

Analyzing monstrous maternal in “Jendela” and “A Mother’s Love” interior *mise-en-scene*

Dea Aulia Widyaevan

Departement of Interior Design, Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia

Submitted: 10 October 2021, Revised: 11 July 2022, Accepted: 16 August 2022, Published: 30 March 2023

ABSTRACT

Background: The storytelling and narrative approaches surpassed the study of the interior and cinematic by the idea of staging. In film production, the use of interior elements to aid storytelling is called interior *mise-en-scene*. However, more research still needs to be done on how spatial metaphors in the interior *mise-en-scene* are explored. The spatial metaphor is central to creating atmosphere and setting based on film narratives. Therefore, this article examines a spatial metaphor in the horror film *mise-en-scene*, focusing on monstrous maternity. The case studies are the film ‘A Mother’s love’ (Joko Anwar, Indonesia) and ‘Jendela’ (M. Subash Abdullah, Malaysia). Both films portray the woman protagonist as a psychotic character who haunts their own house. **Purpose:** The article aims to find spatial metaphors to represent the idea of monstrous maternal as a horror motif. **Methods:** Through qualitative and literature review, the element of the interior *mise-en-scene* and abjection theory has been analyzed to find meaning in spatial language. **Results:** As a result, the spatial metaphor in the film portrays the idea of topo analysis- the topography of the intimate being in the house. Many spaces are composed in dream scene situation, and the use of liminal space become central to supernatural narratives. A distorted play camera frames the space, engaging the audience to enter the character’s mind. **Implications:** This research contributes to how spatial metaphor in film can aid storytelling in interior design. The interior *mise-en-scene* helps the designer translate the narrative’s text into a spatial dimension through the staging technique.

Keywords: Staged interior; monstrous maternal; horror film; narrative space; *mise-en scene*

To cite this article (APA Style):

Widyaevan, D. A. (2023). Analyzing monstrous maternal in “Jendela” and “A Mother’s Love” interior *mise-en-scene*. *ProTVF*, 7(1), 34-49. <https://doi.org/10.24198/ptvf.v7i1.36107>

Correspondence: Dea Aulia Widyaevan, S.T., M.Sn. Departement of Interior Design, Faculty of Creative Industry, Telkom University. Jl. Telekomunikasi No.1, Bandung 40527. Email: widyaevan@telkomuniversity.ac.id

ISSN: 2548-687X (Printed), ISSN: 2549-0087 (Online). Website: <http://jurnal.unpad.ac.id/protvf>

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>). Copyright © 2023 The Author(s).

INTRODUCTION

The work of art has widely influenced Interior Design praxis. In a current study on interior design, space-making involves interdisciplinary practices, surpassing the border between art and design. Cinema has become one approach to studying interior spaces because cinema contains the everyday situations often overlooked by designers (Penz, 2017). According to Ettegui, space in a cinema and the built interior are interchangeable. They both inherit an elusive quality by giving particular ‘simulative’ views of another world. Eventually, both interior designers and production designers play a role in depicting illusion on the screen (Ettegui, 1999).

The research question then arises, if the scenic interior in a film is based on actual events, then the interior design in real space somehow influences the way the film producer describes the film settings. So, can interior design learn from the art of production in filmmaking? What is the relationship between set decoration, décor, and interior decoration? While the term décor quickly reveals definitions that relate to both a style of decoration and theatrical scenery (Rugoff, 2010). It suggests that the two disciplines share some common ground. While in previous research, most *mise-en-scene* studies focused on time and temporality in moving image sequences. The cinematic spaces refer to imaginary spatial constructs within our minds as the story unfolds. However, there is still a lack of research on how the idea of a *mise-en-*

scene in the film related to the interior scenic film, especially in horror films. Therefore, this study aims to find a form of metaphor in spatial language that reflects the idea of horror and monstrous maternal.

The interior design naturally built an elusive world (Whitehead, 2017). Interior design in our everyday environment also tells a story about many contexts, such as history, culture, or commercials. Both in film production and building, interior design uses spatial engagement and décor to create this imaginary world. The interior decoration involves selecting furniture, products, accessories, and backdrops to create a styled ‘scene.’ The French word *Décor* has a dual meaning. It translates as stage scenery and interior decoration (Rugoff, 2010); this duality underlines a link between a cinematic interpretation of space, the theatricality of film sets, staged space, and certain aspects of interiors. Therefore, from the idea of décor and the making of the illusive world, the analogy between the built interior design can be drawn to the art of production design in creating imaginary environments for the film. In this case, these studies try to re-contextualize a décor in interior design praxis.

Furthermore, interior design in film and built design is also concerned with the atmosphere. The atmosphere is constructed in a certain way to deliver certain messages and narratives. The difference is that the scenic interior is based on the script, while the built interior is based on a ‘spatial programming’ script. Indeed, both have

a similar focus on making the interior part of spectacular experiences as it finds its urgency to use film language to describe the experience of space (Hynam & Mosley, 2016). The way space is perceived is the critical aspect of the story (Sloane, 2014). With being able to create an atmosphere, the interiors will be 'dead' or active.

