Children, Violence, and Problems of Ratiocination in Indonesian Horror Movies

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Abstract

As themes, children and violence are broadly presented in popular culture, especially in movies. This paper investigates images of children and violence in post-New Order Indonesian horror movies, focusing on two films: Rumah Kentang (Potato House, 2012) and Badoet (Clown, 2015). Rumah Kentang is a movie about a ghostlike house haunted by the child victim of domestic violence, while Badoet is about a mysterious clown who killed three children and a murder investigation that harms many people, including children. Using Raphaëlle Moine’s concept of genre, this paper reveals the textual and contextual aspects of domestic and social violence that threatens children in urban environments. The institution of family and the social urban environment are highlighted in the analysis. This study also shows the weakness of ratiocination as a main problem of the genre, and as such scenes in the Indonesian horror films have difficulty arousing the fear of their audiences, their ultimate goal.

Keywords: children, violence, ratiocination, horror movies, Indonesian cinema

Introduction

Since the dawn of film, movies and violence have become main topics of cinematic discussion. This endless discussion can be divided into two concerns, namely (i) as media, movies are considered to have negative social effects (i.e., violent scenes in movies are considered to cause violent acts in society); (ii) movies qualify as art, and therefore constitute cultural products that present themes of violence in all of their complexity and variety. One of the most nefarious and common forms of violence within cinema is violence against children.

This paper will discuss violence against children in two contemporary Indonesian horror movies, Rumah Kentang (2012) and Badoet (2015), and elaborate upon the problem of the (apparently) weak ‘ratiocination element’ (i.e. logical and structured reasoning) in Indonesian horror movies. Although horror films often involve supernatural elements, in the presence of ratiocination, this supernaturality becomes (seemingly) explicit and plausible. My discussion will rely crucially upon Raphaëlle Moine’s genre studies concept. According to Moine, movie genre studies consist of two aspects: textual and contextual. As texts, works within specific genres have certain structures and systems of meaning. Research into this textual aspect can thus
elucidate films' narrative norms and cinematography, which will hopefully aid in their investment with a deep understanding. Contextual aspects of genres also cannot be ignored. Genres are born from the values, expectations, and socio-cultural tendencies of certain societies, and are thus popular imaginative manifestations selected and presented according to audiences' viewing expectations, which are invariably marked by relatively permanent conventions and formulas. Therefore, any given movie genre has the potential to act as both the cause and effect of social value construction. Genre studies, thus, should explore those two aspects in depth (Moïne, 2008).

**Indonesian Movies and Violence Towards Children**

As a category of anti-social behaviour, violence against children has been defined as all acts/behaviour that involves physically or emotionally harming children, as well as sexual abuse, abandonment, and exploitation causing real or potential damage to children's health, survival, growth, and dignity (WHO, 1999). According to the Child Protection Commission of Indonesia (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia, KPAI), the number of cases of violence against children in Indonesia has increased significantly from year to year: in 2011 there were 2,178 cases of violence; in 2012, 3,512 cases; in 2013, 4,311 cases; and in 2014, 5,066 cases (http://www.kpai.go.id). The KPAI also stated that cases of violence have increased in number by an average of 15% in 2015 and 2016. Several recent cases of violence against children have gained national and international media attention. Take, for instance, the tragic case of Angeline in Bali. Three weeks after she was reported missing through her family's social media account, police found evidence that the eight-year-old girl was tortured and killed by her own stepmother. Angeline's body was found buried in her family's backyard.

Angeline's story was adapted to film under the title *Untuk Angeline* (For Angeline, 2016), with the support from KPAI, as the campaign to stop violence against children in Indonesia intensified. Despite its mission to increase social awareness of the need to prevent violence against children, this film was broadly criticised as it was considered a mere melancholy exploiting Angeline’s fate. This differed significantly from a movie made 30 years previously, *Arie Hanggara* (1985), which was based on the true story of an eight-year-old boy, Arie, who died after being physically punished by his biological father and stepmother. *Arie Hanggara* was considered better able to represent the tragedy of violence against children through its narrative emphasis on the complexity of father-child relationships and the lack of formal education within families. This movie was a great commercial success, and won many awards at various movie festivals.

Other Indonesian movies that have recorded violence against children include *Pintu Terlarang* (Forbidden Door, 2009) and *Mereka Bilang, Saya Monyet!* (They Say I’m a Monkey!, 2008). The main characters in both movies, Gambir and Adjeng, are shown to have developed personality issues as a result of the trauma caused by the physical, sexual, and mental violence they experienced during their childhoods. This past trauma continued to haunt those characters in the present. Both films reflect the KPAI data showing that children who are victims of domestic violence tend to have introverted personalities or harbour the potential to perpetrate violence when they grow older.

