



SOCIETY AS THE POSSIBLE VILLAIN IN *MENJELANG MAGRIB*: SOCIAL THRILLER CRITICAL GENRE ANALYSIS

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis film Indonesia *Menjelang Magrib* yang dirilis pada tahun 2022 dengan menggunakan teori genre kritis. Film tersebut berpotensi sebagai social thriller, di mana antagonisnya bukanlah individu, melainkan masyarakat. Penelitian kualitatif ini mengadopsi pendekatan deskriptif dan akan mengumpulkan data melalui metode observasi dengan pembacaan heuristik dan hermeneutik dari dialog karakter terpilih yang relevan dengan topik analisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat dalam film memang berperan sebagai antagonis, karena melakukan diskriminasi terhadap seseorang yang memiliki masalah kesehatan mental dengan mengikatnya dan bertindak egois terhadap lingkungan. Film ini memberikan gambaran tentang masalah diskriminasi dan degradasi lingkungan dan menggambarkan masyarakat sebagai penyebab dari masalah-masalah tersebut. Penggunaan teori genre kritis memberikan kerangka untuk memahami elemen-elemen sosial yang terjadi dalam film dan membantu menganalisis pesan dan tujuan film. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini mendukung gagasan bahwa "*Menjelang Magrib*" dapat dianalisis sebagai social thriller, di mana masyarakat berperan sebagai antagonis.

Kata kunci: analisis genre; social thriller; antagonis; masyarakat

Abstract

The aim of the study is to analyze the Indonesian film Menjelang Magrib released in 2022 using critical genre theory. The movie is potentially a social thriller, where the antagonist is not an individual but rather society. This qualitative research adopts a descriptive approach and will gather data through observation methods with heuristic and hermeneutic readings of selected character dialogues relevant to the topic of analysis. The findings indicate that the society in the film indeed serves as the antagonist, as it discriminates against a person with mental health problems by shackling her and acting selfishly towards the environment. The movie sheds light on the issue of discrimination and environmental degradation and depicts society as the cause of these problems. The use of critical genre theory provides a framework for understanding the societal elements at play in the film and helps to analyze the film's message and purpose. Overall, the study supports the notion that Menjelang Magrib can be analyzed as a social thriller, where society serves as the antagonist.

Keywords: genre analysis; social thriller; antagonist; society



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INTRODUCTION

The social thriller genre is a unique form of storytelling that emerged with the release of Jordan Peele's film *Get Out* in 2017. This genre takes the essence of horror and suspense, but instead of portraying individual characters as the main antagonist, it depicts society as the primary source of evil and conflict. This departure from traditional genre conventions, where the protagonist-antagonist dichotomy is limited to the characters, aligns with the definition of characterization as described by Jones in Nurgiyantoro (2007), who defines it as the process of creating a vivid picture of the characters in a story.

The social thriller genre takes the audience on a journey where the underlying societal norms and structures are the true source of terror and fear. This genre challenges traditional genre conventions and invites viewers to think critically about the role that society plays in shaping our experiences and worldview.

An upcoming film, *Menjelang Magrib* by Helfi Kardit, provides an excellent opportunity to explore the social thriller genre further. The film follows the story of three psychology students who attempt to collect data for their thesis on a unique case of mental illness in a rural village. The case they choose is of Nina, who appears normal in the morning but becomes uncontrollable in the evenings and has to be shackled. The research team sees this treatment as inhumane and tries to uncover the truth behind Nina's illness, but they soon find themselves confronting strange and otherworldly events.

The issues raised in this film are multi-layered and intriguing, making it an ideal subject for a genre critical analysis. Such an analysis can explore the filmmakers' intention to raise and convey important social issues, such as mental health and environmental degradation, using ecocritical theory.

Previous research has also utilized genre critical analysis to examine the construction of characterization in film. For example, Rapo (2021) conducted a study entitled "Girls on Film: A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Screenplay of Booksmart," which analyzed the depiction of women in coming-of-age films using Fairclough's three-dimensional method. The study found that the choice of words used by the female characters influenced the power dynamic between them and elicited polarizing reactions from the audience.



The social thriller genre is an innovative form of storytelling that challenges traditional genre conventions and invites audiences to consider the role of society in shaping our experiences. A genre critical analysis of *Menjelang Magrib* presents an opportunity to explore the construction of characterization and the filmmakers' intentions to raise important social issues through the genre of social thriller.

Critical Genre Analysis is a research approach that seeks to understand how different cultural and social factors influence the development and reception of different genres. It emphasizes the importance of contextualizing genre within its historical, cultural, and economic contexts (Hills, 2002).