In film settings, the idea of décor and atmosphere leads naturally to the narrative and '*mise en-scène*.' *Mise-en-scène* determined the audience's 'perception' through staging: choreographing and displaying for a camera' (Martin, 2014). *Mise-en-scène* is used as a mnemonic device that expressively conveys meaning through interior characterization (Whitehead, 2017). It suggests that an interior setting in the cinema is designed to be a simulation to strengthen our understanding of the characters and plot. At the same time, the narrative becomes central to this environment.

In narrative environments, interiors become settings that embody a psychological aspect. Interior space is a projection or reflection of our consciousness into the physical world (Caan, 2011). Interior design is a metaphor for characters (or users) or the story to create a visually complex atmosphere and pictorial interpretation. So, the setting is designed concerning *mise-en-scène* as an aid to storytelling. In such intersections, we call these approaches an 'interior *mise-en-scène*' that later can be applied in both film-setting makings and built interiors. According to Whitehead, the

interior *mise-en-scène* is then characterized by three key elements –the physical, physiological, and narrative (Whitehead, 2017). Central to this is the relationship of these ingredients as a generator–features that help to create atmosphere by setting the conditions (Böhme, 2013), especially if we embed the idea of horror into space.

This paper will analyze two films: *A Mother's Love* and *Jendela*. Each film is a horror film focused on the idea of monstrous maternal. Monstrous maternal is a critical concept in which the woman heroine- mother, became such a horrible, abject character. Monstrous maternal is closely related to Kristeva's concept of abjection and Freud's psychoanalytic thinking. The woman's body could be considered horrible if it threatened the masculine identity and the patriarch's system (Suhendi et al., 2017).

In both films, the protagonist represents a woman as the figure of monstrous femininity. This representation shows the unfit role of women in a patriarchal society. In *Jendela* and *A Mother's Love*, both characters do not represent the ideal wife. In that case, their existence has become a threat to male-dominant culture. It has become a trend in contemporary Malay horror films (Asaari et al., 2017). A sense of horror arises when women do not accept the traditionally predefined roles of wife and mother, submissive and subordinate; on the contrary, they are an act of resistance to woman's equality rights (Boccuti, 2020). Thus, it has become a motive of horror in terms of

woman's abject act to disrupt the stable system in society. This paper will discuss spatial language through several film scenes that show an anomaly in the house.

In the film, spatial metaphors are a place where space is transformed and translated, and the metaphor, as one of the figures of speech, is one of those artifices of the language, even in space communication, aimed at creating a unique effect, a transfer of meaning. The metaphor is interpretation, asking, and seeking interpretation (Trocchianesi & Pirola, 2017). In that case, using a metaphor to understand the story's hidden meaning can always be traced to the film settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to gain a better insight into the research question, we use qualitative and literature reviews to seek a relationship between interior design and cinema. This research aims to define the spatial metaphors in the interior *mise-en-scene*, representing the idea of monstrous maternal.

Both films have several steps to link the idea of monstrous maternal and spatial metaphors. First, a theoretical framework needs to be created. The literature on abjection became a fundamental understanding to depict the metaphors of body, woman, and domestic space (house) as a horror motif in both films. Secondly, the scenes will be curated based on anomalous events that evoke horror emotions. Thirdly, the film scene will be analyzed based

on interior *mise-en-scene* aspects: the physical, psychological, and narratives. At last, the pattern of spatial language and thematic similarity will be drawn to find a spatial metaphor for the monstrous maternal idea.

In building a theatrical framework, we first start by understanding the idea of horror. As a source of horror, Kristeva explores the idea of abject. Abject is a defenseless breakdown in meaning caused by their inability to distinguish between themselves and others (Kristeva, 1982). According to Kristeva, the feminine body is a source of abject because a woman gives birth to a child and has a period cycle.

In the reproduction context, the woman's body produces 'other' in her secretion. The ability to expose something that must be inside blurs the distinction between self and other. In that case, the idea of horror always comes to the analogy of something unnatural; something hidden inside the body appears. Furthermore, Creed also mentions that this kind of woman's body can threaten the masculine identity. The woman's body sees as a disruption of the patriarch's system (Creed, 1993).

The pleasure of horror films comes when we enjoy the thrills in the safe space of the cinema. The audience situates themselves as voyeurism of the horror story, as the film manifests the uncanny re-occurring thoughts that are lying in our consciousness, repressed by our ego but not familiar to us (Freud, 1955). On the other hand, horror also portrays as incessantly hungry and unstoppable, triggering basic human survival

instincts (Norman, 2018).

The idea of immersion in the cinema always relies heavily upon the interior setting of the scene and how the angled camera represents the gaze of both the spectator and spectacle as the space has become a reflection of the protagonist's condition, which evokes a sense of ambiguity. Regarding the *mise-en-scene*, the position of the subject-object captures at the most unstable angle (Putri & Nurhajati, 2020).

In an extension of Creed's opinion, horror films can also be seen as a tool of social control since, within the narrative, it reflects certain gender ideology, especially in Malay society (Wahid & Agustina, 2021). So, in the case of the films studied, the horror film on the subject of monstrous femininity became a metaphor for woman's vulnerable position in Malay society.