The two movies discussed in this paper do not discuss violence against children as explicitly as *Untuk Angeline* and *Arie Hanggara*, nor do they focus on characters marred by childhood trauma, as in *Pintu Terlarang* and *Mereka Bilang, Saya Monyet!*. The two films
analysed here, *Rumah Kentang* (Potato House, 2012) and *Badoet* (Clown, 2015), are horror movies that present the ghostly characters of a dead child and clown (respectively), both closely related to the worlds of the films’ living children. Critically, both movies depict children characters that are victims of violence.

The first movie, *Rumah Kentang*, follows Farah, who has to return to Indonesia after hearing that her mother has passed away. Her return changes her life, because—aside from having to discontinue her studies in Melbourne—Farah must also take care of her sister Rika, who has been traumatised by the accident that killed their mother. As their mother’s hospital expenses consumed most of their family fortune, and thus Farah and Rika live in their mother’s inherited home to save money. The house has long sat unoccupied, and it has become known as *Rumah Kentang* (Potato House) because of the stinging smell of boiled potatoes it emits. This does not concern Farah, who takes up abode in the house. They are soon terrorised by a ghostly boy, who threatens Rika’s life. Assisted by her fiancé, Herman, Farah tries to get rid of the ghost, including with the help of a psychic. However, Farah’s actions anger the ghost, who becomes even more uncontrollable.

The second movie, *Badoet*, deals with three children who were found dead in their shared flat, the result of either suicide or some terrifying accident. Their death is viewed as strange, and suicide is considered unlikely as the children were cheerful and lived within an apparently happy family. The movie’s protagonists—Donald, Farel, and Kayla—are youths who also live in the flat, and are investigating the cause of the children’s death. The youths are neighbours and friends of Raisa, a single mother who lives with her son, Vino. They begin to solve the mystery when they discover dozens of mysterious drawings, all depicting a clown, in the rooms of the dead children. After they discover a similar drawing in Vino’s room, they realise that he is the clown’s next target. It turns out that Vino, together with the other children, discovered and opened a music box suspected to hold the soul of a deceased clown. Donald, Farel, and Kayla then ask help from their peers on social media. They find that Nikki, who possesses a sixth sense of sorts, is able to see supernatural beings and can reveal the identity of the clownish ghost. They attempt to save Vino from the mysterious ghost, who turns out to be both enraged and cruel.

In connection with violence, the first thing that I will discuss is the identification of its perpetrators and victims. In *Rumah Kentang*, it initially seems that the violence is perpetrated by the child ghost and its victims are Farah and Rika. However, if we explore further, we will discover the ghost’s ‘back story’, that he was actually the victim of a heinous act of violence in the past. When Farah attempts to communicate with the boy ghost in the house using a *jelangkung* (a puppet to conjure up the dead) as her medium, she discovers that he was once a little boy living in the house, who fell victim to domestic violence. Through the *jelangkung*, it is revealed that, because the boy was very finicky and troublesome, he was boiled to death by his family’s maid and, along with potatoes, made into porridge. Echoing a common motif from Greek tragedy, the potato porridge was then served to all members of his family. Since this ghastly feast, the smell of potatoes has permeated the house every night, and in the kitchen a big pot of potatoes has been forever boiling. The child’s tragic fate made him unwilling to leave the house, and unwilling to allow anyone else to live there. In *Rumah Kentang*, the child ghost character thus doubles as a representative of all child victims of domestic violence.

Child ghosts frequently appear in horror movies. With such ghosts, the feeling of the uncanny easily emerges, as it presents a contrast between the purity and innocence of children
and the evil of the constant threats against them. Children usually appear to be innocent figures who love to play and be accompanied by others. Nonetheless, in horror movies, child ghosts are often described as having no emotions, being loners, and being suspicious of adults. The children that become ghosts are usually those who died tragically, often as victims of violence committed by adults. From the first time they entered the house in Rumah Kentang, Rika and Farah were frightened and anxious because they heard that a boy ghost lived therein. These feelings became more real when they encountered several peculiarities that indicated a ghostly presence in their house, ultimately directly feeling the threat of the ghost.

