

Empirical investigation of *A Widow's Journey*: A visual exploration utilising experimental film

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ABSTRACT

Background: The experimental film *A Widow* will engage the spectator in the protagonist's journey as a widowed woman on an avant-garde exploration. Confined within a realm that blurs the distinctions between reality and fate. The protagonist encounters a succession of paradoxes that she endeavours to comprehend. Nevertheless, the more she endeavoured to comprehend her alternatives, the more perplexed her environment grew. **Purpose:** This study seeks to elucidate the creative process of visualizing feminism via the lens of a widow's experience. This research employs both an avant-garde methodology and a discourse platform that examines the convergence of realism with the experiences of a widow and feminist themes. **Methods:** This research used a qualitative method with a reception analysis approach through two elements of David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's experimental film theory, abstract form and associational form. **Results:** The results indicate that an experimental experience utilizing metaphorical symbols, inspired by the author's mother—who was a twice-widowed individual—has transformed into an element of abstract form. An occurrence, which the author refers to as “coincidence,” heightened the enigma around a widow from her two husbands. **Conclusion:** This research concludes that the experimental film, *A Widow's Journey*, possesses a distinctive artistic process. The film's experimental nature is evident in its unstructured filmmaking stages, with a more intimate tale presented in an abstract style. The narrative is abundant in historical depth and utilizes archival material featuring a widow as its major film. The editing employs mosaic imaging techniques and utilizes non-mainstream bioskop for distribution. The production phases are frequently experimental and executed non-procedurally, highlighting human discovery, where the central story evolves through collective choices. **Implications:** Provide information about an experimental film, *A Widow* that has a visual power that can influence the audience in processing the message conveyed.

Keywords: *A widow* film; feminism; film style; Indonesian experimental film; Indonesian post-cinema

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INTRODUCTION

Cinema is among the most prevalent and influential artistic mediums globally. As a visual and auditory medium, it possesses the capacity to communicate narratives, emotions, and concepts in impactful and significant manners. Sintowoko (2025) identifies a comprehensive concept that underscores the exploration of the medium and the film production process itself within Indonesian experimental films. Experimental films have thus far exhibited exclusivity due to limited accessibility and only a few studies discuss. The article examines the positioning of experimental films within the Indonesian cinema industry in the era of postmodernism. The evolution of experimental cinema, shown by ARKIPEL, serves as a form of resistance against mainstream cinema. This cinematic collaborative serves as the heartbeat of socially pertinent creation. The experimental and collective ethos embodied by ARKIPEL demonstrates that experimental films serve not only as an artistic medium but also as instruments for cultural preservation, critiques of authority, and technological innovation—a legacy perpetuated by generations of filmmakers who challenge boundaries, alongside global collaborations that enhance Indonesia's standing on the international cultural landscape. By persistently adopting technical advancements and enhancing accessibility via digital archives, experimental films can evolve into a more extensive teaching platform (Davies, 2025). The employment of experimental films in the

production of the works constitutes one of the scholarly justifications for composing this article. Since the inception of silent films, cinema has experienced significant technological advancements, allowing filmmakers to articulate their concepts with greater complexity.

Moreover, film constitutes a collaborative art form that integrates picture arrangement, camera movement, and editing to provide a meaning that transcends the individual components. Film possesses the capacity to communicate messages and tales through visual and auditory elements, frequently serving to entertain, educate, and inspire its audience. Film can serve as a potent medium for instigating social and political transformation, perhaps altering the viewer's perspective on an issue. Film is the most potent artistic medium ever devised by humanity. It is a method of moving narratives, enabling them to evolve into experiences, and it has the capacity to transform humans. As with all cinematic works, there exist diverse styles, one of which is experimental film.

Following the collapse of Soeharto's New Order administration in the 1990s, Indonesian cinema production experienced a significant downturn due to various factors, including the monopolistic activities of Soeharto's associates in film importation and exhibition rules. Economic challenges prompted a significant exodus of proprietors of large manufacturing firms to the television industry. Young individuals, including film directors,

producers, scriptwriters, festival organizers, programmers, and activists, rejuvenated Indonesian cinema through independent film techniques that enabled them to articulate the issues pertinent to their generation at that time (Paramaditha, 2014). Filmmakers engaged in independent production, initiating a cinematic renaissance that encompassed other emerging cultural creators who produced their own films, organized festivals, and built film communities independent of state or established producer assistance. Over the course of fifteen years, the period referred to as “independent” in this dissertation has emerged as a catalyst for aspirations within contemporary Indonesian cinema, potentially serving as a lens through which to examine the burgeoning Southeast Asian experimental film movement that commenced at the beginning of the year 2000s (Paramaditha, 2014).