Based on the literature review above-mention, the two films share similar patterns in spatial analogy. The scenic interior has become a projection of the protagonist's psychological condition and their space. The space in both films has become an indirect clue to link visually between the 'mental images' of the audience and the protagonist's experiences. So, in this spatial setting, we can experience the actual and imagined space simultaneously, as interior design in real life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Mother's Love (Joko Anwar, Indonesia 2018) tells a story about a single mother who works as a maid and lives with her seven years

old sons. Her landlord kicked her out one day because she could not pay the rent. In a panic, she moves secretly into her vacant master's house, where something sinister occurs in the attic. She discovered several starve kids who hid in the corner of the cabinet. Those kids are hidden by *Wewe Gombel*, a mythical female- the ghost who likes to kidnap children. After that event, she moves to another house. Nevertheless, still, something terrible followed her, throwing her into a dream-like situation under anger and frustration by believing that *Wewe Gombel* had persuaded her son to leave her. *Jendela* (M. Subash Abdullah, Malaysia, 2017) is a silent film with only one actress. The story is about an old lady living alone in her house. During the film, the lady seems disturbed by a strange invisible invasion that leaves her disoriented. The plot is non-linear, and in the middle of the film, the plot plays in reverse and shows the previous day's event. Any disturbance and mental break that happened to her stem from one reason – she feels abandoned by her son. A few days back, she received a letter from her son. Her son wants to sell the house and moves her into a senior house. She feels rejected by her son, and throughout the film, the desperation projects on the 'disrupting' scene. In the end, she went mad because of isolation and abandonment. The film portrays how she becomes a ghost in her own house – haunted by her own house by remorse feelings.

Based on these two films, the article will elaborate on how the concept of space uses to

signify the idea of monstrous maternal. The analysis uses the key element of the interior *mise-en-scene*: psychological, narratives, and physical (Whitehead, 2017).

First, the physical is concerned with the design or staging of the physical environment or 'setting,' such as the choice of props, furniture, accessories, fixtures, and equipment. Secondly, the psychological *mise-en-scène* includes elements that work with the setting and props to enhance a specific 'mood,' such as light, shadow, color, scale, composition, and even special effects employed for dramatic effect. Thirdly, the narrative *mise-en-scène* is about an immersive environment that tells a 'story' through an unfolding narrative that reveals a certain quality or mood. The role of symbolism, metaphor, or motif can be of great importance to this form of interior storytelling, while visual, psychological, and sensory tricks are used to great effect.

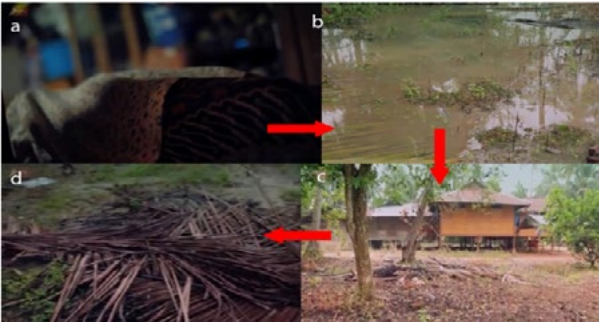
Several scenes from this film are taken to identify the physical, psychological, and narrative elements in the interior *mise-en-scene*, as follows in Table 1. In "*A Mother's Love*" film, several scenes describe spatial ambiguity and the ghost's appearance. The interior *mise-en-scene* has been identified in terms of spatial arrangements, ambiance-making, and what messages convey in the space, as follows in Table 2. Based on the analysis, the interior *mise-en scene* transforms the house into something terrible, uncanny, and secretive. Both films reflect a concept of topo analysis toward a

house. A house has become the topography of our intimate being.

Furthermore, an external space reflects an internal world (Bachelard, 1994). The house becomes a wider reflection of the woman's body, which defines a self-identity and a sense of 'whole' being a woman. The interior is the woman's mind, and the exterior side of the house is 'the others. So, if the woman protagonist slowly breaks down, the house turns into something sinister. In these two films, the confrontation with death gives rise to a terror of self-disintegration, of losing one self's ego. Death is represented in a horror film as a threat to the self's boundaries, symbolized by the danger of the monster; death images are most likely to cause the spectator to look away. This desire to detach also suggests a desire to return to a state of origin oneness of mother (womb). Fear of losing oneself and one's boundaries is more acute in a society that values boundaries over continuity and separateness over sameness.

A phase of psychosis in a woman turns her into a monstrous figure. In films, the house seems disturbed, disrupting the protagonist's state of peace. House is no longer perceived as a safe place, but it signifies a monstrous obliteration of the self that is demonic. Both films signify a monstrous obliteration of the self and are linked to the demonic. The geography of a place is often stigmatized into certain narration within each culture. A place associated with the dead and traumatic events is even perceived as sinister (McAndrew, 2020).