Not unlike women, children are often marginalised in society. Children are vulnerable figures, both physically and mentally. As such, they often become victims of violence in society and at home, often at the hands of a family member. The death of a child at home shows parents' failure or negligence in providing protection. The boy ghost in Rumah Kentang tried hard to frighten everyone who attempts to occupy his house, because he himself is actually a scared little child. He is afraid of losing the house that has been his home all this time, afraid of building relationships with adults because, in the past, he was the victim of violence committed by an adult.

As a victim of domestic violence, the boy ghost neatly conveys the potential threats hidden in our homes. Data from KPAI show that 91% of violence against children happen in the family environment (www.kpai.go.id). Children are especially vulnerable in private spaces because the perpetrators of violence are most often their closest relatives: their fathers and mothers, step-fathers and step-mothers, brothers and sisters, uncles, nannies, and household maids. This is very ironic, as the home is where the family lives and takes cover from the heat of the sun and the cold of the wind and rain. It is a place to perform daily activities while protected from the threat of wild animals or criminals. Home is a place where family members start their activities in the morning and where they return in the evening to clean themselves and rest. Home is a place that should provide family members comfort and safety. However, in the horror genre, the house that should be a place for refuge becomes a threat, unsafe for its occupants—especially the children and women.

In Badoet, meanwhile, the identity of the perpetrator and the victims is very clear; the former is the ghost of a dead clown and the latter are the soon-to-be-dead children living in a flat. The children that become the ghost's victims are not explicitly shown to receive cruel treatment physically, but their minds and thoughts are possessed by terror and fear, as represented by their sketches of terrifying clowns. Eventually, three children are found dead after either committing suicide or suffering a strange accident. The story of their deaths makes other residents restless and transforms life in the flat into one of fear.

It turns out that the ghost is that of a figure once known by all flat residents: a clown nicknamed 'Kapten Cilukba' (Captain Peek-a-boo), who provided entertainment at the night market near the flat. However, behind his laughing face, Kapten Cilukba was the perpetrator of sex crimes, a paedophile preying on children. His transgressions were discovered, and the angry parents of his victims took revenge by torturing Kapten Cilukba, This lynch mob killed and buried him, without following the applicable legal processes.

Two hidden threats that can be surmised from this summary of Badoet: (i) the presence of predators, preying on children in public spaces, and (ii) the potential violence collectively 'owned' by society when excessively expressing their anger to take revenge on a suspected
criminal. Paedophiles secretly seek out (stalk) vulnerable children in their social environment, in housing complexes or (as currently the trend) on social media, and the film exposes this as a hidden threat to children. The recent discovery of pro-paedophilia group on Facebook by the Indonesian police revealed a sizeable network of child predators, more than 7,000 in number, which included people from all over the world who were spreading hundreds of pornographic photographs and videos of children. Several group members are also suspected of sexually harassing children aged 2 to 10 years old, often using items such as balloons and candies to lure children. The character Kapten Cilukba also used balloons to attract children's attention, and his costume and behaviour as a clown, full of jokes and laughter, hid his real predatory nature. At a glance, the appearance and attributes of Kapten Cilukba immediately reminds us of the character Pennywise in Stephen King's novel *IT*, who also targets children. Nonetheless, they are also very different. Pennywise is described as being very intelligent and articulate; while Kapten Cilukba is portrayed as a distressed, angry, and vengeful soul within a highly discriminating environment.

Although the violent threat of sexual assault was hidden, *Badoet* makes apparent the violence committed by the parents of Kapten Cilukba's victims, who could not control their anger and took revenge directly by torturing the clown to death: pulling out his teeth, and slicing open his lips and face. Compared to the children's deaths and sexual harassment, the violence committed by the parents is depicted explicitly, and its duration is much longer. This violent revenge committed by a group of people who punish perpetrators without following legal processes can be 'read' as indicating society's inability to restrain itself in the face of an irresistible demand for popular justice. More subversively, it can be seen as reflecting a general lack of trust in positive law, which is considered insufficiently harsh in its sentencing and punishments. Although meant to be protective, the lynch mob's violent behaviour indirectly threatens children's future safety and lives, because it is through this that the children learn about violence, ultimately encouraging them to perpetrate illegal violence themselves. Violence, then, cannot be separated from the horror genre. It appears that, in both films, violence is not only a dramatic (and thrilling) ingredient. A significant sub-text of social critique is exposed and hidden within it at the same time.