Experimental film is a kind of audio-visual art that emphasizes the exploration of innovative concepts beyond conventional cinematic norms. The contemporary era, the connection between digitalization and the wave of industrialization, has driven the world toward digital transformation (Wendt, 2021). In this postmodern epoch, individuals perceive themselves as more “untamed” and often resist constraints that “restrict” freedom and creativity (Sintowoko, 2021). In experimental cinema, visual quality is of minimal significance, and the material is abstract. Employs several rhythms and repetition, can utilize music or function

without it. Experimental filmmaking typically has numerous motivations and justifications. Its effect on cognitive emotion (Walley, 2024). According to Bordwell and Thompson (2017) in his book *The experimental filmmaker may tell no story, creating poetic revelations*. Experimental films may lack narrative structure. Nonetheless, they compose poetry. Like language poetry, experimental filmmakers craft poetry using the medium of film.

Bordwell and Thompson (2017) categorize films into three types: documentary films, animated films, and experimental films. Documentary films possess multiple facets that reflect reality. This film is differentiated from fictional films as it is regarded as a factual assertion. An animated film is defined by its method of production. Images, models, or individuals are displayed sequentially to generate an illusion of motion that was never captured by the camera. Experimental films manipulate cinematic form and traditions, subverting spectators’ expectations to deliver a distinctive emotional and intellectual experience. This kind of film originated during the Avant-Garde movement, which deviated from established conventions and fostered a new artistic paradigm. Experimental filmmakers may seek to investigate many possibilities inherent in the medium itself. Experimental films are creations that utilize interpretation to convey emotions. Experimental film is a cohesive genre that embodies alternative principles grounded in the definition of its

form, content, and format (Sintowoko, 2025). Experimental films differ from conventional films, which possess a narrative structure, by exhibiting a distinct composition. Experimental films provide a medium for comprehending diverse emotional expressions. Bordwell and Thompson (2017) identify two components that constitute experimental films: abstract form and associational form.

The film's overarching structure will be dictated by the characteristics of the theme and variation patterns. Referring to the form as abstract does not imply that the film lacks identifiable objects. Nonetheless, each conceivable abstract property examined possesses a distinct significance for the experimental filmmaker. Including natural elements, artificial constructs, avian vocalizations, cloud configurations, etc. Abstract objects such as these captivate attention due to their aesthetic appeal and prompt the spectator to engage their senses in unconventional manners. These are several of the same attributes sought in a piece of art. Abstract forms will consistently attract filmmakers seeking to perceive their surroundings from a novel perspective.

In addition to abstract forms, there exist associational forms that evoke ideas and feelings by combining pictures and sounds that may lack a logical connection. The experimental filmmaker regards his cinematic creations as poetry. The metaphorical connotations of linguistic poetry are transmitted through images and sounds in an associative manner. Like visual storytelling,

they craft poetry via the medium of video.

The structure in experimental films serves as a conduit for visual concepts derived from practical experiences, facilitating novel interpretations through the cinematic medium. This work employs experimental film as it offers a broad scope for exploring innovative approaches in unorthodox filmmaking. The filmmaker aims to convey their perspective through an unconventional artistic approach, employing innovative techniques to instill anticipation, evoke optimism, and subsequently subvert audience expectations. Films generally reflect cultural attitudes that apply to roles, norms, attitudes, and gender expectations (Kunsey, 2019). Negative depictions of gender relations in films influence the spread of gender stereotypes. They aim to present an alternative perspective on topics affecting the surrounding environment or the general populace, such as highlighting the topic of feminism among widowed women.

Feminism is a movement advocating for absolute equality of rights between women and men that integrated with social and politics (Missero, 2021). In the current study, feminism aims to confront the inequality, prejudice, and injustices faced by women in society Jessica Benjamin, a psychotherapist and feminist critic renowned for her contributions to feminist theory, created the notion of *Intersubjectivity* within the feminist psychoanalytic framework. The concept of intersubjectivity is fundamental to her theory, as it elucidates the dynamics

of social relations, particularly within the framework of feminism. Intersubjectivity denotes the interdependent link among persons in the construction of identity and subjective experience (Benjamin, 2017). Despite the existence of debates and divergent viewpoints within the feminist movement, the primary objective continues to be the attainment of gender equality and the eradication of discrimination against women, including widows, who are defined as women who have lost their spouses through divorce, death, or separation. In terms of experimental film, the spirit of activism from *Khadiu Club* in South Korea show a more radical movement to avoid western hegemony. Barrowman (2025) analysis underscores that the popular appeal of Hollywood movies profoundly impacts prejudices regarding the beauty standards of non-Western women. While in South Korea use the relation of media and society with feminism-movement (Kim, 2024).

Women's stories are often different from the stories told by men. Explicitly or implicitly feminine films challenging, rather than

fetishizing, dominant representations of female identity (Kunsey, 2019). The depiction of gender in films is influenced by the perpetrator behind the scenes (Yuliantini, 2021).