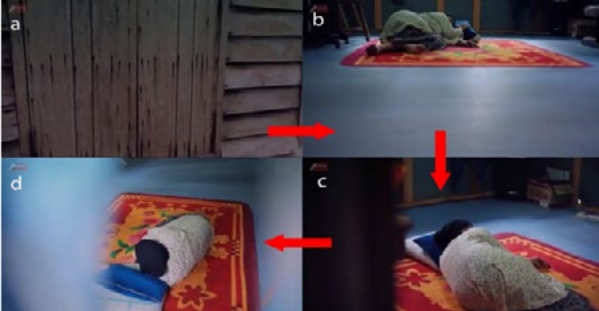
Table 1 Film scene and Interior Mise-en Scene in “ Jendela “

Scene	Interior Mise-en Scene
	<p>Physical: Outdoor landscape, the Malay house, decaying landscape</p> <p>Psychology: Gloomy, isolated, abandoned</p> <p>Narratives: The still-angle camera shows the analogy of the situation of the inhabitant and its surroundings. The house architecture shows the identity of the owner.</p>

Source: Jendela, 2017

Figure 1 Scene sequence on time: 01:1, 01:37, 01:48, 02:17

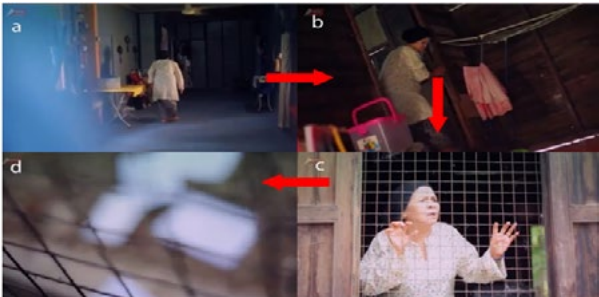
There was a house in a rural place in Malay near the beach.

	<p>Physical: Wooden, window, floor mat.</p> <p>Psychology: Voyeuristic</p> <p>Narratives: The position of the camera (low- high angle) gives non-human perspectives that give a sense of intrusion.</p>
--	---

Source: Jendela, 2017

Figure 2 Scene sequence on time: 02:36, 02:58, 03:04, 03:14

In the afternoon, the lady naps alone in her living area.

	<p>Physical: Kitchen, house, dark corridor, wooden window</p> <p>Psychology: Uneasy, disorientation</p> <p>Narratives: The camera follows her through the kitchen, but with an unstable angle. The camera back and forth, showing what is visible and invisible from the lady's perspective.</p>
---	--

Source: Jendela, 2017

Figure 3 Scene sequence on time: 03:47, 04:38, 05:08, 05:20

During the nap, the lady suddenly awoke because she heard a loud thumping sound in the kitchen. With Half-sleepy eyes, the ladies checked the kitchen and opened its window, but nothing was there.



Physical: Bedroom, plastic cabinet, vinyl floor, rubber floor.

Psychology: Terrified, odd, uncanny, darker light ambiance.

Narratives: The car toys are moving without anybody playing with them. It signified the metaphor of revisiting the traumatic memory of her son.

Source: Jendela, 2017

Figure 4 Scene sequence on time: 10:06, 10:18, 14:48, 15:42

Then, she returned to the living room and found a trail of blood and car toys moving toward her.



Physical: Door, stairs, corridor, terrace

Psychology: Disorientation, desperation, dark lighting, shadow area

Narratives: She expressed her desperation by passing through a transitional space such as door or corridor. The place signified a connection between the real-imaginary world projected by the lady. The 'ghost' likely appears around the house as a form of bad memories.

Source: Jendela, 2017

Figure 5 Scene sequence on time: 19:54, 41:22, 48:02, 50:03

She then remembers her son. She tries not to be hysterical, and she moves out into a terrace, but her tantrum get worse, and she crawls back to the house through the front stair.



Physical: Kitchen, bedroom, plate shelves, boxes of toys, backyard/service area, logged wood

Psychology: Strangely familiar, terrified, nostalgic. The light moves from the dark ambiance to the light.

Narratives: The scene exposes the space of taboo. As the lady moves from the kitchen, bedroom, and backyard, it reveals some past secret that haunts her. Her suffering is present and buried deep in his unconscious, as the place (kitchen-backyard) signified the most hidden, dirty location in Malay architecture.

Source: Jendela, 2017

Figure 6 Scene sequence on time: 18:30, 18:30, 21:52, 25:38

The disturbance appears again. First, in the kitchen, the plate flying around, the object moving, and in her son's bedroom, the box of toys is falling. Beneath the boxes, a pile of letters flew around through the window. The lady tries to catch it. Then she sits and reads in her backyard.



Source: Jendela, 2017

Figure 7 Scene sequence on time: 48:39,
01:05:33, 01:06:54, 01:13:00

Toward the last scene, she crawls from the front door to the kitchen's back door, standing on to the window, lurking outside, beyond the house. She then enters the backyard by dragging a spade to dig a place to bury all memory (letters, a box of toys, etc.). Then, she rests and dies nearby, leaning on a decaying palm tree as she returns to nature – her womb.

Physical: Corridor, door, kitchen, backyard

Psychology: Desperation, disorientation, fear. All the scene has natural lighting, but the way the camera moves evokes a sensation of a 'dream scene.'