**The Pleasures of Ratiocination and Suspense**

Movie genre theory is related not only to the issue of conventions or formulas, but also the problems of audience expectations, and of the factor(s) at play when abstract 'audiences' actually select movies to watch. In the case of horror movies, American philosopher Noël E. Carroll states that the genre's lovers and casual viewers exhibit what is called "paradoxical joy" (Carroll, 1997:182), which assumes an inseparable connection, or twinning, between "pleasant joy" and "painful or torturing joy." The audience views horror films with the semi-formulated intent of undergoing precisely the frightening, scary, or disgusting experiences that they avoid in daily reality.

In his book *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart*, Carroll summarises the central narrative structure of the horror genre. Carroll explains that this structure is most appropriate for horror movies involving ghost because these are based directly on the most basic four-fold set of plot divisions in horror: onset/attack, discovery, confirmation, and confrontation (Carroll, 1990:99). In horror movies, the arrangement of the archetypal plot is related to audience questions and expectations. It is not only the question of whether a monster or ghost really exists, but also subsequent questions such as: how do ghosts appear? Why do
ghosts appear? What are the strengths and weaknesses of ghosts? How do humans deal with them? and so on (Carroll, 1990:67). Reading or watching horror stories enables people to arrive at a rational understanding of the possibility of supernatural monstrosity, an intellectual pleasure derived from the alternating validation (confirmation) or repudiation of their beliefs. Along with the plots of horror movies, Carroll devotes the greatest part of his analysis to the problem of confirmation, as contrasted with appearance, discovery, or confrontation. Confirmation emphasises the ratiocination process of strong and systematic reasoning (Carroll, 1990:106). As a logical positivist, Carroll arrives at the 'natural' conclusion that it is the joy and seriousness of undertaking this ratiocination process that makes horror movies both interesting and popular.

I agree that good horror movies highlight ratiocination. Ratiocination, confirmation, and validation are horror movie elements that also serve an important role in both crime and police/detective movies. As a process, ratiocination involves three important elements: logic, reasoning, and rationality. If the ratiocination process in detective or crime stories is used to explain the reasoning and discovery of both the criminal and the evidence of the crime, in horror movies it serves as a source of joy to audiences as they attempt to understand the background of the ghost's appearance and the parallel, but logically necessary, dynamics of the supernatural world. Through the ratiocination process (or strong reasoning), the existence of the supernatural world is acknowledged and even so widely opened that characters and audience members gain broad and in-depth knowledge about it, pursuant to their culture—in our case, Indonesian but predominantly Javanese. The histories of vampires, for instance, is likewise revealed cinematically, in much detail. The histories of relevant houses, sites, or castles is also extended backwards through decades or even centuries. This is related to "curiosity", which is given broad space to be explored. There is an attempt to explain the logic of the supernatural world and enhance viewers' appreciation of the discernible differences between that world and their everyday lives. Hierarchy, locations, and entry points to the spirit world are described logically. Attempts to conquer the supernatural world are done seriously, systematically, and with tremendous curiosity. Scenes of obtaining information through investigation, revealing the history of certain characters, exploring the background of the story (going back decades), drowning in dusty piles of library books, intensively browsing in Internet, making efforts to find a person to contact the supernatural world, all prove inextricable parts of horror movies as stereotypical exercises in ratiocination. Those things, according to Carroll, are the true sources of joy in watching horror movies.

In both Rumah Kentang and Badoet, the ratiocination process as a strong and logical reasoning of the supernatural world seems to be poorly integrated into the central plot. In Rumah Kentang, there is a scene where the main character, Farah, seeks information about the ghost, but her effort is limited to a Google search, and as such the information found lacks authority, referencing only definitions, rumours, or urban legends available on the Internet. There is no attempt to look for information in formal institutions, such as local libraries, government archives, or police department archives, where records of violence against children—i.e. murder—may exist. This information, in fact, is obtained orally, based on "what other people said", "according to rumour", and so on, and this from an electrician who has by happenstance visited the house to fix the electric system. Their lack of knowledge of ghosts, as well as the house's background history, leaves Farah and Rika with only fear and one overriding desire: to get rid of or exterminate the ghost.
In *Badoet*, the investigation as ratiocination seems more apparent. Three youths—Donald, Farel, and Kayla—show great curiosity and concern for the problem occurring in their environment. These three characters are university students, and this very convenient fact serves as the logical foundation for a relatively rational investigation. They explore the background of their flat very well, especially in relation to the places children favour for playing, gathering, and engaging in various activities and relationships with the flat residents, who come from diverse social groups. Through their investigation, the protagonists become closer to the mothers of the ghost's victims, and it is through their narration that the victims' back stories are revealed, belying the theory that the children's deaths were the results of suicide or strange accidents. The finding of the clown sketches and the story of the music box, as well as the connection of the clown story with the night market near the flat, also results from the protagonists' intimacy with the victims' mothers.