As reflected in Figure 1, the picture shows an archive background in experimental cinema. The author endeavors to achieve a new milestone by producing an experimental film that embodies feminist themes through the lens of grave. This narrative is inspired by the life experiences of the author's mother, *a widow* who has endured the loss of two husbands. Between her two spouses, the author refers to an occurrence as a *coincidence*. The author's mother experienced the deaths of her two husbands three days prior to three days after her birthday. The author's grandparents arranged for the first marriage of the author's mother. The author's mother's second spouse was her former boyfriend prior to her marriage to the first husband. An atypical occurrence involving a man selected by his parents and another chosen by herself, both culminating tragically in a death on an uncommon date coinciding



Source: Author's documentation, 2024

Figure 1 Photo of The Graves of The Author's Fathers

with the author's mother's birthday, motivated the author to narrate this tale.

The status of widows in contemporary society remains quite variable. This deviation arises from a lack of awareness regarding labeling, influenced by various inherent factors such as behavior, culture, moral customs, and the situational context, which significantly impact individuals' actions, manifesting as discrimination, oppression, injustice, and concern for their circumstances, often leading to the assignment of nicknames (labeling) (Suhan et al., 2020). Gender roles create stereotypes in society, namely labeling, that begins with the process of perception of various inherent personal characteristics and traits (as if permanent) in a group of people (Nurwahyuni, 2015). Women in society are often perceived as the *second sex* since their identity is shaped by their relationships with men. This pertains to widows, who are often defined by their marital status or association with their deceased spouse.

In our culture, conventional norms frequently advocate for the necessity of widows to reconstruct their lives following the loss of their spouse. Numerous men seek to propose to the author's mother as a second wife or in a polygamous arrangement, citing the Prophet's sunnah aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of widows, as if they pity them for their perceived inability to thrive without a companion. In contemporary society, the majority of polygamous practices by several individuals no longer align with prevailing

moral standards, hence lacking inherent wisdom. The implementation of polygamy regulations in Islam has, in numerous instances, occurred arbitrarily, disregarding the requisite requirements that must be adhered to. Polygamy is typically practiced by multiple individuals primarily to fulfill personal wants. This tradition, which appears to engage with the Sunnah of the Apostle, is merely dismissed by being designated as a "widow".

The media plays a big role in affecting people's daily lives because the media influences how society views the world in general (Alzahrani, 2016). So as films that can influence society's perspective; at a time reflecting the understanding and attitudes of a society on a particular issue, is wrong one of them is a gender issue. Inside each film, there is an image shown of men and women. These images are depicted in a different way with characteristics which are different and have different meanings (Alzahrani, 2016). The necessity of creating this work is underscored by the urgency inherent in the metaphorical symbolism, particularly about the traits of the bereaved female character and her destined trip. The author creates a female figure to represent a widow, using inspiration from the life story of her mother in an experimental narrative. Examining feminism from the viewpoint of a widow. This occurrence motivated the author to expand upon it by conceptualizing an experimental film named *A Widow*, utilizing two components of experimental film theory:

abstract form and associational form. The author aims to ensure that the experimental film *A Widow* possesses graphics capable of impacting the audience's understanding of the delivered content (Bordwell & Thompson, 2017).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research entails the production of works utilizing experimental film methodology through: 1) unstructured stages of filmmaking; 2) event synchronization to forge novel associations; 3) innovation in mosaic imaging techniques; 4) multi-screen projection; and 5) abstract forms as representations of vision. The production phases are often experimental and conducted non-procedurally, emphasizing exploration; the primary narrative may evolve until completion due to collaborative decisions, even throughout the film production phase (Chodorov & Cha, 2019).

This experimental film applied both qualitative methods, narrative and visual art techniques to show the emotional journey of a widow. The procedure started with more than 10 years of participant observation, during which the researcher talked to the subject a lot through in-depth interviews, diary entries, footage and pictures of their personal spaces (Boczkowska, 2024). This research turned this real-world data into a visual archive that used symbolic things like the deceased's clothes, love letters, and private areas as the basis for creative material.

The next step was to use found footage techniques to turn the data into experimental

film language. This meant digitally altering old family footage to make it look like it was from a different time. Scenes were filmed using both a 16mm camera and a mobile phone camera to mix analog and digital textures. This shows how memories of the past and the present are both genuine. The editing method used a non-linear framework, breaking up the story's timeline through associative montage to reflect the subject's scattered ideas. For scenes of loneliness, color experiments used monochrome filters, while for scenes of emotional conflict, they used red-orange gradients. For sound design, they used field recordings (such wind noises and the ticking of a wall clock) to show how empty something is. Working with subjects during screening tests confirmed the accuracy of the visual representations by changing sceneries based on how they felt. Also, using specific color would lead differ perception on audience psychology emotion (Winnie & Li, 2024).

This method focused on reflexivity in production by using a process notebook to keep track of how empirical facts and creative interpretation interacted with each other. The end product wasn't just a movie; it was a visual essay that blurred the lines between factual and fiction and gave a personal look at loneliness that is hard to get through other means. This method made experimental films a more useful tool for studying complicated human behavior.