Narratives: The lady ends her tantrum outside. As she tries to escape from the disturbance in the house, she finds a safe place in the backyard- a space with no identity.

Source: Research's Finding, 2022

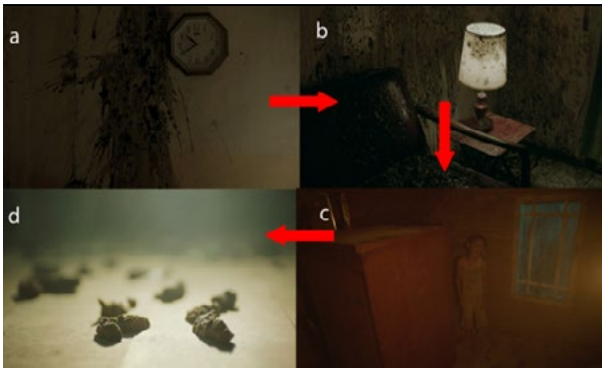
Table 2 Film scene and Interior Mise-en Scene in "A Mother's Love"

Scene	Interior Mise-en Scene
	<p>Physical: Living room, furniture covered with white linen. The ghostly silhouette of the furniture fills the room. Dining room, the wooden dining table, kitchen style with no equipment, or tableware in it. The Façade of the 70's style house</p> <p>Psychology: The ambience along the scene, fills with grayish light in a day. In the night, the shadow is played to heighten the silhouette. From the ambience, emotion evokes a strange feeling, empty, and secrecy.</p> <p>Narratives: The house in retro 70's style refers to nostalgic feeling, which contradict with the heroin condition. The house seems to become an ideal house to her. Despite the emptiness, and an eerie atmosphere the heroin tries to inhibit the house. The sense of abandonment of conveys by the house spatial arrangements, reflects indirectly to the heroin's state of mind. As a single mother lives in very isolated world from society, the house represents almost the same. The old-house somehow rejected from its surrounding and leaves empty.</p>

Source: "A Mother's Love", 2018

Figure 8 Scene sequence on time: 00:59, 10:06, 14:45,
32:20

The main character, a single lady with one son, who work as maid find herself caring for the vacant rich people house in the city. She knows the house good, and at some point, she just pretends that it is her house. All events occur in the house, show how her relationships with his son are unfold. The house has become a silent witness on their loneliness and isolation.



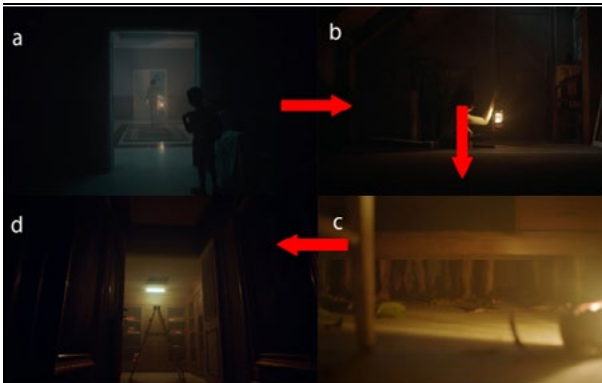
Source: "A Mother's Love", 2018
Figure 9 Scene sequence on time: 06:30,06:39, 12:38, 13:29

Physical: The rent house, clock, stained wall, stained sofa and side-table. The vacant house, attic cabinet, window, Floor in the attic

Psychological: anger, mysterious and loneliness. These feeling evoke by the dim-light color in the night

Narratives: The lady stained the living room in rental house, to show her anger. To show, that her dream houses are collapse, with nothing to see in the living room but a dirt sewage. While she moves to the vacant house, in the attic she finds human feces on the floor, followed by the children hiding in the corner of cabinet. The attic is the least accessible space in the house, that usually not being use in daily basis.

One day, she come back to her rent-house. The landlord kicked her off because she unable to pay her rent. She then forced to leave at the same night, and before she leaves, she spill a dirt on the wall as an expression of anger. Then, she decide to stay on her master's vacant house at that night.



Source: "A Mother's Love", 2018
Figure 10 Scene sequence on time: 07:55,12:47, 11:41, 12:41

Physical: Door, corridor, attic, under the cabinet

Psychology: tense, mysterious and eerie. Lighting only relies on one source, as it creates a shadow into surroundings.

Narratives: The kids hide in between furniture, in corner of the room as they do not want to be found. In this scene, the lady starts to derange, as drifting her mind into some irrational fear that embodied her in the house. The paranoia, trauma of her findings, leads her to question her relationship to her son.

The lady finds something sinister in the attic. The kids confess that they are being kidnapped by a woman ghost – Wewe Gombel.



Source: "A Mother's Love", 2018
Figure 11 Scene sequence on time: 16:13, 18:21, 32:41, 36:05

Physical: Bedroom, window-curtain, cabinet door.

Psychology: Frightening, dreamy situation/hallucination. The effect of light creates a strong shadow that camouflages the appearance of ghost. As the ghost are embeds in the curtain or wall.

