

RELIGIOUSLY HORROR: RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN *PENGABDI SETAN* (2017) AND *PENGABDI SETAN: COMMUNION* (2022)

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Abstract: *This research explores the religious elements in the Indonesian horror movies 'Pengabdi Setan' (2017) and Pengabdi Setan: Communion (2022) using a descriptive qualitative approach, guided by Hank Davis and Javor's religious horror theory (2004). The research explores how both movies incorporate religious elements from Islam and local beliefs to create a compelling horror narrative. Davis and Javor's theory, which examines the relationship between religion and the supernatural in horror, provides a framework for analyzing the moral and existential tensions between faith and evil forces. By focusing on the role of religious elements in shaping character behavior and plot development, the research highlights how these movies reflect broader societal concerns and spiritual struggles. The analysis reveals how religious elements intensify the horror experience, while also offering a deeper commentary on the complexities of faith, morality, and the battle between good and evil in Indonesian culture. This research is useful for future research, such as analyzing other genres such as horror comedy, based on the Hank Davis and Javor theory. This is also helpful in cultural, literary, and film studies by showing how religious elements can be used in horror to create stories that are both locally relevant and universal.*

Keywords: *Religious, horror, movies, predation, contagion, violation of person*

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A. INTRODUCTION

Horror is a genre identical to mystic, fear, ghost, and even religious elements. In literary works, horror can be applied in the form of poetry, novels, and movies. Based on the literary works mentioned above, one of the most popular is the horror movie. Nevins (2020) argues that horror's popularity stems from its ability to address universal fears and reflect societal anxieties. Weismann (2023) Horror is an act of rebellion and a form of disruption that challenges beliefs and shatters the audience's sense of security by making fear its focal point. Horror movies can be described as scary movies, because they contain terrifying elements that can be seen from the storyline, audio and visuals. According to Allen (2012) Horror movies attract audiences by engaging them in a fearful illusion, while not real, and deeply affect their emotions. These movies reflect societal fears and anxieties, representing social, political, or psychological issues. However, by presenting terrifying scenarios in a controlled environment, horror movies allow viewers to deal with these fears safely. Audiences feel deep pleasure, even in the midst of fear, they are convinced that the fear is only temporary and will not last forever. Kaplan (2023) argues that fear arises from the recognition of human limitations, imperfect knowledge, and the inevitability of tragic choices. Moreover, they help audiences indirectly face and understand real-life anxieties, often through narratives centered on religious concepts like possession or encounters with demonic forces. Religions work because they align with cognitive processes, offering narratives to explain them. Davis and Javor (2004) note that mental and emotional responses to death occur with or without religion, but religions succeeded by intuitively addressing these responses.



Figure 1. *Tahlilan*

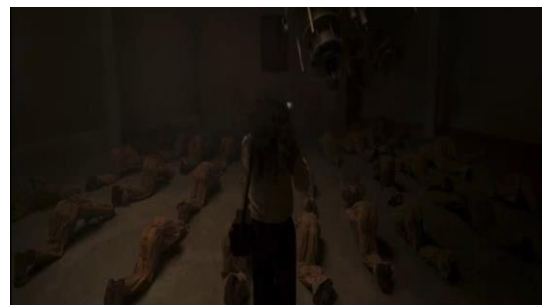


Figure 2. *Many pocong prostrate something*

The first figure is one of the scenes from *Pengabdi Setan 1* (2017) movie. It portrays how religious elements become a symbol used in horror movies. The picture above shows *tahlilan*. In Islam, *tahlilan* is performed to pray for the deceased. Mubarok (2021) implies that *tahlilan* is a religious practice intended to draw closer to God, whether performed individually or in a group setting. In this scene, people are shown performing *tahlilan* to pray for the character's mother who has just died. The second photo from *Pengabdi Setan 2: Communion* shows a picture of many *pocongs* prostrate something. In Islam *pocong* is a corpse wrapped in a shroud because it is going to the burial process. Khairunnisa and Wardhaningsih (2020) describe that the *pocong* is a ghost tied to Islamic funeral customs, representing a soul still confined in its burial shroud. In the photo it seems to violate Islamic law because *pocong* is a human who has died and is assumed not to be able to do activities related to the world. In Islam prostration is one of the movements of prayer with the aim of prostrating to God, but in the film scene shows a deviation, namely prostrating to worship false beliefs.