This research uses experimental literature film for references from scientific journals

and film literature that underpin the analysis of feminist concerns through the lens of widowhood. This also encompasses the author's empirical experience in examining the narrative of the author's mother's widow as a foundation for comprehending the suitable approaches and methods to portray the concept of feminism to the widow (Ørskov, 2025). The conceptual narrative is derived on a true account, specifically the author's mother's story, which is subsequently rendered into an experimental cinema format lasting 9 minutes and 20 seconds.

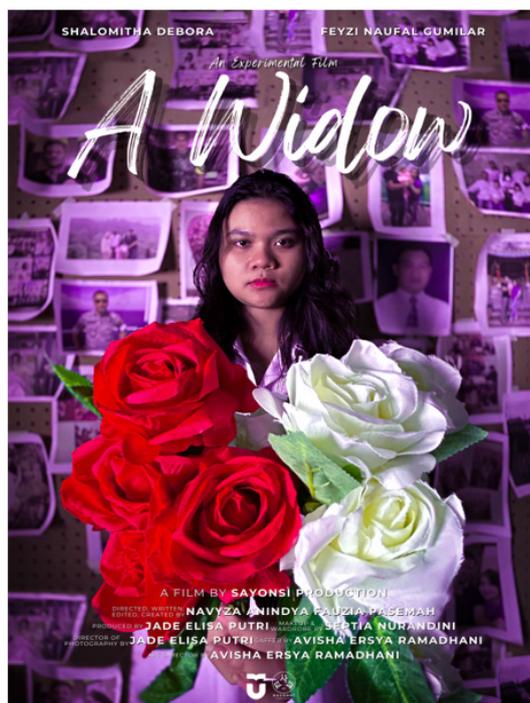
The experimental potency of the film *A Widow* regarding abstract form can be analyzed through the abstract variations, narrative (Hegarar, 2025), presented by the repeated scenes, which convey the narrative of *a widow's journey* through successive marriages and subsequent abandonments until she ultimately becomes a widow once more. In terms of associational form, it manifests as object play, serving as a metaphor for her two husbands. From the outset of the film, the creator endeavors to engage the viewer in the narrative of a widowed woman (the creator's mother) who is ensnared in a realm that blurs the lines between reality and fate. The widowed protagonist in this film encounters a succession of paradoxes that she endeavors to comprehend. Nonetheless, the more she endeavored to comprehend her alternatives, the more perplexing her environment became. The film production process involves pre-production, production,

and post-production, involving social agents tied to social structures. Film production is highly dependent on ideological values (Alam et al., 2023). This film serves as a means for the author to express social criticism, originating from personal insights and directed towards others, by producing experimental cinematic artworks that transmit meaning through both content and form (Jacobs & Vanhout, 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We delineated the creative process with several stages of chapter to make it easy to understand. The chapter goes from one to seven chapters to show her life.

In figure 2, we convey multiple ideas or meanings through items, colours, and intricate details on the poster film *A Widow*. The billboard emphasizes red and white roses, symbolizing the two significant men in the author's mother's life. Goody (1993) asserts that floriography, the art of flower language, originated as a means of communication among illiterate women in Persia, who utilized flowers to convey messages in a period when written language was prohibited. Each flower possesses its own meaning and significance. The symbolic significance of white roses is sincerity and sacred love. The author suggests that "She selected white roses as a sincere and pure expression of her love for her parents, which also extended to the man they chose for her". Red roses are frequently employed to convey affection, symbolizing the sentiment "*I love you*". Red roses symbolize



Source: *A Widow*, 2024

Figure 2 Film Poster of *A Widow*

loyalty and first love. The representation of the red rose symbolizes the complexities of her initial romance prior to entering a relationship dictated by her parent's preferences. This theme will serve as the unifying aspect that links the components of the film.

In figure 2 predominantly features purple hues to signify widowhood, as purple is frequently linked to widows. The author seeks to convey the sentiment of a grieving widow. Diverse individuals or civilizations possess distinct standards and criteria for assessing color. Purple signifies various emotions including death or widows in mourning (Neves, 2022). In Japan, purple signifies celebration and arrogance. Purple is both romantic and feminine. Color psychology offers a systematic perspective on the psychological and emotional effects of colors on individual (Matbouly, 2022). The color purple relates to loneliness

and melancholy. Represents the essence of secularism, illusion, idealism, and mysticism. It is defined by hyperbole and insanity.

Utilizing a design that incorporates two experimental film elements: abstract form and associational form, as delineated by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. The utilization of color, rhythm, symbols/interpretation, devoid of narration or dialogue, along with the variation in tempo between scenes, imparts a composite nature to this picture. Incorporating numerous abstract motifs that serve as emblems of the theme in this experimental film. Consequently, the author will elucidate the significance inherent in various scenes addressed in this part.