In *Rumah Kentang*, the shaman or psychic character is still depicted with the cliché of 'weirdness', with a frightening and mysterious appearance akin to Indonesia's early horror movies. Male shamans are often depicted in traditional Javanese costumes, with long hair, moustaches, and beards, and fingers covered with rings and large gemstones, while female shamans usually look like gypsy forecasters. While performing their work, shamans are usually described as coming to haunted sites, closing their eyes, groping around the room, and mumbling the words of a difficult-to-interpolate incantation. The audience, instead of being given visual insight into what the shaman sees and hears, is only given a verbal explanation, which are sometimes very cliché and banal.

The supernatural knowledge possessed by characters is not easy to explain, and tends to remain mysterious and 'in the dark'. Even when they are in action, they recite spells unclearly, with mumbling or weird voices coming out of their mouths. The information about the supernatural world that audiences obtain is therefore quite scant. There is no certainty or further explanation concerning the information obtained. This tendency is confirmed with statements such as "don't ask too many questions!", "just believe it", "the less you know, the safer you will be", and so on.

The character with supernatural abilities in *Badoet* is described somewhat differently. Nikki does not follow the stereotypes of psychic characters usually presented in Indonesian horror movies. She is a university student who wears modern clothes and has a sixth sense. Nikki enables her three friends to complete their investigation thanks to her ability to see ghosts, see the past, and even predict the future. Contrary to shamans and psychics, who tend to be magical and find it hard to show their 'ability' to others, Nikki is described as a smart student who is very happy and full of curiosity in investigating the terrifying events in the flat.

Aside from ratiocination, the second fundamental joy in watching horror movies is the suspense building process. Scenes in horror movies are built using images and voices to build suspense and ensure audiences' continued fear. This suspense-leading-to-fear emerges when audiences assume that horrible things will happen on-screen. Occasionally, scenes are used to "misdirect" audiences, to make them feel an intense sense of curiosity and suggest that a threat is oncoming but ultimately reveal that there is no threat or that it is a false alarm. This "camouflage" is used to build suspense, but at the end this suspense is released. Conversely, surprising effects—screaming voices, falling people, emerging ghosts—sometimes occur unexpectedly during a previously calm or normal scene. Such surprising scenes have also become standard in the horror genre (Sipos, 2010: 60–65). The right arrangement of scenes, to
build suspense, release suspense, and provide surprise are key to audiences' 'enjoyment' of horror movies.

Both of the movies I am discussing use the camouflage and surprise techniques to build suspense and also provide relief before the real threat appears. In Rumah Kentang, Farah, who has become terrified after being terrorised by the boy ghost in the potato house, suddenly feels intense panic upon hearing the doorbell ringing. Full of suspense and suspicion, Farah slowly approaches the door to find out who is ringing. Although she has prepared herself to face the ghost, it turns out that the guest is Herman, her fiancé, who has come because he is worried about Farah's condition and would like to help her. In contrast, the suspense in Badoet is more obvious, even though the on-screen appearance of the ghost is minimal. Its narrative aspects (plot, characterisation, and setting), have been neatly laid out, along with its cinematographic aspects (shots, lighting, angles, and sound), and all of these enhance the suspense built, as supported by the unforgettable clown make-up artistry and costume.

One strategy used to build suspense is by repetitively showing the audience scenes associated with the appearance of the ghost or the approach of something horrible. The constantly repetition of select scenes in horror movies are often applied to reinforce the horror and terror effect. Although the repetition itself does not always refer to something scary, it can contain small things, such as the appearance of a doll, a music box, or another item related to dead people or terrifying events. Initially, this repetition will cause feelings of surprise, oddity, curiosity, and confusion. Because the 'uncanny' is not explained, anxiety and worry will emerge, and when these emotions are connected with death or ghosts, they will bring with them fear. Surprise, unease, anxiety, and fright are emotions that cannot be separated from the uncanny characteristic of horror movies.