Prior studies have examined the complex connection between horror and religion, demonstrating that horror movies frequently incorporate religious themes and symbols to express profound existential anxieties. Saputra et al. (2024), investigates their study of religious elements present in the film "*The Unholy*," directed by Evan Spiliotopoulos. Adziz et al. (2015) investigate the impact of psychological factors like empathy, stress, depression, and anxiety on supernatural beliefs from the perspective of audience engagement. Arapkirli (2017), studies the resonance of horror to evoke the expected effects from the script to the films. Abdullah and Hasan (2019) explore the reasons behind the creation and existence of Malay horror films. Widodo (2022) explores how horror movies feature religious leaders as key characters who help resolve supernatural conflicts. These previous studies align with this study regarding the presence of religious elements in Indonesian horror movies namely, *Pengabdi Setan* (2017) and *Pengabdi Setan: Communion* (2022) movies directed by Joko Anwar.

The core of the previous studies is a compilation of multiple research studies by several investigators focusing on religious elements in horror movies and psychological factors affecting supernatural beliefs. While the prior study focuses primarily on the emotional and experiential aspects of faith, the gaps with

those previous studies are in the Indonesian horror movies and the religious elements in the movies. These gaps are articulated in the following question.

1. How religious elements are presented in *Pengabdi Setan* (2017) and *Pengabdi Setan: Communion* (2022) movies?

Religions indicate a diverse range of perspectives on the supernatural world, but the other perspective may place a greater underline on religious ceremonies and rituals as a means of connecting with *illahi* or supernatural. Boyer (2001) states that there are three orientations including religious emotions and beliefs, attitudes towards the supernatural, and religious ceremonies. These are connected influential to shape understanding of the supernatural world and reflected in aspects of religion. Belief in the supernatural often gives rise to imagination through the elements that appear in movies. leading to the creation of stories, characters, and properties that are rooted in supernatural or religion.

In horror movies, it is identical with mystical things, starting from a tense atmosphere, using objects or creatures related to mysticism, and also characters who show the emotions they play such as fear and so on. Horror movies effectively involve fundamental human fears and can craft stories that affect deeply with audiences because horror is not only a genre but also provides insights into the psychological mechanisms that drive our reactions to fear. Davis and Javor (2004) construe that cognitions and the main emotions related to three categories: predation, contagion and violations of the person category. Predation is a fear that appears of something that is invisible as though in *Pengabdi Setan* first movie is when the woman main character feels afraid when praying because feel something is disturbing the main character. This incident is similar to the second movie but what makes it different is the character who plays it. The next, contagion is the use of religious elements intended to deny mystical things such as curses, spells, illnesses as though in *Pengabdi Setan* first movie and second movie are the same when character *ustaz* against the satan by utter holy verses. The last, violation of the person category is an innocent person who became a victim who was given a talisman as though in *Pengabdi Setan* first and second are the same where both movies have the same victim, a boy who was made a sacrifice due to the impact of the contract with the satan.

In a movie, apart from focusing on the characters or figures who are showing their acting, there are many details that need to be paid attention to in a movie, one of which is the components that are displayed. According to Gong and Zhang (2021) movies can generally be broken down into three components: language, music, and sound effects, while horror movies can be categorized into other elements such as ghosts, killers, horror, and suspense. The case of horror movies, these elements are particularly important in building tension and creating an atmosphere of fear or suspense. The elements such as ghosts, Morton (2023) explores the concept of ghosts as manifestations of the deceased that are believed to communicate with the living through mediums and spiritual practices. The appearance of ghosts in movies is described as a scary figure because it is supported by scary visuals, this is influenced by makeup and clothes that are made scary. Ghosts are usually used as jumpscare that make the audience surprised and feel scared. The second element is killers, Edwards (2023) states that the killers in horror movies are described as antagonist characters who commit violent acts. These killers can take many forms, from human serial murderers to supernatural entities. The third element is horror, Tudor (1997) states that horror in movies is a genre designed to evoke fear and tension. The goal of horror is to bring up emotions of terror, dread, shock and sometimes disgusting. The last element is suspense, Minogue (2024) states that suspense in horror movies is to build tension and keep the audience on edge, creating a sense of frightening to happen resulting in the audience anxious. Beside the elements mentioned above, there is also another element of horror movies called religious elements. Stone (2001) states that many themes in horror movies often align with traditional religious concerns, specifically those in Western religions, such as sin and redemption, life after death, the battle between good and evil, or the existence of the supernatural.

