

## **Patriarchal Ideology in *Good Wife*, a Horror Episode of Korean Webtoon *Shriek***

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### **ABSTRACT**

When the couple of man and woman have become husband and wife, it means that the husband becomes the head of family and father of his children while the wife becomes the breadwinner of the family and mother of her children. However, there is a misconception of the 'head and breadwinner of the family.' The misconception is that since the husband is the head of the family, it means the husband can order his wife. While the wife, since she roles as the 'breadwinner', she must obey and be submissive to her husband and her in-laws. If something bad happens to the husband, the wife will be blamed, even when the wife gets angry at her husband for some reasons, still the wife is the one to blame.

**Keywords:** breadwinner, horror; patriarchal ideology; webtoon

### **INTRODUCTION**

Beer (2009) states that the democratization has improved gender equity in some cases, but reversed equity-enhancing reforms in other cases. Systematic statistical evidence has demonstrated that democracy promotes gender equality in some cases, but not others. Still, there are important theoretical reasons to expect that democracy would improve gender equality (Beer, 2009, p.216). From that, I conclude that justice and equality have existed and it must be preserved by law and politics, especially in gender. Men and women have the same rights. However, In some cases, there are still some women who become so depressed due to the patriarchal ideology. In fact, there are still domestic violence cases that are experienced by women because of their abusive husband. Whereas there is democracy that can improve equality. It is also because of the husband's patriarchy. Thus, in this paper, I will analyze the patriarchal issue in one of the Webtoon horror episodes of *Shriek* titled *good wife*. The plot of the story is about a husband who puts pressure on his wife by ordering her around. The husband always orders her to cook and to take care of his grandfather. However, the wife resists and keeps being submissive to her husband and his grandfather. Insensibly, the husband's and his grandfather's acts make the wife feel depressed and oppressed. Then, because the wife suffers from the pressure, she dies. After that, she becomes a ghoulish that hunts the husband. However, based on readers' comments, the wife had a miscarriage because of the pressure given by the husband and her grandfather-in-law. In other words, the wife sacrificed her child for her husband and her in-law's requests. This paper aims to analyze the effect of patriarchy to the woman in the comic. I will choose some scenes and analyze the conversation and also the image of this Webtoon horror comic.

From the story and the images of the comic, I think Joana aims to give a message to the readers about the patriarchy that happens in Korea and its effect on women in the form of horror stories. According to the Christ (2016), patriarchy is an integral system: male dominance is enforced by violence which is a product of war; the control of female sexuality ensures the transfer private property and slaves which are the spoils of war in the male line;

and the system as a whole is legitimated by religion (Christ, 2016, p. abstract). It means that the patriarchy is an idea which believes that man is the master of the house and that he takes control of the house by religion.

## **METHODOLOGY**

For the methodology, I will use discourse analysis based on Gee (1999). Gee (1999) states that discourse analysis is the analysis of language as it is used to enact activities, perspectives, and identities. It means that it is a method which is used to expose the kind of acts till identities by analyzing the language. However, there are different approaches to discourse. One of the approaches is the context of the situation. According to Gee (1999), situations, when they involve communicative social interaction, always involve the following inextricably connected components or aspects:

- A semiotic aspect, that is, the “sign systems,” such as language, gestures, images, or other symbolic systems, and the analysis forms of knowledge, that are operative and important here and now. Different sign systems and different ways of knowing have, in turn, different implications for what is taken as the “real” world, and what is taken as probable and possible and impossible, here and now, since it is only through sign systems that we have access to “reality.”
- An activity aspect, that is, the specific social activity or activities in which the participants are engaging; activities are, in turn, made up of a sequence of actions.
- A material aspect, that is, the place, time, bodies and objects present during interaction.
- A political aspect, that is, the distribution of “social goods” in the interaction, such as, power, status, and anything else deemed a “social good” by the participants in terms of their cultural models and Discourses, e.g. beauty, intelligence, “street smarts,” strength, possessions, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
- A sociocultural aspect, that is, the personal, social, and cultural knowledge, feelings, values, identities, and relationships relevant in the interaction, including, of course, sociocultural knowledge about sign systems, activities, the material world, and politics, i.e. all the other aspects above.