In Rumah Kentang, there are two patterns of repetition that generate the horror effect and feeling of the uncanny associated with the house. First is the constant smell of potatoes, presented together with many potatoes in the hallway leading to the kitchen. When this is presented, it can always be anticipated that the following scene will show the kitchen at the back, with a burning stove and pot of boiling potatoes. Every time this scene is repeated, Farah and Rika will appear, their faces showing intense fear. The smell of potatoes and the hallways leading to the kitchen being covered with potatoes thus indicate the presence of the child ghost in the house. The second repetition is the repeated appearance of the pot, even after it has been thrown away several times. Farah's failure to get rid of the pot parallels her failure to get rid of the ghost occupying her house, and the ghost is determined not to leave the house or allow anyone to live there. In Badoet, repetition also appears and provides a powerful sense of suspense. The first repeated pattern depicts an opened music box playing a jingle. Usually music boxes contain dancer dolls, but this 'haunted' music box contains a clown doll. This music box appears very early in the movie, when Vino finds it at the night market and opens it. The scene of the opened music box, and its unique sound, also occurs within a flashback scene showing Kapten Cilukba applying his clown make-up. From the beginning, the audience is shown that the music box is associated with the presence of Kapten Cilukba. Therefore, in the scene where Vino finds and opens the music box, the suspense can be felt directly, and we can assume that the rediscovery of the music box will have horrifying consequences. The second obvious repetition is the appearance of floating colourful balloons, which is repeated several times as a harbinger of the appearance or presence of Kapten Cilukba. In flash-back scenes showing the deaths of
the three victims, balloons are always shown. Compared to *Rumah Kentang*, *Badoet* exposes audiences to more explicitly violent, sadistic, and bloody scenes.

A good horror film must build ratiocination and suspense with caution, not excessively. As in crime or detective stories, the suspense element of horror stories—if well-managed—will present the paradoxical pleasure expected by audiences. This paradoxical enjoyment, derived from events and images that present fear, horror, and terror, gives audiences a range of uncomfortable feelings, such as threat, disgust, panic, and despair, as well as amazement or astonishment because the scene feels so beyond reality and reason.

The unpleasantness experienced by audiences will be more perfect if accompanied by intellectual pleasure, where their curiosity leads to the unveiling of mystery, be it the ghosts or supernatural worlds of horror movies, or the perpetrators and evil plots of detective stories. This is where ratiocination is very important, because its presence through three elements, i.e. logic, reasoning, and rationality, enables audiences to more easily believe the solution to the mystery within the horizon of their knowledge. It does not mean that, through this solving process, all secrets or mysteries will be revealed, but rather that audiences will more easily derive intellectual pleasure from the process of investigation into a mystery or secret.

**Conclusion**

*Rumah Kentang* and *Badoet* are not specifically focussed on the theme of violence against children. However, the movies' characterisation of the perpetrators and victims of violence reveals three hidden threats of social violence, namely (i) domestic violence or violence at home, committed by the people closest to the victim, (ii) sexual violence against children, usually committed by child predators, and (iii) children's potential to perpetrate violence because they have experienced and seen examples of violence in their environment.

The horror genre seeks, as its main dramatic objective, to scare audiences and create suspense. For this objective to be accomplished, movie narratives are built by arranging elements such as plot, characters, space, and time to present fear and maintain suspense. It may be impossible to achieve this without appropriate cinematography, i.e. the images and sounds that provide the basic material of the subjective cinematic experience. The narrative centrality of the ratiocination of the supernatural shows that, in Indonesian society at least, otherworldly things are regular features of daily life. Therefore, when film protagonists face problems that are difficult to understand and hard to resolve, they soon see (or ‘define’) those problems as supernatural and immediately decide to ask for the help of parties involved with the supernatural or mystical world.

The lack of strong ratiocination or logical reasoning of the supernatural world in Indonesian cinema reinforces the popular or common-sense perception that the world is odd, mysterious, and untouchable. On the one hand, this provides pleasurable confirmation/validation of Indonesian, especially Javanese, society's epistemology, where 'sense' or intuitive knowledge is preferred over scientific and rational knowledge. On the other hand, this less-than-strong reasoning process can also be seen as constituting a lack of adequate understanding of stereotypical Indonesian supernatural knowledge, showing that those horror movie stories are insufficiently rooted in local Indonesian traditions. The narrative arc of horror films could be greatly improved, considering that in Indonesia the supernatural serves as an inseparable part of daily life. The cinematic joy of confirmation within Indonesian society is not about whether there is a supernatural world, but rather how the supernatural experience in the
film is not one had by everyone. Reading or watching horror stories, therefore, becomes the medium of confirmation of both the desire for and dread of a supernatural experience.

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