Narratives: The ghost is spying the lady's son, watching him sleeping. The ghost seems to be appeared in the dream of the kids, or, it real. The scene gives a sense of mixed reality, in which the 'terrible' fear is manifested while sleeping. As the bedroom conveys a subliminal message on the traumatic projection of the lady's son. In this case, it shows that the lady's son is aware of the existence of the ghost, and he is anxious since his relationship with his mother get worse.

During nap time, the son is being haunted by Wewe Gombel. The silhouette of the hidden kids is re-appearing, as the ghosts also appear from the window. The ghost lurking from behind the window frame, and the cabinet door.



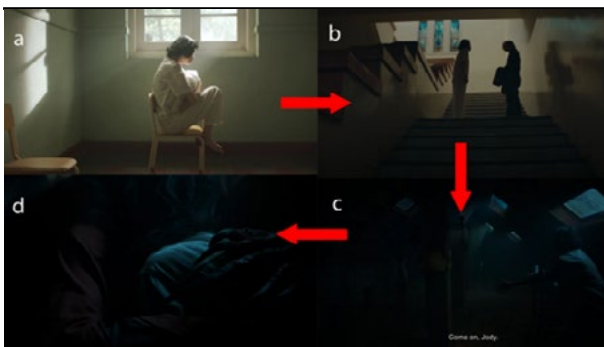
Source: "A Mother's Love", 2018
Figure 12 Scene sequence on time: 20:48, 26:17, 33:39, 37:17

Physical: Bedroom cabinet, Dining room floor, Back yard

Psychology: Chaos. The lighting softens the contrast of the stain, in the house, while the stain on the sheet, and bluntly appear on the day light. This comparison shows the 'conscious an unconscious 'way of anger. In which the stained in the sheet, seem to be contrast, as revealing something terrifying occur in the mid of the day.

Narratives: The feeling of anger, frustration start to lose control. As the appearance of the space from bedroom, dining room and backyard, represent how the repressed intimate feeling are being expressed. The sequence of the space shows the metaphor of the subliminal realm of the heroin disorder.

Another disturbance occurs when the mother angry to the boy. In the dining room, she threw the food on the floor, leaving a stain like in the first scene (on her rent house). Then, strange thing happened when her dried sheet also stained out of nowhere. She then blames her son for every unfortunate she encounters.



Source: "A Mother's Love", 2018
Figure 13 Scene sequence on time: 40:09, 42:20, 45:48, 47:31

Physical: Asylum's window, stairs, attic

Psychology: Sorrow, eerie.

The lighting emphasizes on the back light and silhouette, as the film try to immerse the lady existence with a shadow around her.

Narratives: The ambience and setting relate to the idea of the lady at the end, need to do a 'shadow working'. It is a tough reflection, to fear her own demon. The setting and transition somehow blurry, as it tries to merge two places in one time. The scenes happened in the end, can become a projection of the lady's mind, as she faces her own fear.

The lady sent to the hospital, because she likely hurt her own son. In the mental hospital, she reflecte what had happened, and try to seek a reason behind of all this unfortunate event. Later; she come to realization, when a paranormal confirm the ghost existance, that causethe disruption of her mental health. Then, at the end of the scene, she look for her son on the vacant house attic, and face the ghost – her own fear, to claim back her son's love.

Source: Research's Finding, 2022

Another extension of the metaphor, the house also perceives as a womb. A house represents the maternal body, which becomes a site of conflicting desires. These desires are constantly staged and re-staged in the working of the horror narrative, where the subject is left alone, usually in a strange hostile place, and forced to confront an unamiable terror.

In the context of interior *mise-en-scene* elements, the physical quality relies on several patterns of spatial language that have been perceived as a 'dark place' by the protagonist. Although the setting is in a familiar domestic space, however, the space also becomes a potential source of something terrifying hidden and remains invisible; it is the very quality of privacy and intimacy; the house seems a fragile shell that only waits to be broken, a shelter awaiting violation (Royle, 2003).

Such disturbance or anomaly events mostly appear in several patterns of interior place. First, the door, window, and passage are treated as Liminal Spaces. Liminal space is the boundary that speaks of dualities by separating two different states/spaces/realities etc. However, it also speaks of connections through the thresholds that link them and mark the passage from one to another (Sfinteş, 2012). At an abstract level, liminal space refers to opposed realities (this world/the beyond; real/virtual; known/unknown; allowable/forbidden). In the films, the idea of liminal space is not only considered to be the dreams represented in the narrative but also the notion of liminal limbo, a

cursed artifact resulting from a revolution of the mind (Malekpour & Motamedi, 2021). A play of threshold emphasizes how negative emotions lurk in the heroin mind. Threshold potentially evokes fear of the unknown.

Secondly, the attic and the backyard are considered the "Back of the House." Both films use the back of the house to represent the ghost' dwelling. These two spaces have become a space not inhibited by the house's residences. It stays vacant only to store goods or any other 'excess' belonging that is not meaningful. These spaces are left abandoned and hidden from the public eye. Bachelard mentions that the attic, backyard, and basement are spaces to hide something. Something like the memory of the past, a forgotten space that embodied secrets or things meant to be not seen.