Horror movies and religious elements are two related things, many horror films contain religious elements in their scripts, which are related to religion. According to Suroyya (2022) religious elements display religious symbols in horror film scenes, several religious symbols displayed first are modeling God with a human symbol as a savior to save protagonist characters such as *ustaz* in Islamic religion, priests in Christian religion, they are called religious figures. By featuring religious figures in the movie, it shows that there is a religious element, shown by

the presence of religious figures who usually help other characters who experience mystical things such as possession, by chanting verses from the holy books of the religion they adhere to. The second religious symbol is carrying out ritual practices regarding sacred things. Lamb (2005) implies that ritual can be understood as a series of planned and routine actions, these actions are usually carried out by a person or community. In a religious context, this is a moment where people can feel close to divine power, trying to influence or interact with the supernatural world. In addition, rituals also help individuals gain power or protection from respected spirits. According to Zulkifli and Fitria (2023) there are several components in horror movies, there are objects related to mystical things that can be used for ritual processes, an example related to religion is a grave, a place used to bury deceased people. There are several other symbols that appear, the emergence of supernatural beings, for example the pocong, which in Islam is the body of a deceased person then wrapped in a shroud.

As discussed above about the theory of Davis and Javor (2004) about cognitions and the main emotions related to three categories; predation, contagion and violations of the person. According to Meloy et al. (2018) predation refers to interaction where one organism hunting other organisms, there are three types of predation. First is social predation, where predators may manipulate social structures to capture pre, second is sexual predation namely coercive sexual behavior used to control the victim, and third is violent predation namely aggressive behavior that causes injury or even death. Dreisbach (2022) describes contagion as the spread of behavior, emotions, or diseases. This can take the form of emotional contagion, where emotions such as fear or anxiety spread through individuals in a group. Dreisbach explains that there are two impacts of contagion, the first is social dynamics contagion, namely emotional contagion which can directly affect a group, and the second is the psychological effect, namely causing someone to feel afraid and have trauma. Burgoon (2015) states that violation of person is an interpersonal communication that presents a counterintuitive perspective, suggesting that instances where expectations are violated can, in certain contexts, be more advantageous than situations where those expectations are merely confirmed.

B. DISCUSSION

Research Method

This research design is descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative is displaying and describing data using techniques of watching, collecting, and finding data solutions. Aspers and Corte (2019) state that qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand key phenomena. In qualitative research, the development of conceptualization, categorization, and description is carried out based on events obtained during the research activities. The researcher gathered data from two movies released in different years: *Pengabdi Setan* (2017) and *Pengabdi Setan 2: Communion* (2022). There are two types of data, visual and textual data, and each of the data drew conclusions from the very basic analysis. First and primary data is visualization of *Pengabdi Setan* (2017) and *Pengabdi Setan 2: Communion* (2022), illustrating the religious elements in horror movies from the scenes are portrayal. Second is textual data that illustrates the religious elements in horror movies from the dialogue that was used.

To analyze this data, the researcher employed analysis techniques by Spradley (2016) that comprise of domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme analyses. In domain phase, the theory of religious elements in horror movies by Davis and Javor (2004) as a foundational framework or guideline for revealing the types of religious elements appearing on the selected movies namely predation, contagion, and violation of person. In taxonomy phase the theory of icons by Nachbar and Lause (1992) was employed to reveal whether the religious elements in the movies were categorized into pure personal icons is icons that represent personal or individual aspects with very personal characteristics and are not bound by general social norms, functional personal icons is icons that are related to personal functions but still reflect personal or subjective aspects, pure local icons is icons that have meaning or representation that applies in a local context but are not directly related to function, functional local icons are icons that function in a local context and also have a clear functional meaning, pure cultural icons is icons that represent broader cultural meanings and are common in a culture or large group, and functional cultural icons are icons that not only have cultural meaning but also function within the context of that culture.