Social Thriller is a genre that reflects societal issues and anxieties through the lens of suspense and tension. It often deals with themes such as power dynamics, political corruption, class conflict, and the abuse of authority. Examples of social thrillers include "The Silence of the Lambs," "The Manchurian Candidate," and "Three Days of the Condor." Critical genre analysis provides a framework for examining the interplay between cultural and social factors and the development of genre. The social thriller genre reflects societal anxieties and issues through suspense and tension, often exploring themes related to power dynamics and corruption (Neale, 1980).

Critical genre analysis is a multi-disciplinary approach that uses theories and methods from fields such as film studies, cultural studies, and sociology to examine the relationship between genre and its cultural, historical, and social contexts (Schrader, 1972). Genre as a social construct suggests that genre is not a fixed entity, but rather a product of cultural, historical, and economic forces. Genre is seen as a dynamic and evolving category that reflects social values and cultural norms. Ideology and genre refer to the set of beliefs, values, and norms that shape social and cultural practices. In the context of genre analysis, ideology is often seen as playing a central role in shaping the conventions, themes, and meanings of different genres. Genre and power suggest that genre is not just a product of cultural and social forces, but also a means of asserting power and control. Genre can be used to reinforce existing power structures, shape public discourse, and shape audience expectations and behavior. Intertextuality and genre suggest that genres are shaped by the



relationships and connections between different texts within a genre. Intertextuality refers to the ways in which one text references, quotes, or draws on elements from another text.

In the context of the social thriller genre, critical genre analysis can be used to examine how social and political issues are reflected in the conventions, themes, and narrative structures of this genre. For example, the genre's focus on power dynamics, political corruption, and class conflict can be seen as a reflection of broader societal anxieties and concerns (Jancovich, 1992; Altman, 1999).

The novelty of this research lies in its unique focus on analyzing *Menjelang Magrib* as a social thriller using critical genre theory. While there has been previous research on the use of genre theory in film analysis, there has been limited research specifically on social thrillers as a genre and the use of critical genre theory in analyzing them. The study's focus on the Indonesian film *Menjelang Magrib* is also novel. Indonesian cinema is a relatively underexplored area of film studies, and this research contributes to filling this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of a recent Indonesian film.

The study's application of qualitative research methods, particularly the use of heuristic and hermeneutic readings, is also a novel approach. These methods provide a comprehensive understanding of the film's message and purpose, going beyond the surface-level analysis of the narrative and structure.

In short, this research offers a unique contribution to the field of film studies by exploring a lesser-known genre and applying critical genre theory to the analysis of a recent Indonesian film. The study's innovative approach to qualitative research methods also adds value to the field by providing a framework for future studies in film analysis.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method for this study will adopt a qualitative approach as it aims to analyze and interpret the societal elements presented in *Menjelang Magrib*. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because it is concerned with understanding the meaning and interpretation of social phenomena, which is the primary focus of this



research. Moreover, qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of the subject matter, which is crucial for this study's purpose.

The descriptive approach will be used to describe the elements of the film relevant to the study's topic. The approach will involve a detailed analysis of the selected character dialogues to gather data on how the societal elements are presented and the purpose of the film in shedding light on the issues of discrimination and environmental degradation. The descriptive approach will also provide a detailed understanding of the film's structure and narrative elements, which is necessary for the application of the critical genre theory.

The observation method will be used to gather data for the study. The observation method involves watching the movie and taking notes on the relevant character dialogues and societal elements. This approach is suitable because it allows for the collection of data on the subject matter as it is presented in the movie. Moreover, this method will provide an opportunity for the researcher to immerse themselves in the film and gain a deeper understanding of the societal elements and their presentation.

Heuristic and hermeneutic readings will be used to analyze the data collected from the selected character dialogues. These methods are suitable for this study as they involve the exploration of the various meanings and interpretations of the societal elements presented in the movie. The heuristic approach will involve analyzing the data to uncover any hidden meanings, while the hermeneutic approach will involve interpreting the data to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the film's message and purpose.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Society's prejudices towards people with mental health problems

Mental health is a crucial aspect of overall health and well-being, and individuals with psychological problems deserve access to appropriate and effective hospital treatment. Unfortunately, society's discrimination against individuals with psychological problems can prevent them from receiving the care they need. Discrimination against individuals with psychological problems can take many forms. This can include stigmatization, bias, and exclusion from healthcare and other essential services. This can result in individuals with psychological problems being denied access to appropriate hospital treatment, leading to a decline in their health and quality of life (Wahyuhadi et al., 2022).