Thirdly, negative space in the interior design context is linked to the spatial layout. A negative space is a space that lies outside the enclosed space. At the same time, the space inside the enclosed space is positive (Barnes, 2019). In the films, another place considered a source of disturbance comes from the negative spaces, such as under the bed, cabinet, dark corner, or any spaces, that seem to become a residue' on what is left from the spatial arrangement. In some scenes, the heroin moves in-out of these unusual spaces, such as crawling beneath the stairs, or hide under the table, and so on. Negative space can be referred to as an unintended design. The space simultaneously appears, but it reverses the enclosed space. The

use of this metaphor is related to the 'dream-scene' construction. As is strengthened by the play of both chiaroscuro, low key tone color turns the atmosphere of the space become 'creepy.' Vanishing the boundary of the wall makes the character's threshold become both a state of waking –dreaming (Park, 2018).

Fourth, the kitchen and dining room appear as a representation of Woman Space. The female body is thought of only in places where socially constructed roles need 'special' care: the kitchen, public restrooms, changing rooms for babies in public amenities, and female-oriented shopping areas (Nakhal, 2015). In the household, women were conventionally placed in spaces associated with body care and emotional tasks (socialization and childcaring). At the same time, men were with mind-related work, leisure time, and prestige (Rezeanu, 2015). Both spaces are considered a woman space because a woman in the household mainly has to prepare food, present food, and sustain the family life through these two important spaces.

The social construction of the domestic space of the colonized was shaped by "imaginary geographies" (Barnes, 2019) (Said, 1978). Concerning topo analysis, the setting takes place in a colonial 70's house and a traditional Malay house; both spatial layouts follow the colonist's imagination about gender roles in domestic households. The house in both films represents an idea of oppression. The house built in colonial style, or traditional Malay, position

woman in a more vulnerable way. The idea of domestication became a paradox, in which the films show that both women cannot escape their isolation and turn into the monstrous figure.

Furthermore, as the house embodied the idea of body, therefore within the interior realm, the house unconsciously affects the protagonist of mind in certain ways. Perhaps, the heroin hallucination the house turns against her, projecting her fear of the outer world. As single mothers or old ladies, their existence has threatened male-dominant culture. Thus, it has become a trend in Malay horror contemporary films (Asaari et al., 2017). A sense of horror arises when women do not accept the traditionally predefined roles of wife and mother, submissive and subordinate; on the contrary, they are an act of resistance to woman's equality rights (Boccuti, 2020). Thus, it has become a motive of horror in terms of woman's abject act to disrupt the stable system in society.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the interior *mise-en-scene* has been achieved to evoke a horror emotion. The aesthetic of horror conveys by the spatial metaphors in the idea of woman abjection and space. The relation between gender and spatial construction metaphorically shows in the topo analysis of a house in several ways. First, in physical interior spatial setting likely uses the language of liminal space, negative space, back of the house, and gendered space to present the supernatural anomaly.

Secondly, from a psychological view, the interplay between space and characters affects the plot and provokes a range of emotions spanning shock, tension, claustrophobia, and the uncanny. The play of light, shade, and color indicates the 'transition' between dream-reality. A play of the camera, such as using closes, still shot, and a low angle creates an asymmetric proportion that evokes a sense of confusion and limbo.

At last, from a narrative point of view, these films show how fear relates to a specific and important location. First is fear of the unknown; the feeling arises when the characters enter an isolated, dark, unfamiliar location, which turns into terror when we see the hidden threats. The second is fear of violation, which arises when a sudden noise wakes the characters up and turns into sheer terror upon the realization that someone just sneaked in. Bound to the idea of abject and monstrous maternal, the strange mother figure has become 'the other,' the good mother turns into a sinister figure, invading her own house. She became somebody who is not supposed to be, as making her own home feels uncanny. The scene in the film describes the interiority of a repressed woman's psyche, haunted by the guilt of being an unfit mother. The negative emotion influences the house in a certain way, turning objects and architectural elements into something unhomely. The presence of memory, tragedy, and trauma is recorded in both space and objects.

The finding's contribution to interior design

praxis allows the designer to deploy a certain spatial language to evoke a feeling of curiosity, mystery, and enigma. A play of threshold, spatial illusion, can further develop to produce transformative spatial experiences upon the design. The findings of certain spatial language help designers to deploy the 'dream-scene' mode into the actual interiors by adding color, light shadow, and certain saturated graphics.

For further recommendation, the concept of topo analysis can further elaborate in observing the real production of film settings. By being directly involved in the creative process, the forming of spatial metaphors can be realistically traced to see a relationship between the camera frame and spatial proximity. Also, through this direct observation, the scenic interior can be assessed on how narratives are imbued on settings and how space is distorted to match the camera's eye. Further study might elaborate on a spatial composition, scenography technique based on the camera eye, and how this approach can be applied to the built interior design to create a 'photogenic' interior design.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Telkom University, who provide financial support and materials for this research.