From those aspects, I will use semiotic aspect, activities aspect, material aspect, and political aspect. First, for the semiotic aspect, I will use it to analyze the pictures and the dialogues of the characters in the comic. Secondly, I will use the activity aspect to analyze the activities that the characters are engaging in. Thirdly, for the material aspect, it is to show the place where the scenes take place. Lastly, I will use the political aspect to analyze and to show the power of the characters such as the wife, the husband and his grandfather based on their interactions and actions.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Submission



(scene 1, page 1)

The first issue that surfaces in *Good Wife* is the wife's involuntary submission. The wife has to be submissive to her husband for some reasons. Based on the reader's comment, the wife should do everything that husband says so that she can get a 'label' of 'good wife':

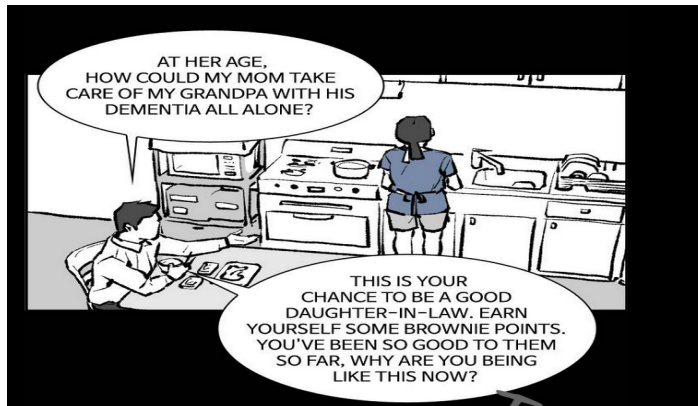
#### Geraldine Villanueva

Korea is a patriarchal country on which when a woman married a man, she has to do everything to please the man's family because for them it will show how good a wife you are. Apparently in this story the wife lost her son in the process of fulfilling his duties as a "good wife". After sometime the wife still carries the burden she had for losing her son and all the stress she had to please her husband's family. Now she wants her husband to feel and experience the burden and stress she had.

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The scene takes place in the kitchen. Here, the kitchen is the material aspect. The activity aspect here is when the husband is sitting while waiting for the food and the wife is cooking. From the first scene above, it is seen that the husband says "Honey, you hardly do anything at home" explicitly. While she stays quiet while cooking for her husband. It indicates that the husband is looking down at his wife as she works as a homemaker, thinking that the housemaker does not have a 'real' job. Next, the husband continues, "it's not like my grandpa's going to live much longer anyway." He means that because his wife does "nothing", it means that she has time to pay a visit and to take care of her husband's old grandfather. From the political aspects, the husband is patriarchal in that he takes control of his house and demands his wife too much. While the wife's identity is femininity as she cooks for her husband and fulfills her husband's demand. In patriarchal ideology, the husband interpellates his wife as he keeps ordering like he is the 'governor'. Here the husband is so demanding for good 'service' to his wife.

## 2. Resistance



(scene 1, page 2)

The second issue is the resistance. Resistance here shows how the wife replies or fights back the words of her husband and her grandfather-in-law. How she replies is to stay silent and not talk back because the husband is the ‘god’ in the house. I provide the comment of the reader and my analysis as the proofs:

### ↳ bakugo'slefttoenail

This actually happens in most Asian countries and in our country the wife is supposed to stay with the husband and abandon her own house. And while in the house the wife has to take care of her in-laws and manage everything on her own "like a good woman should" as they say and the husband is supposed to earn enough money. The wife also can't talk back to her husband and the husband is supposed to be "god"

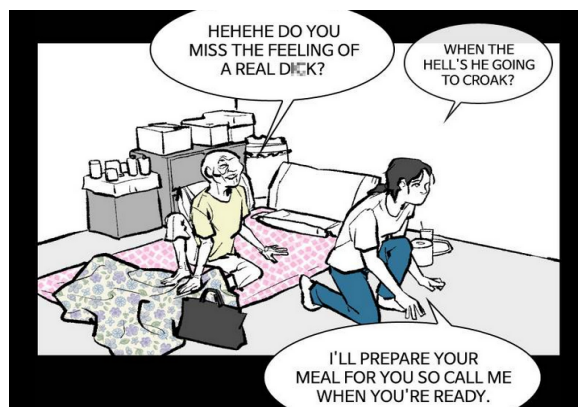
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The first resistance is to her husband. The husband asks “At her age, how could my mom take care of my grandpa with dementia all alone?”. Based on my point of view, when the husband is asking that question, he considers that his mother is too old to take care of the grandpa. Then, the husband continues, “This is your chance to be a good daughter-in-law. Earn yourself some brownie points.” From his conversation, he thinks that it is a chance for the wife to be a good daughter-in-law. When it comes to patriarchy, it means not only the husband who ‘masters’ the house, but also his family, including his grandparents. In addition, in patriarchy, a man thinks that the woman is good as long as she takes orders and serves his family so that she will be labeled as a “good wife”, “good daughter-in-law”, “good sister-in-law”, or even “good granddaughter-in-law.” After that, the husband asked again, “You’ve been so good to them so far, why are you being like this now?”. In my mind, the wife just keeps quiet because she holds her emotions. When the husband asks, he feels that there is something wrong with his wife that she is not like herself like used to be.