Experimentation of *A Widow* has been divided to 2 part namely: 1) narrative experimentation; 2) *Film as a Medium of Self-Expression*. First experimentation is the narrative experimentation with 7 chapters of a

widow's life. Below is the phase of narrative experimentation that can be seen from figure 3 until figure 5. The narrative experimentation explain the story of a widow in 7 part of stories namely: 1) initial chapter representing in figure 3 (1) (timecode 00:00:25 - 00:00:35); 2) chapter of a widow representing in figure 3 (2) (timecode 00:00:35 - 00:00:41); 3) approach chapter in figure 4 (1) (timecode 00:00:50 - 00:01:02); 4) mourning chapter in figure 4 (2) (timecode 00:00:58 - 00:02:51) and figure 4 (3) (timecode 00:01:20 - 00:03:19); 5) reality, myth and spiritual beliefs in figure 4 (4) (timecode 00:03:20 - 00:04:17); 6) destiny in figure 5 (1) (timecode 00:04:23 - 00:04:40); 7) choice chapter in figure 5 (2) (timecode 00:06:11 - 00:06:26) and figure 5 (3) (timecode 00:07:56-00:08:26); 8) final chapter in figure 5 (4) (timecode 00:08:29 - 00:08:44).

Figure 3 (1) (timecode 00:00:25 - 00:00:35) constitutes the initial scene of this film. Depicts a wedding scenario with a blurred background, centering attention on the female character in the foreground. The author strives

to create the impression that the film is cyclical. The film's beginning and conclusion will be interconnected. The film's associative structure is composed of a compilation of pictures and concepts that lack a logical connection. Like how poetry employs language and metaphor to express meaning, the film utilizes patterns of visual and sound to create associative forms and links that unify its thoughts and feelings. The scene above is seen as presenting marriage as an option for a widow, reflecting the contemporary societal belief that those who are widowed should remarry or establish new relationships to achieve prosperity.

Subsequently, the scene transitions into figure 3 (2) (timecode 00:00:35 - 00:00:41), revealing an abstract form element. This component enables the author to structure the film according to color, shape, size, and dynamic movement within the image. The film's visual quality is structured through a series of recurring themes and abstract variants. This scene marks the transition in color grading from warm tones to black and white tones. The



(1) timecode 00:00:25 - 00:00:35



(2) timecode 00:00:35 - 00:00:41

Source: *A Widow*, 2024

Figure 3 An Experimental Film *A Widow*

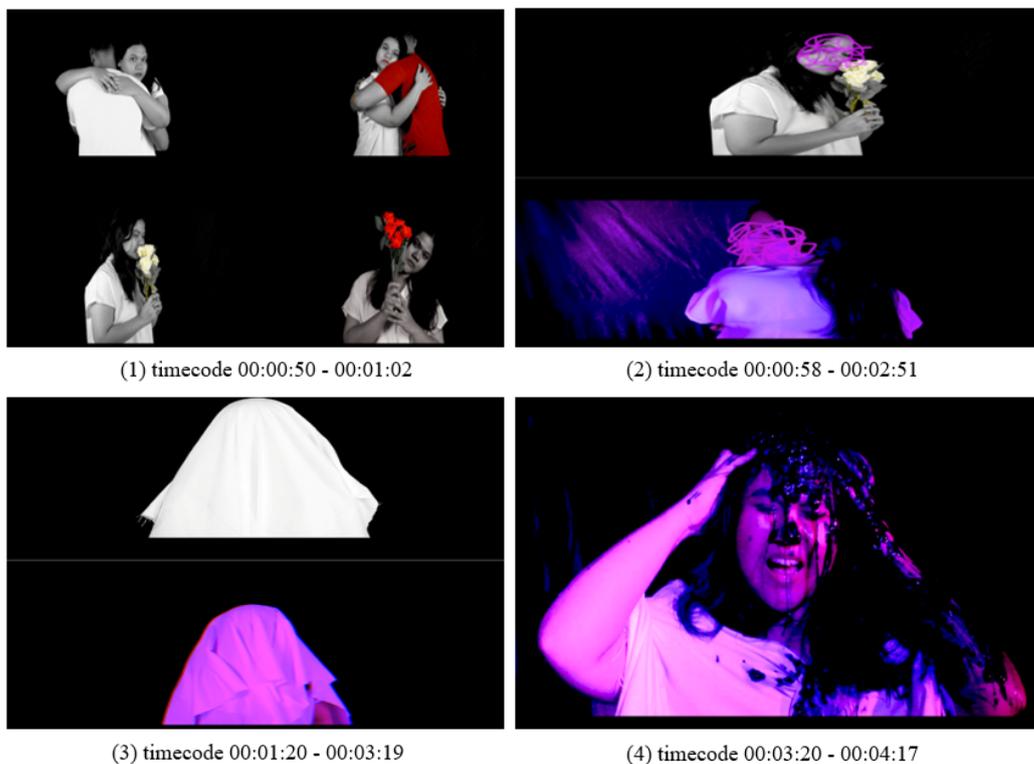
author incorporates this aspect in this section, depicting a subconscious scene or the woman's recollections of her destiny as a widow. Similarly, the color black, employed as a background in this experimental video, symbolizes loneliness, death, funerals, depression, and loss. Black enhances the vibrancy of other colors. In color psychology, black promotes confidence and strength in an individual.

