

**CHAPTER II.**  
**GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PLEASURE DERIVED BY INDONESIAN  
HORROR FILM FANS**

**2.1 Overview of the Pleasure Derived by Indonesian Horror Film Fans**

The enjoyment experienced by Indonesian horror film enthusiasts can be comprehensively understood through several interconnected dimensions: shared enjoyment during the viewing experience, the cinematic elements of horror films, self-identification and personal connections within horror fandom, the interplay of fear and discomfort in creating pleasure, and the appreciation of grotesque aesthetics. These dimensions collectively explain how audiences find delight in content that is inherently unsettling. The popularity of horror films in Indonesia underscores the relevance of these dimensions, as horror consistently dominates the domestic film market and attracts substantial audiences nationwide.

**a. Shared enjoyment during the viewing experience** highlights the communal aspect of watching horror films. In Indonesia, gatherings with friends or family to watch horror movies are common, reinforcing social bonds and enhancing the collective experience. Genre Theory suggests that the common conventions and themes present in horror films create a shared language among fans, allowing them to engage simultaneously with emotional responses such as collective screams or controlled laughter. This

collective participation enriches the overall pleasure derived from the film. The widespread popularity of horror films, evidenced by high attendance rates and repeated viewings of successful titles like *Pengabdian Setan* (2017) [Box Office Indonesia, 2018], demonstrates how shared enjoyment plays a crucial role in sustaining the genre's appeal.

- b. The cinematic elements of horror films** encompass the technical and artistic features that define the genre, including lighting, sound, narrative structure, and special effects. In Indonesian horror cinema, these elements are meticulously crafted to build a suspenseful and eerie atmosphere while showcasing grotesque aesthetics as described by the Beauty of the Grotesque Theory. For instance, the use of disturbing visual effects and the integration of traditional elements with modern technology create a captivating visual experience that simultaneously induces fear and admiration. Techniques such as dramatic camera angles and dim lighting guide the viewer's attention and deepen their emotional engagement, enhancing visual pleasure. The consistent success of films like *Impetigore* (2019) [Indonesian Film Industry Report, 2020] highlights how effective cinematic techniques contribute to both the popularity and the pleasurable experience of horror films in Indonesia.
- c. Self-identification and personal connections within horror fandom** emphasize how Indonesian horror fans develop their identities and form personal bonds through their engagement with the genre. Genre Theory

indicates that horror provides a framework where individuals can find common ground and establish collective identities within fan communities. In Indonesian horror films, the portrayal of characters and stories tied to local mythology, such as the Kuntilanak and Pocong, allows viewers to relate personally to the narratives. The interpretive research paradigm aids in understanding how fans see themselves reflected in these characters and themes, strengthening their attachment and enjoyment of the films. The enduring popularity of locally themed horror films reflects the deep personal bonds and sense of identity that fans derive from these culturally resonant stories [Smith & Rahardjo, 2021].

- d. **The interplay of fear and discomfort in creating pleasure** explores how the emotions of fear and unease inherent in horror films become sources of enjoyment. Genre Theory identifies fear as a central emotional response in horror, while the Beauty of the Grotesque Theory explains how grotesque elements that are both frightening and aesthetically pleasing create a balance between fear and fascination. Indonesian films like *Pengabdian Setan* and *Impetigore* utilize psychological tension and supernatural elements to generate a controlled fear experience. Spectatorship Theory and the concept of visual pleasure demonstrate that the manipulation of emotions through cinematic techniques allows viewers to relish the frightening experience without feeling truly threatened, transforming fear into excitement and enjoyment. The commercial success and repeated screenings of these films

indicate that audiences appreciate this emotional dynamic, finding pleasure in the safe exploration of their fears [CinemaScope Indonesia, 2020].