(scene 1, page 9)

From the picture above, the husband says that he will go out of the town tomorrow and he will drive his wife to his grandpa's house so that she can take care of his grandpa. Yet, the wife is still quiet as she does not answer. Based on this situation, by ordering his wife a lot, it puts a lot of pressure on the wife. However, the wife keeps holding her emotions. It is concluded that the wife remains silent.



(scene 2, page 14)

Second resistance is to her grandfather-in-law. From the image above, the wife arrives at her grandfather-in-law's house as the material aspect. It is seen that the grandfather is talking with dirty words. However, the wife still must take care of the grandfather by preparing his meal. She is talking inside her mind, "when the hell's he going to croak?". It means that she holds her grudge in order to not make a quarrel. She talks back to the grandfather as a form of resistance. It also signs that femininity should soothe the bad feeling no matter how people treat her badly. She keeps resisting to prevent the quarrel with his husband's family members. The activity aspect here is the wife stays quiet when the grandfather talks dirty.

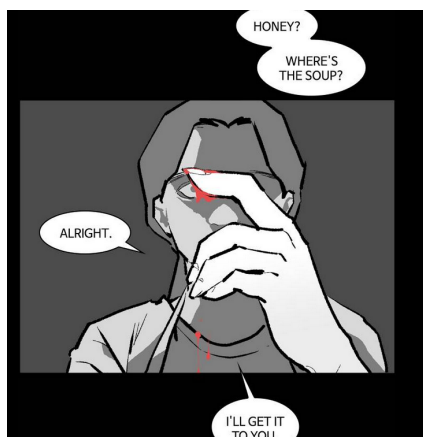
### 3. Depression



(scene 1, page 14)

The third issue is depression. In this scene, the wife is the one who gets depressed because of the pressure given by her husband's family and burden. Depression that she experiences makes her sick mentally. From the scene above, after the husband goes to the office to work, the wife asks for her acquaintance's help to take care of her son in her house because she must go to his husband's grandpa's house. From the image, it is clear that the wife is stressed out because she has many things to do and she cannot leave her baby in the house just like that. That is why she needs help desperately. In the image, there are a lot of words of "Waaa". It is the sound of her baby crying. As one of the comments says, the crying of her baby is just her hallucination because she had miscarriage due to the pressure from her husband's family. From this picture, it is seen that femininity also bears so much burden as she must take care of everything and everyone.

### 4. Oppression



(scene 1, page 6)

First oppression is from her husband. The husband is so insensitive in this scene. It is the kitchen scene as a material aspect where the wife is cooking for her husband. When the

husband asks where the soup is, the wife replies politely. The wife keeps obeying her husband because a woman must obey and be sensitive to the needs of others, including her whole family. Even when she accidentally got her finger cut, she keeps doing her obligation as a wife. It seems that the husband oppresses her by keeping on giving her pressure. When she gets injured, the husband does not care that he neglects his wife's poor condition.



(scene 2, page 15)

The second oppression is from her grandfather-in-law. The grandfather oppresses his granddaughter-in-law by protesting her for food she serves. The grandfather complains about the food in front of his granddaughter-in-law and flips the table. It is shown that the wife must face that kind of abuse because she is under control by her husband's order. Again, the wife experiences the oppression done by husband's grandfather. Because the grandfather is from her husband's side, he insensibly 'bully' his granddaughter-in-law

## 5. Death

The last issue is the death of the wife. Because of the patriarchy, the wife just cannot take all the pressure that she becomes mentally ill, she also has guts to kill her grandfather-in-law then mysteriously turns into a ghoul. When the wife tells her husband about how she killed her husband's grandfather in their bedroom, she can twist her head like an owl and laugh tehee.



