the same power to control nature and society as God. Technology has become not only a tool to rule nature, but also a tool for man to rule man. In this way, the enlightenment rationality's pursuit of freedom, justice and equality leads to the repression and distortion of human nature and even crazy deception of the masses in order to preserve the order of the existing hierarchy... They associate reason with totalitarianism and oppression. They subvert reason from the realm of knowledge to the realm of sociopolitics. (Wen, 2001, p.25)

Therefore, in essence, cultural distortion in "The Monkey's Paw" is orientalist debasement, aimed at the degradation of a colonized culture. Based on western culture and his own imagination, Jacobs' depiction of Indian culture is fictitious and contemptuous. As Frazer said, "in the last analysis magic, religion, and science are nothing but theories of thought; and as science has supplanted its predecessors, so it may hereafter be itself superseded by some more perfect hypothesis" (Frazer, 2009, p.1662), so this kind of cultural degradation makes no sense to the colonized country, which is not a factual statement of truth, but a deliberate act of slander.

3.2 The Culture Hegemony of the Colonial Power

Under British colonial rule from 1608 to 1947, India was the largest, longest and most profitable area of the British colonies. For both the English aristocracy and the poor, the overseas colonies were undoubtedly a new beginning, a good place to acquire territory and respectable identity. Just like Mr. White, he was admiring his old friend's transformation from a slip of youth in the warehouse to a broad-shouldered sergeant with a rich life of experience after 21 years as a colonist. He couldn't help expressing his heartfelt voice: "I'd like to go to India myself". (Jacobs, 1997, p.18.) Obviously, all of these reflect that from the perspective of Orientalism, the colonial process in this "Imaginary India" was so reasonable and natural.

On the title page of *Orientalism*, two famous quotes are mentioned by Edward Wadie Said: "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented"; "The

East is a career." As he sees it, Orientalism is represented by a misrepresentation of the East by the West, and its intention is cultural colonization. As a continuation of *Orientalism, Culture and Imperialism* more clearly points out the influence of this colonial rule on English literature:

In English literature and thought the list of great names who dealt with and wrote about India is astonishingly impressive, for it includes William Jones, Edmund Burke, William Makepeace Thackeray, Jeremy Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill, Lord Macaulay, Harriet Martineau, and, of course Rudyard Kipling, whose importance in the definition, the imagination, the formulation of what India was to the British empire in its mature phase, just before the whole edifice began to split and crack, is undeniable. (Said, 1993, p.133)

Descriptions of India have appeared extensively in English literature since the 17th century, from colonial literature *Kim* to female literature *Jane Eyre*, then to the horror short story "The Monkey's Paw". It shows that the reference to India is not only a fantasy of the authors, but also related to the international status and power of Britain itself. These works more or less reveal the behavior and thoughts centered on the suzerainty ruling the distant countries. As the more advanced side, they fulfilled the needs of imperialist colonial rationalization by carefully incorporating imperialist views into their works, deliberately concealing the truth and condescending to the other side. It is their camouflage, but also their true purpose.

For example, St. John in *Jane Eyre* criminalizes people in overseas colonies and takes preaching to India as his supreme mission. *Kim* directly compares the white people with the aborigines of British India, exposing the idea that British rule was the best fate for India. Jacobs's cultural distortion of Hindu amulets in "The Monkey's Paw" is similar to that of British Orientalist scholars' depiction of Muslims in Indian history. The reason for this kind of demolition of others is explained by Partha Chatterjee: "in any case, the history of medieval decline fitted in nicely with the overall judgement of nineteenth-century British historians that "Muslim rule in India" was a period of despotism, misrule, and anarchy, this needless to say, being the historical justification for colonial intervention. (Chatterjee, 1993, p.102) In short, as long as India was portrayed as an abomination, the rule of British colonists was justified.

In particular, the greater the position of such works in their respective literature category (non-colonial literature), the greater influence of the colonial discourse contained in them. As the image of the monkey's paw becomes more and more popular, the role of the cultural mystique embedded in "The monkey's Paw" is tremendously deepened, which to some extent intensifies the phenomenon of cultural expansion mentioned above.

CONCLUSION

Cultural colonization demonstrated in “The Monkey’s Paw” has far-reaching research significance. First, Jacobs did not make an explicit confession of cultural aggression, but artfully realize the intention of cultural distortion in aid of the horror narrative. Second, Jacobs reconstructed the images of the monkey’s paw and India, catering to the psychological and value demands of the colonial people in pursuit of novelty and superiority. Thirdly, Jacobs did not take the form of direct confrontation and conflict with the colonized national culture, but implicitly emphasized some negative and backward factors of culture in the third world, so as to create a strong cultural countercurrent. Therefore, in “The Monkey’s Paw”, the cultural distortion in the horror narrative is characterized by imperceptibility, high transmission and relative persistence.

Taking “The Monkey’s Paw” as a sample, readers should consider the harm of colonial discourse and treat them with utmost caution. While affirming the literary value of such works, it is significant to think deeply about the effect of public opinion orientation and political conspiracy displayed behind. The assimilation and alienation of marginalized cultures is not a matter of a single country, but of all discriminated and boycotted cultures around the world. It is of great importance to establish national confidence, strengthen cultural identity and guard against colonial thought and imperialism.

At last, in the age of media culture, the means of western cultural hegemony are more complex and stealthier. With global media dissemination, its impact is even greater and more alarming.

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