Data Availability Statement: The data is available on Youtube and HBO films (FOLKLORE | HBO GO. It is HBO. Anywhere. (hbogoasia.id) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nb_HBLWUrCE&t=107s

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding: This research was funded by Telkom University.

REFERENCES

- Asaari, A., Aziz, J., & Mohamed Salleh, S. (2017). Susuk, Wanita Dan Abjection Dalam Film Seram Kontemporari Melayu (Susuk, Women and Abjection in Contemporary Malay Horror Films). *Jurnal Komunikasi, Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 33(3), 70. <https://doi.org/10.17576/jkmjc-2017-3303-05>
- Bachelard, G. (1994). *The Poetics of Space* (Reprint ed). Beacon Press;
- Barnes, S. (2019). *How Artists Use Negative Space to Say a Lot with Nothing*. My Modern Met. <https://mymodernmet.com/negative-space-definition/>
- Boccuti, A. (2020). Female fantastic in anthologies: Gendering the genre and its discourse. *CLCWeb - Comparative Literature and Culture*, 22(4), 0–15. <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3692>
- Böhme, G. (2013). The Art of the Stage Set as a Paradigm for an Aesthetics of Atmospheres. *Ambiances Environment Sensible, Architecture et Espace Urban, Redecouvertes*. <https://doi.org/10.4000/ambiances.315>
- Caan, S. (2011). *Rethinking Design and Interiors: Human Beings in the Built Environment*. Laurence King Publishing
- Creed, B. (1993). *The Monstrous-Feminine* (First edit). Routledge.
- Ettegui, P. (1999). *Production Design and Art Direction*. Focal Press.
- Freud, S. (1955). The Uncanny. In *The standard edition of the 53 complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (pp. 219-256.). Hogarth Press. <https://docslib.org/doc/2804589/freud-s-1919-the-uncanny-the-standard->
- Hynam, M., & Mosley, J. (2016). *Filmic Space: Parallels between transitions in film and architecture Composite transition image, fig 1. April*. <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/912876>
- Kristeva, J. (1982). *Power of Horror: An Essay on Objection*. Columbia University press.
- Malekpour, M., & Motamedi, S. (2021). The Liminal and the Surreal: The Space of Limbo and Dreams in Luis Bunuel's The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie. *CINEJ Cinema Journal*, 9(1), 320–345.
- Martin, A. (2014). Mise en Scène and Film Style. In *Mise en Scene and Film Style*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137269959>
- McAndrew, F. T. (2020). The psychology, geography, and architecture of horror: How places creep us out. *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture*, 4(2), 47–62. <https://doi.org/10.26613/esic.4.2.189>
- Nakhal, J. (2015). Women as Space/Women in Space: Relocating our Bodies and Rewriting Gender in Space. *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research*, 1(Summer), 15–22. <https://doi.org/10.36583/1-1-3>
- Norman, J. (2018). *Personality Types and The Enjoyment of Horror Movies*. *Journal of Social and Psychological Sciences*. 15(1), 56.
- Park, M. (2018). *The Aesthetics and Psychology Behind Horror Films* [Long Island University]. https://digitalcommons.liu.edu/post_honors_theses
- Penz, F. (2017). *Cinematic Aided Design: An Everyday Life Approach to Architecture*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315722993>
- Putri, A., & Nurhajati, L. (2020). Representasi perempuan dalam kukungan tradisi Jawa pada film Kartini karya Hanung Bramantyo. *ProTVF*, 4(1), 42. <https://doi.org/10.24198/ptvf.v4i1.24008>
- Rezeanu, C.-I. (2015). The relationship between domestic space and gender identity: Some signs of emergence of alternative domestic femininity and masculinity. *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, 6(2), 9–29.
- Royle, N. (2003). *The Uncanny*. Routledge.
- Rugoff, R. (2010). *The New Décor*. Hayward Gallery Publishing.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.
- Sfinteş, A. I. (2012). Rethinking liminality: built form as threshold-space. *ICAR2012 – (Re) Writing History, May 2012*.
- Sloane, M. (2014). Tuning the space: Investigating the making of atmospheres through interior design practices. *Interiors: Design, Architecture, Culture*, 5(3), 297–314. <https://>

- doi.org/10.2752/204191114X14126916211184
- Suhendi, I. D., Priyatna, A., & Muhtadin, T. (2017). Representasi Monstrositas Perempuan Dalam Novel Mantra Lilith karya Hendri Yulius. *Atavisme*, 20(2), 123–137. <https://doi.org/10.24257/atavisme.v20i2.391.123-137>
- Trocchianesi, R., & Pirola, M. (2017). Metaphorical spaces. The art used by designers to explore, experiment and express concepts of Interiors. *Design Journal*, 20(sup1), S261–S272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14606925.2017.1352793>
- Wahid, U., & Agustina, S. (2021). Strukturasi proses produksi film horor Pengabdian Setan: Perspektif ekonomi politik. *ProTVF*, 5(1), 80. <https://doi.org/10.24198/ptvf.v5i1.25601>
- Whitehead, J. (2017). *Creating Interior Atmosphere : Mise-en-scène and Interior Design*. Bloomsbury Publishing.