- e. **Grotesque and aesthetic appreciation** focuses on the unique visual style that characterizes Indonesian horror films. The Beauty of the Grotesque Theory highlights how the combination of bizarre and distorted elements creates an aesthetically compelling experience that is both mesmerizing and disturbing. Films such as *Rumah Dara* (2009) and *Srigala* (1981) feature extreme visuals and depictions of terrifying creatures that provoke strong visceral reactions from audiences. Genre Theory supports this by recognizing the use of grotesque elements as a hallmark of the horror genre, reinforcing the cultural significance of these films. Through Spectatorship Theory and visual pleasure, grotesque aesthetics engage viewers subconsciously, fostering a deep aesthetic attraction while maintaining underlying fear elements. This appreciation for the grotesque adds an additional layer to the viewing experience, allowing audiences to find beauty in discomfort. The enduring popularity of visually intense films like *Rumah Dara* underscores the audience's appreciation for grotesque aesthetics, contributing to the overall pleasure derived from horror films [Horror Studies Journal, 2019].

## 2.2 Indonesian Horror Movie Subgenres

Indonesian horror films are categorized into seven distinct subgenres,

each reflecting the country's rich cultural and mythological heritage. **Local Ghosts** explore traditional spirits like the Kuntilanak and Pocong, integrating familiar fears into stories seen in films such as *Kuntilanak* (2006) and *Pengabdi Setan* (2017). These narratives immerse audiences in local folklore, blending cultural beliefs with chilling tales that resonate deeply. **Supernatural Horror** ventures into the realms of occult and black magic, as demonstrated by films like *Santet* (2018) and *Sebelum Iblis Menjemput* (2018), creating a sense of mystery and awe around the unknown. **Psychological Horror** focuses on the emotional and mental strains of characters, presenting introspective terror through films like *Pintu Terlarang* (2009) and *Impetigore (Perempuan Tanah Jahanam)*, (2019), which encourage viewers to explore the darker aspects of the human psyche.

**Religious Horror** intertwines themes of faith and fear, seen in films such as *Mata Batin* (2017) and *Ruqyah: The Exorcism* (2017), which combine divine retribution and spiritual conflict, creating a potent blend of horror and reverence. **Horror Comedy** mixes humor with horror elements, offering a more entertaining approach through films like *Pocong 2* (2006) and *Hantu Jamu Gendong* (2009), which provide a unique twist on traditional horror. **Gore Horror** is characterized by graphic violence and shocking imagery, pushing the genre's boundaries with films like *Rumah Dara* (2009) and *Srigala* (1981), aiming to elicit a strong visceral response. Lastly, **Exploitation Horror** tackles taboo subjects with provocative content, as seen in *Misteri Rumah Tua* (1987)

and *Gairah Malam* (1993), exploring themes that challenge societal norms and offering a distinct perspective on fear and cultural narratives.

The dominance of horror films in Indonesia's domestic market is further evidenced by the consistent high box office performance of these subgenres. Successful releases such as *Pengabdil Setan* and *Impetigore* have not only garnered substantial financial returns but also sparked widespread discussions and fan engagement, highlighting the genre's integral role in Indonesian cinema. Reports from industry analysts and box office tracking organizations, such as [Indonesian Cinema Association, 2021] and [Box Office Indonesia, 2022], reveal that horror films regularly rank among the top-grossing genres, reflecting their enduring appeal and the robust support from Indonesian audiences. This widespread popularity underscores the relevance of the interconnected dimensions of shared enjoyment, cinematic excellence, personal bonds, emotional dynamics, and aesthetic appreciation in understanding why horror films continue to captivate and delight Indonesian audiences.

By integrating these dimensions and understanding the diverse subgenres of Indonesian horror, this research provides a thorough exploration of how Indonesian horror film audiences derive pleasure from their viewing experiences. This approach not only clarifies the paradox of finding joy in fear and discomfort but also highlights how cinematic elements, personal identification, and aesthetic appreciation work together to create a rich and satisfying cinematic experience for horror fans in Indonesia.