Table 1. Componential Table

Objects	Predation						Contagion						Violation					
	P PI	F PI	P LI	F LI	P CI	F CI	P PI	F PI	P LI	F LI	P CI	F CI	P PI	F PI	P LI	F LI	P CI	F CI
PS 1		✓																
PS 2																		

Explanation:

PS 1: Pengabdi Setan 1

PLI: Pure Local Icons

PS 2: Pengabdi Setan 2

FLI: Functional Local Icons

PPI: Pure Personal Icons

PCI: Pure Cultural Icons

FPI: Functional Personal Icons

FCI: Functional Cultural Icons

Pengabdi Setan (2017) and *Pengabdi Setan 2: Communion (2022)* combined horror with religious elements to reflect the cultural values of Indonesia, which is majority Muslim, through Islamic rituals such as reading holy verses of prayer, the figure of the *ustaz*. Unnatural deaths by several characters as a symbol of punishment for their sins that have been committed in the past. In Indonesia itself is very thick with culture and rituals, especially Javanese culture. In both movies, there is Javanese culture through the combination of religious elements and traditional beliefs in Javanese society, which is reflected in the use of rituals, for example in *tahlilan* which is used to pray for the deceased, also local symbols, for example the prayer beads used for spiritual and religious practices. Relationship with ancestors, violating obligations to ancestors is believed to have a bad impact or be cursed. Thus, these two movies combine Islamic and traditional beliefs in Javanese culture.

Finding And Discussion

In the findings section, the proposed religious elements are presented, as a result of discussions involving *Pengabdi Setan* and *Pengabdi Setan 2: Communion*. The analysis reveals how each film depicts the interaction between religious and horror themes, with a particular focus on the concepts of predation, contagion, and violation

of person. The religious elements serve to heighten the psychological tension and fear in the movies.

To analyze these movies, namely *Pengabdi Setan* and *Pengabdi Setan: Communion*, involves three main concepts in the types of religious elements that appear in the selected movies carried by Hank Davis and Javor (2004), namely predation, contagion, and violation of person. By blending these types with cultural and religious nuances, the movies not only provide an intimate horror experience but also provide a medium to explore deeper questions about faith, morality, and the society's culture.

Predation

According to Hank Davis and Javor (2004), predation is a person's fear of something that is not visible. Predation is rooted in a deep-seated fear of unseen threats, reflecting the human instinct to be aware of dangers that cannot be easily detected or understood. The concept connected into the psychological terror of being vulnerable to forces beyond immediate perception, whether supernatural entities, hidden predators, or intangible influences. Fear of the unseen often heightens feelings of paranoia, helplessness, and anxiety, as the lack of visibility prevents individuals from taking defensive action or fully understanding the nature of the threat. In the context of horror, the concept is often used to generate tension and dread, as the audience is forced to imagine the threat lurking beyond their awareness.

In addition, according to Meloy et al. (2018) predation describes a dynamic interaction in which one organism hunts and exploits another. The concept encompasses three distinct forms. The first is social predation, in which a predator strategically manipulates social relationships to trap and dominate its prey. This type of predation often involves social bonds for personal gain. The second is sexual predation, which is characterized by sexual behavior used to control a victim, often through manipulation, intimidation, or violence. Finally, violent predation involves direct, aggressive actions that inflict physical harm, injury, or even death on a target. Taken together, these forms of predation reflect the various ways in which power and control are exercised over others, whether through psychological manipulation, sexual coercion, or outright physical violence.



Figure 3. *Rini take a wudhu water*



Figure 4. *The appearance of the mother figure*

In this research, it was found in *Pengabdi Setan* in the scene where the character Rini was doing activities before praying, namely *wudhu*, then saw the figure of her mother who had died suddenly appear beside her, this scene showed the fusion elements of religion and horror. The element of predation in this movie appears in the scene where the figure of mother attacks Rini psychologically with a presence that threatens fear, this predator does not involve physical violence, but is manifested through an overwhelming sense of fear and a disturbing and threatening presence that disturbs Rini's mental condition. The religious element is when Rini is performing *wudhu*, *wudhu* in Islam is usually done in an intimate and calm atmosphere, but because of the appearance of her mother's figure, the atmosphere changes to become frightening.

