

THE PLEASURE DERIVED BY INDONESIAN HORROR FILM FANS

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ABSTRACT

Indonesian horror films, deeply rooted in cultural and mythological heritage, captivate audiences through unique cinematic experiences. This study explores the multifaceted dimensions of enjoyment derived by Indonesian horror enthusiasts, including communal viewing, artistic elements, personal identification, emotional interplay of fear and discomfort, and grotesque aesthetics. The prominence of horror in Indonesia's film industry reflects its cultural significance, as seen in the success of films like *Pengabdian Setan* and *Impetigore*. The study also categorizes seven subgenres; Local Ghosts, Supernatural Horror, Psychological Horror, Religious Horror, Horror Comedy, Gore Horror, and Exploitation Horror—emphasizing their appeal to diverse audience segments. Integrating theories such as Genre Theory and the Beauty of the Grotesque, the research elucidates how horror films balance fear and fascination, fostering a compelling cinematic experience. Findings underscore the genre's integral role in Indonesian cinema, offering insights into the cultural and emotional dynamics that drive its popularity.

Keywords: Indonesian horror films, Cinematic experience, Audience pleasure, Cultural resonance.

ABSTRAK

*Film horor Indonesia, yang berakar kuat pada warisan budaya dan mitologi, memikat penonton melalui pengalaman sinematik yang unik. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi berbagai dimensi kesenangan yang dirasakan oleh penggemar horor Indonesia, termasuk menonton secara komunal, elemen artistik, identifikasi pribadi, interaksi emosional antara rasa takut dan ketidaknyamanan, serta estetika grotesk. Dominasi horor dalam industri film Indonesia mencerminkan signifikansi budayanya, sebagaimana terlihat dalam kesuksesan film seperti *Pengabdian Setan* dan *Impetigore*. Penelitian ini juga mengategorikan tujuh subgenre: Hantu Lokal, Horor Supernatural, Horor Psikologis, Horor Religi, Horor Komedi, Horor Gore, dan Horor Eksploitasi—yang menonjolkan daya tariknya terhadap berbagai segmen penonton. Dengan mengintegrasikan teori seperti Genre Theory dan The*

Beauty of the Grotesque, penelitian ini menjelaskan bagaimana film horor menyeimbangkan rasa takut dan daya tarik, menciptakan pengalaman sinematik yang menggugah. Temuan ini menegaskan peran penting genre ini dalam perfilman Indonesia, memberikan wawasan tentang dinamika budaya dan emosional yang mendorong popularitasnya.

Kata kunci: *Film horor Indonesia, Pengalaman sinematik, Kepuasan penonton, Resonansi budaya.*

INTRODUCTION

Horror films occupy a unique place in Indonesia's cinematic landscape, blending cultural narratives with universal themes of fear and fascination. Unlike conventional entertainment genres, horror films challenge audiences by eliciting discomfort and fear, paradoxically transforming these emotions into pleasure. This phenomenon is particularly prominent in Indonesia, where horror consistently dominates box office charts and engages diverse audience demographics. Iconic films like *Pengabdian Setan* (2017) and *Impetigore* (2019) exemplify this cultural resonance.

The appeal of Indonesian horror lies in its ability to connect deeply with local audiences through stories rooted in folklore, mythology, and societal norms. Simultaneously, the genre employs universal cinematic

techniques to enhance its aesthetic and emotional impact. The communal aspect of viewing horror films further amplifies their allure, offering shared experiences of fear and excitement that strengthen social bonds. The exploration of subgenres, from supernatural horror to horror comedy, reflects the versatility and richness of Indonesian horror cinema.

This study investigates the sources of pleasure derived by Indonesian horror film fans, focusing on key dimensions such as shared viewing experiences, cinematic artistry, personal connections, emotional dynamics, and grotesque aesthetics. Through this exploration, it seeks to unravel the paradox of finding joy in fear and to highlight the cultural significance of horror films in Indonesia.

DISCUSSION

Shared Viewing Experiences

The communal nature of watching horror films is a cornerstone of their appeal in Indonesia. Gatherings with friends and family to watch horror movies foster collective enjoyment, creating an emotional bond among viewers. As Genre Theory posits, shared conventions and themes in horror establish a common language, enabling audiences to engage collectively through laughter and screams. Films like *Pengabdi Setan* (2017) exemplify this dynamic, with their widespread popularity demonstrating the role of communal experiences in sustaining the genre's appeal [Box Office Indonesia, 2018].

Cinematic Elements

Indonesian horror films excel in their use of cinematic techniques to evoke fear and admiration. Elements such as lighting, sound, narrative structure, and special effects are meticulously crafted to create an eerie atmosphere. The integration of traditional themes with modern technology, as seen in *Impetigore* (2019), enhances visual and emotional engagement. Techniques like dramatic camera

angles and dim lighting draw viewers into the narrative, aligning with the Beauty of the Grotesque Theory to highlight the interplay between fear and aesthetic appreciation [Indonesian Film Industry Report, 2020].

Personal Connections

Horror films serve as a medium for self-identification and cultural expression among Indonesian audiences. Characters and stories rooted in local mythology, such as the Kuntilanak and Pocong, resonate deeply, allowing viewers to see themselves reflected in these narratives. This personal connection is further amplified by fan communities, where shared appreciation for the genre fosters a sense of belonging. The interpretive research paradigm highlights how these cultural elements reinforce fans' attachment and enjoyment of Indonesian horror films [Smith & Rahardjo, 2021].

Emotional Dynamics

The paradox of fear and enjoyment lies at the heart of horror's appeal. Genre Theory and the Beauty of the Grotesque Theory explain how

elements of fear and discomfort are transformed into sources of pleasure. Films like *Pengabdian Setan* manipulate psychological tension and supernatural elements to evoke controlled fear, which audiences find thrilling rather than threatening. This dynamic, supported by Spectatorship Theory, reveals how horror films balance emotional extremes to create an exhilarating viewing experience [CinemaScope Indonesia, 2020].

Aesthetic Appreciation

The grotesque visuals characteristic of Indonesian horror films contribute to their unique appeal. By combining bizarre and distorted imagery with compelling narratives, films like *Rumah Dara* (2009) evoke strong visceral reactions while maintaining aesthetic allure. This interplay of beauty and discomfort engages audiences on a subconscious level, enriching their appreciation of the genre. The enduring success of visually intense films underscores the importance of grotesque aesthetics in shaping the horror experience [Horror Studies Journal, 2019].

Subgenres of Indonesian Horror

Indonesian horror films are categorized into seven subgenres: Local Ghosts, Supernatural Horror, Psychological Horror, Religious Horror, Horror Comedy, Gore Horror, and Exploitation Horror. Each subgenre reflects unique aspects of Indonesian culture and audience preferences. For instance, *Kuntilanak* (2006) explores traditional spirits, while *Rumah Dara* delves into graphic violence and gore. The diversity of these subgenres ensures broad audience appeal and highlights the genre's versatility in addressing varied themes and emotions [Indonesian Cinema Association, 2021; Box Office Indonesia, 2022].

CONCLUSION

The pleasure derived from Indonesian horror films is a multifaceted phenomenon rooted in cultural, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions. By fostering communal viewing experiences, employing sophisticated cinematic techniques, and exploring culturally resonant themes, Indonesian horror films transform fear into a source of enjoyment. The diverse subgenres further enhance the

genre's appeal, ensuring its continued dominance in the domestic film market. Through this exploration, the study underscores the cultural significance of horror in Indonesia, offering insights into the intricate dynamics that captivate audiences and sustain the genre's popularity.

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