(scene 3, page 13 &amp; page 14)

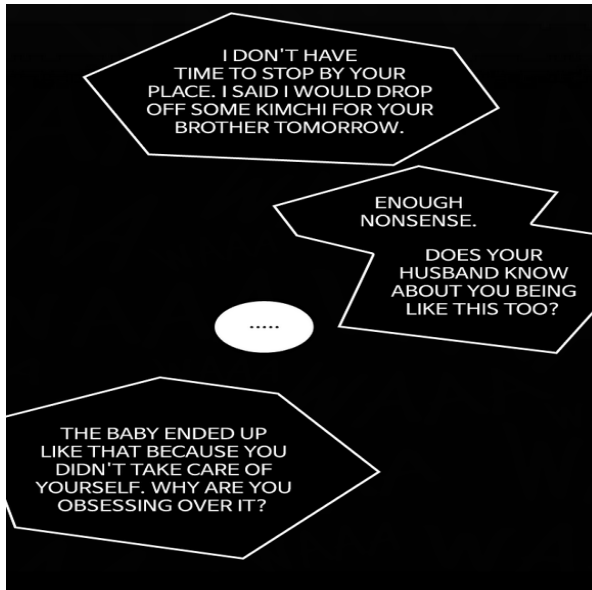
Then, while the wife is laughing till her mouth is wide open, there are some words. The words are the dialogue between the wife and her in-laws. Her in-laws protest for her behavior and blame her for her miscarriage. Whereas the wife has miscarriage due to her burden on the family. Here is the reader's comment and scene to support my statement:

#### Alpacacino

**TOP** The wife had a miscarriage because she kept taking care of her husband's grandfather. She is in denial of this so she has delusions of her baby crying. This is proved by her mom saying that she is "obsessing" over it. In her last visit, she snapped and killed the grandpa. Since she's mental, some kind of paranormal sh!t happens in her dreams. The husband then got sucked into her nightmare. The last words: "honey" was from the wife to the husband..while "dad" is from their unborn baby

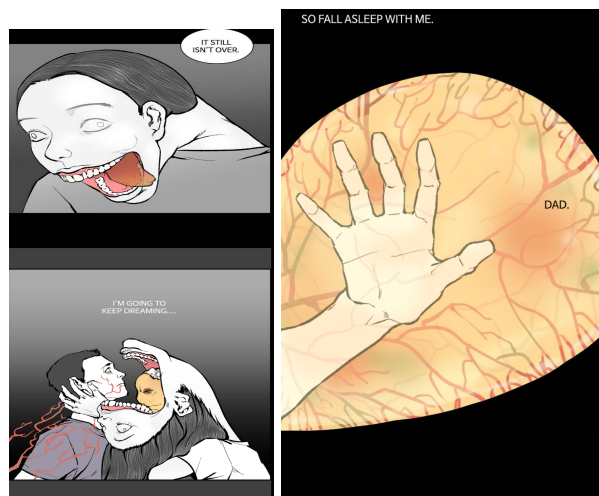
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(scene 3, page 15)

When the husband wakes up and confronts his wife, she turns her head in one hundred and eighty degrees and kills her husband by sucking him into her body and he is being together with his dead premature child. Eventually, the husband is dead. From that, I can conclude that patriarchy can be so deadly for the women that it will be able to kill women mentally.



(scene 3, page 21 &amp; final page)

## CONCLUSION

The act of patriarchy towards the woman based on the comic that I choose is seriously offensive for the woman. It is seen how one of the patriarchy family members like the husband's grandfather treats the wife violently. This case becomes a serious issue for the household. Because women must obey men, Patriarchy starts to exploit femininity in many ways. Patriarchy makes the women submissive by thinking the husband is an 'interpellation' and also depressed that the women have the heaviest burden of the family. Patriarchy also lets oppression happen to the wife which is why many women are the victims of domestic violence. However, since most of the women do not want to make the household problem bigger, she resists all that kind of oppression from her in-laws by staying silent and talking back. But one

thing that most men feel unaware of is that the patriarchy can ‘kill’ the woman's mental condition that the woman will be deranged and they can even kill her husband’s family.

I thought that Joana, the author of Webtoon titled *Good Wife*, delivers the important message that patriarchy has been misused and misunderstood by Koreans and most Asian countries. I think that there is nothing wrong with patriarchy, but the man as husband and also his family misunderstand that by treating the wife as a ‘slave’. My recommendation for researchers or maybe readers who want to be researchers is to try to find and analyze the comic or any kinds of literature that has good patriarchy, then make a journal so that other readers understand what the goodness of patriarchy is.

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