One major barrier to access to appropriate hospital treatment for individuals with psychological problems is the stigma and discrimination they face in the healthcare system. Healthcare providers may hold negative beliefs and attitudes towards individuals with psychological problems, leading to bias and discrimination in the provision of care. This can result in substandard care and a lower likelihood of receiving evidence-based treatments. Another barrier to access to appropriate hospital treatment is the lack of resources available to individuals with psychological problems. This can include a shortage of mental health professionals, inadequate insurance coverage, and a lack of access to specialized mental health facilities. These barriers can make it difficult for individuals with psychological problems to receive the care they need, even when they are motivated to seek help (Warnick et al., 2022).

Society's discrimination against individuals with psychological problems can also result in a lack of support for their families and caregivers. This can lead to increased stress and burden for those providing care, further exacerbating the individual's psychological problems. It is essential that we work to address the barriers to access to appropriate hospital treatment for individuals with psychological problems. This can include efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination in the healthcare system, increasing resources for mental health treatment, and providing support for families and caregivers.

Nina, a character in the movie *Menjelang Magrib*, is depicted as having a psychological disorder. Unfortunately, Nina's condition is not treated appropriately, and she is shackled in a hut outside of her house instead of receiving hospital care. This is a common experience for individuals with psychological problems and highlights the challenges they face in accessing appropriate care.

One reason for Nina's lack of access to hospital care is the stigma and discrimination she faces due to her condition. Society often holds negative beliefs and attitudes towards individuals with psychological problems, which can result in bias and discrimination in the provision of care. This can prevent individuals like Nina from seeking help and accessing appropriate treatment.



Another reason for Nina's lack of access to hospital care is the lack of resources available for mental health treatment. In many countries, there is a shortage of mental health professionals, inadequate insurance coverage for mental health treatment, and a lack of access to specialized mental health facilities. These barriers can make it difficult for individuals with psychological problems to receive the care they need, even when they are motivated to seek help.

Nina's situation is also influenced by her family's lack of understanding and support for her condition. Her family may not believe that she has a serious condition and may not understand the importance of appropriate treatment. This can result in them choosing to shackle her into a hut instead of seeking help from mental health professionals.

Nina's situation is a clear example of the prevalence of mystic beliefs over medical help and science in certain cultures. In many parts of the world, mental illness is viewed as a result of supernatural forces, rather than a medical condition that requires proper treatment. This can lead to stigmatization of those with mental health issues and hinder their access to appropriate care (Jorm et al., 2017).

Families who hold such beliefs may not understand the seriousness of mental illness and may not be willing to seek help from medical professionals. Instead, they may choose to resort to traditional or religious practices, such as shamanism or exorcism, which may further exacerbate the condition (WHO, 2019). In extreme cases, families may even resort to physically restraining individuals with mental illness, as seen in Nina's case.

It is important to note that seeking help from mental health professionals and adhering to evidence-based treatment can significantly improve the prognosis of mental illnesses. It is crucial to raise awareness and provide education to communities that hold mystic beliefs and stigmatize mental illness to improve access to proper care and treatment (Thornicroft et al., 2017).

The use of shackles to restrain Nina is a form of human rights abuse and is not an appropriate form of treatment for someone with a psychological disorder. This practice is unacceptable and highlights the need for greater awareness and understanding of appropriate treatments for individuals with psychological problems.



Superstitious beliefs can often play a significant role in affecting a person's health and well-being, especially in terms of seeking medical treatment for mental health disorders. In many cultures, there is still a pervasive stigma surrounding mental health and mental illness, which can lead individuals and communities to rely on superstition and traditional remedies instead of seeking professional medical care.

In the case of Nina, not receiving medical treatment for her mental health disorder could be due to several factors related to superstition. For instance, her family or community may believe that mental illness is caused by supernatural forces such as evil spirits or curses. They may also believe that mental health problems can be cured through traditional healing practices such as chanting, rituals, or the use of herbal remedies.

There also may be a lack of understanding about the nature of mental health disorders and the importance of seeking professional medical treatment. This lack of knowledge can lead to mistrust of medical professionals and their treatments, and instead, individuals may turn to superstitious beliefs to cope with their mental health problems.

Social, and cultural norms can play a role in shaping beliefs and attitudes towards mental health treatment as well. In some communities, mental illness may be seen as a source of shame or stigma, which can discourage individuals from seeking medical treatment and instead resort to superstition to hide their condition.

Moreover, financial barriers can also prevent individuals from seeking medical treatment for mental health disorders. Mental health treatment can often be expensive, and in many communities, especially in low and middle-income countries, access to health services is limited. This lack of access to affordable medical care can lead individuals to rely on superstition and traditional remedies instead of seeking professional treatment.