The scene in figure 4 (1) (timecode 00:00:50-00:01:02) shows a woman and a man hugging. This interprets the affection between the two lovebirds. The clothes worn by the man also have a color pattern that is in harmony with the red roses and white roses that are held by the woman. This element is included in the associational form, where the metaphors of the first husband and second husband are differentiated based on the color of

the symbolism of red roses and white roses.

Lameris (2025) posits that an examination of signs substantiates that each sign is defined by its object. Initially, by delineating the characteristics of the thing when designating the sign as an icon. Secondly, testimony and information pertaining to individual objects serve as indexes for referencing signs. Third, the explicit assumption is that it is perceived as a denotative object due to the convention of referring to a sign as a symbol. Based on a semiotic view, if all social practices can be considered as linguistic phenomena, then all of them can also be viewed as signs. This is possible because of the broad meaning of the sign itself (Romdhoni, 2019).

Also, costumes and accessories can provide an overview of the character or personality of the storyteller (Pratista, 2017). Costumes



Source: *A Widow*, 2024

Figure 4 An Experimental Film *A Widow*

communicate the details of a character's personality to the audience (Landis, 2018). Character appearance has a very important role which is useful to provide an overview of the storyteller's character, personality, and status (Sugihartono & Wanggay, 2023). The character's appearance includes the clothes worn, the hairstyle, and how the expression is. The character of two men in this film is based on characterization through the character's appearance as the author's biological father and author's stepfather.

Figure 4 (2) (timecode 00:00:58 - 00:02:51) depicts a scene featuring a scribble art effect with purple streaks obscuring the woman's face. This signifies a moment prior to the woman grieving as a widow. When analyzed through the lens of color psychology, the examination of color as a factor influencing human character can shape views of diverse individuals, irrespective of age, gender, or culture (Sacilotto et al., 2022).

Color psychology pertains to various domains, including film. In this context, the purple streak serves as a benchmark, symbolizing the disparity between the widowed woman's destiny and an unarticulated fate, such as the recurrence of her husband's death.

Figure 4 (2) (timecode 00:00:58 - 00:02:51) pertains to figure 4 (3) (timecode 00:01:20 - 00:03:19). The image depicts a woman enveloped in a white textile. The author perceives it as a veil that envelops deceased individuals. The symbolic aspect of this image signifies that the woman is grieving. He has

experienced abandonment by his two partners. The upper image displays unadorned white fabric with a black and white color gradient, whereas the lower image employs a purple hue. This delineates the distinction that the left image depicts the moment the woman initially becomes a widow, while the right image illustrates her subsequent widowhood, culminating in her becoming a widow once more.

The scenario shown in figure 4 (4) (timecode 00:03:20 - 00:04:17) is derived from the evolution of associative form elements influenced by a sequence in Robert Machado's experimental film, *Catharsis* in which he serves as Director of Photography. This film explores the concept of a voyage inside an individual's innermost thoughts. Catharsis is the expression of repressed emotions associated with a traumatic experience, manifesting those sentiments in the conscious realm. A primary objective of catharsis is to facilitate the expression of human emotions and feelings. The image depicts a woman enveloped in a black liquid, illuminated by refracted purple lights. The author perceives the dark liquid as a designation or epithet for a "widow" who is subjected to disdain. Their standing appears to carry a negative connotation. This notion was influenced only by her designation as a "widow". Despite its repeated removal, the black liquid or the label "widow" continues to resurface and will perpetually be associated with the woman. The author seeks to address the subjective experience of the author's mother by examining

how traditional gender constructs and societal power dynamics contribute to inequality and impede individual growth, particularly that of the author's mother.

The scenario depicts photographs of familial memories affixed to the wall behind the woman, serving as a backdrop. Beginning with familial photographic memories, including wedding images of the writer's mother and her two spouses, culminating in photographs of the writer's mother in sadness at the graves of her two husbands. Figure 5 (1) (timecode 00:04:23 - 00:04:40) shows a woman is depicted observing a December calendar while holding a red rose and a white rose. The calendar is marked on the 2nd, 5th, and 8th. These dates correspond to the author's biological father's date of death, the author's mother's birthday, and the date of the author's stepfather's death. The photographs

and calendar dates provide unequivocal evidence of the author's mother's life narrative, notwithstanding the myth surrounding the peculiarity of these dates.