Society's selfish act towards other living beings on earth

In the movie, the quote "Earth does not only belong to Human" which translates to *Bumi bukan hanya milik manusia* from the movie *Menjelang Magrib* highlights the idea that the earth does not belong solely to humans but is also home to countless other species and ecosystems. This message is meant to encourage people to consider the impact of their



actions on the environment and to acknowledge the value of preserving the earth for future generations and other living beings.

The quote serves as a reminder that humans are not the only species on the earth and that their actions have consequences for the environment and other living beings. It highlights the importance of preserving the earth for all its inhabitants, not just for human benefit. The quote is a call to action for people to change their behavior and to act more responsibly towards the earth. It encourages people to think beyond their own interests and to consider the impact of their actions on the environment and other species. This message is particularly relevant in light of the current environmental crisis, which is being caused by human activities such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change.

Human beings have often treated the earth as if they were the only living beings on it, disregarding the impact of their actions on the environment and other species. This selfish behavior is driven by a number of factors, including a lack of understanding of the interconnectedness of all living things, a belief in human superiority, and an emphasis on short-term economic gain.

The idea that humans are the dominant species on earth and that the earth exists solely to serve human interests is closely related to a capitalist and patriarchal belief system (Eckersley, 2009; Grosfoguel, 2013; Shiva, 2019). Capitalism promotes the exploitation of natural resources for economic gain, often without regard for the impact on the environment or other living beings. Similarly, patriarchal societies have historically placed human males at the top of the social hierarchy and have viewed women and other species as inferior and subservient.

This attitude towards the earth and other species is not only harmful to the environment but also perpetuates a cycle of domination and exploitation. By prioritizing economic gain and human interests over the well-being of the planet and other species, we are contributing to a system of oppression that benefits a privileged few at the expense of the majority.

To address this issue, it is necessary to challenge the underlying beliefs and values that contribute to this exploitative behavior. We must recognize the inherent value of all



living beings and acknowledge the interconnectedness of all species and ecosystems. This requires a shift towards a more holistic and sustainable worldview that prioritizes the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants over short-term economic gain.

One of the main drivers of this selfish behavior is a lack of understanding about the impact that humans have on the environment. Many people do not fully comprehend the extent to which their actions affect the earth and other living beings. For example, the use of plastic, which is non-biodegradable, has led to the accumulation of vast amounts of waste in the oceans, causing harm to marine life. Similarly, deforestation and habitat destruction are driven by a desire for land and resources, without consideration for the animals that depend on those habitats.

Another factor contributing to this behavior is a belief in human superiority. This belief is often rooted in cultural, religious, or philosophical traditions that position humans as the dominant species on the earth, with the right to use and manipulate the environment as they see fit. This sense of superiority can lead people to prioritize their own needs over those of the environment and other species.

A focus on short-term economic gain can also drive selfish behavior towards the earth. Many businesses and individuals prioritize their own financial interests over the long-term health of the environment, cutting corners and exploiting resources without regard for the consequences. This can be seen in practices such as overfishing, mountaintop removal coal mining, and drilling for oil in sensitive ecosystems.

CONCLUSION

Society's discrimination against individuals with psychological problems can prevent them from receiving the appropriate hospital treatment they need. This can result in a decline in their health and quality of life, as well as increased stress and burden for their families and caregivers. It is essential that we work to address these barriers and ensure that all individuals with psychological problems have access to the care they need to lead full and meaningful lives. Nina's experience in the movie *Menjelang Magrib* highlights the challenges that individuals with psychological problems face in accessing appropriate hospital care. The stigma and discrimination they face, lack of resources for mental health



treatment, and lack of understanding and support from their families can all contribute to a lack of access to appropriate care. It is essential that we work to address these barriers and ensure that all individuals with psychological problems have access to the care they need to lead full and meaningful lives. Superstitious beliefs can play a significant role in affecting an individual's decision to seek medical treatment for mental health disorders. It is crucial to raise awareness about the importance of seeking professional medical care and to dispel the stigma and misconceptions surrounding mental health. By doing so, individuals with mental health disorders like Nina can receive the necessary treatment and support they need to recover and lead a fulfilling life.

Human beings have a tendency to treat the earth as if they were the only living beings on it, driven by a lack of understanding, a belief in human superiority, and a focus on short-term economic gain. It is essential that people become more aware of the impact of their actions on the environment and other species, and work to reduce this selfish behavior in order to protect the earth and preserve its biodiversity. The quote "Earth is not only for humans" from the movie *Menjelang Magrib* is a powerful reminder of the interconnectedness of all living things and the importance of protecting the earth for future generations and other species. It encourages people to take action to reduce their impact on the environment and to preserve the earth for all its inhabitants.

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