The term myth commonly denotes views lacking factual foundation or narratives that are nonexistent. Nonetheless, this phrase possesses a distinct connotation in scientific research. Myth may refer to a narrative that effectively conveys the essential insights of a culture, or it can also be a story that is considered to really exist by a culture and is very different from fairy tales, which are purely fictional stories. Myths serve as cultural imperatives for individuals within a culture. The ideology posits that the fundamental character of humans remains unchanged, with the framework of early human cognition (primitive mind) mirroring that of contemporary human cognition (civilized



(1) timecode 00:04:23 - 00:04:40



(2) timecode 00:06:11 - 00:06:26



(3) timecode 00:07:56 - 00:08:26



(4) timecode 00:08:29 - 00:08:44



Source: *A Widow*, 2024

Figure 5 An Experimental Film *A Widow*

mind) (Afifa & Nugraha, 2023). The myth of unusual serial numbers, purportedly complex in specific settings, will be incorporated into the film's idea.

A number can be very influential and the discussion can range from magic to religion (Khoiron, 2018). People have their own views regarding numbers. For example, Javanese people mark numbers in various rituals as symbols with definitions full of abstraction.

The myth of odd numbers pertains to the narrative whereby the author reveals that the author's mother experienced the deaths of her two husbands three days prior to and three days following her birthday, which is also an odd number. This peculiar number remains a myth. Allah SWT favors odd numbers (Khoiron, 2018). Does this imply that God loves the author's mother, thereby enabling her strength? Is this the destiny of the author's mother? Viewed positively, her strength may stem from divine love; the choices she has made throughout her life undoubtedly impart valuable lessons.

Inspired by the 2023 biographical film *Oppenheimer*, directed and written by Christopher Nolan, which chronicles the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer, a physicist who developed the first nuclear weapon during the Manhattan Project in World War II. The film features a transition from a black and white palette to a colored palette, which the author used as a reference. Christopher Nolan portrays black and white as an impartial perspective of characters aside from Oppenheimer

(Sandyakala, 2023). The black and white color palette is objective, whereas color is subjective. In this experimental film, the color palette will shift based on both subjective and objective criteria. Figure 5 image features a woman reclined on the ground, accompanied by a shift in the color palette. This leads to the abstract aspect, wherein the visual quality of the film is governed by variations in thematic patterns and associative forms that manipulate meaning patterns. Color grading in black and white is perceived as subjective. The author's mother's perspective on widowhood is evident from a subjective viewpoint. Exhibits recollections from the past. Color grading with warm tones is perceived as an objective element, particularly evident in the wedding scene.

The scene in figure 5 (2) (timecode 00:06:11 - 00:06:26) shows the woman lying in a large field and as if she is looking for something. The author interprets it as a woman who has become a widow and is equally confused about what she should do after becoming a widow. She is also looking for her identity.

We interpret the continuing journey of a widowed woman. The woman meets a mysterious man. No one knows who this man is. It could be that this man becomes the next man in the woman's life. It could also be that this man is a symbol of today's society which tells women to remarry after becoming widows. Then the man invited the woman to choose two flowers in front of him. This can be interpreted as a symbol that marriage is one of the options

for a widow, the woman is required to choose.

Based on figure 5 (3) (timecode 00:07:56-00:08:26), when she chose and held one of the two roses, she seemed to be hit by turbulent memories from her past, forced to remember the incident when she was left by her two husbands. The woman is required to choose to remarry by circumstances and perhaps because of the traditional thinking of today's society which makes marriage the final goal because there is no other choice but to build a new household.

Then the woman turned her face away, and in an instant all the events returned to the initial scene chapter (Figure 5 (4) timecode 00:08:29-00:08:44). Closing with a wedding scene, the author tries to interpret that this story can still continue or perhaps the author's mother will remarry in the future, no one can predict the future, but there is one definite thing that the author can determine, that many people always gives an expectation for a widow, or you could say the author's mother, to remarry, requires her to build a new life after being left by her partner, as if marriage is a must for a widowed woman. Inherent social decisions on personal identity, directing the individual to be a certain type. This thing becomes the designer's basis for capturing phenomena or social codes to be transformed into the creative thinking process used as mainstream, when they begin to position ideas about femininity and masculinity (Astuti, 2016). If the end will end in abandonment, why is marriage the destination for all people?

The final scene closes with the title of

the film, and the black bar suddenly opens as if an eye is opening. The author interprets this as an object in the audience's eyes. From the beginning of the film, the author tries to invite the audience to see the story of the experimental journey of a widowed woman (the author's mother) who is trapped between a place that raises the boundaries between reality and destiny. The widowed female protagonist in this film experiences a series of absurdities that she tries to understand. However, the more she tried to understand her options, the more confusing her surroundings became. This film is a medium for the author about how the author creates a form of media for social criticism that originates from oneself for others by creating experimental films of art through the meaning of the work and the form of the message to be conveyed.

After describing the narrative of experimentation, here is the personal expression of artist that we call *Film as a Medium of Self-Expression*. Experimental films always talk to the audience more directly than commercial movies made by a cast and crew. Navyza's most personal work is *A Widow*, which shows how she saw the story of a widow. The references to using sadism, blood, and color tones in *A Widow* are similar to those in Robert Machado's experimental film *Catharsis*.

The camera captures old photos of a widow and the deaths of her two spouses in a gloomy room full of wedding souvenirs. There are three moments before and three moments after her

birthday. The widow made this experimental film to explore the landscape of her loneliness through the medium of cinema, where she is both the subject and the director. Navyza has seen her mother's mental health change over the years. The movie makes it hard to tell the difference between a documentary and a fiction, or between reality and a delusion.

This movie is more than just a picture of loss; it's also a study of how the grieving body interacts with time, things, and technology. It is also novel forms of subjectivity that differ from classic cinematic discourses (Glöde, 2023). This work makes the audience feel the widow's emotional confusion personally by breaking away from traditional narrative patterns. Each frame is an experiment, and each scene is a precarious hypothesis. *A widow* is a real-life example of how the story of a mother and widow may be seen as a story about women. This experimental film ends up becoming a way for Navyza to express themselves by questioning the idea that cinema is a passive medium and turning it into a live laboratory where art and loss are in unforeseen dialectics.

The author created an experimental film based on the life narrative of her mother, *a widow* who experienced the loss of two spouses. From both of her spouses, the author experienced an episode that could be deemed a coincidence. Both of her spouses passed away three days prior to and three days subsequent to her mother's birthday. The initial husband was the one selected by the author's grandparents,

who orchestrated a marriage for the author's mother. The second husband was the author's mother's former boyfriend before her marriage to her first husband. An extraordinary scenario between the man selected by her parents and the man of her own choosing culminated tragically, with their deaths occurring near the author's mother's birthday, prompting the author to narrate this tale.

CONCLUSION

The author has effectively depicted the concept of *A Widow* through an experimental film, utilizing David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's theories on experimental cinema, abstract form, and associational form. Experimental film serves as a medium that facilitates extensive research of unconventional filmmaking techniques. The author seeks to convey her experiences and the surrounding events related to feminism through the lens of *a widow*, drawing from her mother's life narrative. The author conveys her fate, choices, and unusual peculiarity in her life using symbolism and metaphor in diverse forms. Depicts the odyssey of a female protagonist who contemplates the internal dilemmas and uncertainties in her existence. The author aspires for the experimental film *A Widow* to illustrate the widow phenomenon as a vehicle for social critique, originating from personal experience and directed towards others, by crafting artistic works that interpret the creative process in a manner aligned with the intended

message. Examine the unawareness of labeling for a widow who is perpetually presented with the opportunity to reconstruct her life following the loss of her partner, however, perceives her inability to act without a companion. Marriage is not the ultimate objective for every individual.

This project's innovative finding is rooted in the artist's empirical approach, extensive archives, and psychological intimacy developed over more than two decades, representing a novel way of creation in an unconventional experimental cinema. The film's strength resides not in addressing sadness, but in the potency of a widow's archive as a storytelling medium. The examination of her anatomy demonstrates how loss alters time, commodifies memory, and obscures the distinctions between reality and illusion. Another finding is its dismissal of linear narrative and editing. It utilizes black-and-white color grading to Oppenheimer's experimental films and incorporates a leave-color effect that exclusively reveals purple and red hues. During the film's editing phase, the method typically employs overlay techniques and integrates various scribbling art effects. The abstract and associative qualities of the experimental film constitute their strengths, as demonstrated in both narrative and technical dimensions.

The potency of narrative is thus exemplified in Javanese mythology and the mystique of odd numbers. Glitch techniques, each repeated loop, transform into a ritualistic practice, akin to revisiting old correspondence or safeguarding pristine artifacts. In this context, technology

serves not merely as a mechanical instrument, but as a repository, transmuting memories into tangible existence through a deeply evocative cinematic experience. The film's most audacious assertion arises from its participative ethos, informed by years of comprehending the empirical reality of widowhood.

This sequence questions individualism in grief, proposing that shared vulnerability can create new connections, even during profound loss. The act of revisiting the memory of death in each new scene of the film defies emotional resolution, asserting that certain challenging experiences of the widow warrant portrayal.

This project reconceptualizes experimental film as a novel methodological approach. It characterizes film not as a passive documenter of truth, but as an active force in transforming pain. The book merges ethnographic precision with innovative expression, prompting both academics and the arts to reevaluate the study of grief-not by clinical detachment, but via the author's candid investigation and subjectivity. This work provides a thought-provoking framework for future endeavors where the personal transcends to the universal, and the camera serves as a conduit for the ineffable. Future studies need to be more comprehensive with the relation of the practice between Indonesian experimental film in postmodernism era and post-cinema. Since experimental film is an umbrella of the 'medium of experimentation' between film and art.

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