Related to the icon theory as described by Nachbar and Lause, the figures in this scene can be categorized as functional personal icons. Functional personal icons relate to personal functions in the form of symbols used by a person in everyday life, as seen in figure number 3 when Rini is performing *wudhu*, *wudhu* has a symbolic meaning in the context of religious practices carried out by an individual to purify themselves. In Islam, *wudhu* is a ritual act of purification used as a preparatory step for pray. *Wudhu* as a functional personal icon not only represents the ritual aspect, but also reflects the personal relationship between the individual, the symbol, and the religious values they adhere to. The symbol in *wudhu* is water which functions to cleanse and purify oneself.



Figure 5. *Tari takes a wudhu water with wall in human world*



Figure 6. *Tari takes a wudhu water with wall in a seemingly different world*

In *Pengabdi Setan: Communion*, predation is found in the scene of Tari's character while *wudhu*, fear arises because she feels there is something around her. As seen in the data figures above, there is a disturbance that appears which can be seen in the difference between the walls in figure 5 and figure 6. In figure 5, the wall still looks normal in general, while in the figure 6, character Tari feels afraid of something around her and the appearance of the wall begins to change, not the same as the wall at the beginning, as if Tari was in another place or could be said to be in another world. The changes of the wall symbolize the entry of a force that may be supernatural, making Tari feel as if she has been transported to another realm or dimension and Tari is psychologically disturbed which makes her afraid and confused.

Related to the icon theory as described by Nachbar and Lause, the figures in this scene can be categorized as functional personal icons. Functional personal icons relate to personal functions in the form of symbols used by a person in everyday life, as seen in figure number 5 when Tari is performing *wudhu*, *wudhu* has a symbolic meaning in the context of religious practices carried out by an individual to purify themselves. In Islam, *wudhu* is a ritual act of purification used as a preparatory step for pray. *Wudhu* as a functional personal icon not only represents the ritual aspect, but also reflects the personal relationship between the individual, the symbol, and the religious values they adhere to. The symbol in *wudhu* is water which functions to cleanse and purify oneself.



Figure 7. Toni checks up the
Deceased



Figure 8. The deceased open
their eyes

The other example of predation was also found in *Pengabdi Setan: Communion*, as the figure 7 presented above shows the scene when Toni checked the body in one of the victim units, then in the figure 8 the body suddenly opened its eyes so that it looked scary. This is an example of predation, where a supernatural force manifests in the form of a corpse that is initially still and has its eyes closed, suddenly the corpse opens its eyes again as if it were alive again and attacks Toni psychologically by causing deep fear, Toni feels scared and run away from the place. Religious elements can be seen from the corpse that is shrouded in a *pocong*. The shape of a *pocong* is usually used to wrap corpses in Islam. In this context, *pocong* has a different and more sinister role. In the picture above, the corpse that has been shrouded and should be the last act of respect for the deceased but instead becomes a symbol of the supernatural and disturbing, the corpse that suddenly opens its eyes and makes Toni afraid shows that the corpse is not in a peaceful state and instead becomes a container for supernatural powers.

In relation to the theory of icons, the figure in this scene is included in functional cultural icons. Functional Cultural Icons are symbols that not only carry cultural significance but also serve a practical function in the daily lives of members of that culture. These icons are often used in more functional contexts, such as within social, political, or economic systems related to a particular culture. For example, symbols in the education or administrative systems used to signify something within a specific culture. In these movies, the icons of the shroud on the *pocong* are highlighted. The formation of a *pocong* is a cultural practice among Muslims, where

the body is wrapped in a shroud before being buried. Thus, the shroud symbol represents the values of Islamic culture.

Contagion

According to Hank Davis and Javor (2004), contagion is the use of religious elements intended to deny mystical things such as curses, spells, illnesses. Contagion refers to the use of religious elements to ward off or deny mystical phenomena, including curses, spells, and diseases. The concept highlights how religious practices, beliefs, or rituals are often used as protective measures against perceived supernatural threats. In many cultural contexts, these mystical forces are seen as spreading as a form of contamination, affecting individuals, families, or communities. The invocation of religious elements such as prayers, sacred objects, or rituals as a means of purification serves as protection against such unseen dangers. Contagion, therefore, not only represents the fear of spiritual or physical harm, but also underscores the role of religion in addressing and alleviating these fears. In horror narratives, the concept is often used to explore the tension between belief in the supernatural and attempts to contain its effects, adding depth to the depiction of spiritual and psychological conflict.

In addition, according to Dreisbach (2022) describes contagion as a process by which behavior, emotions, or even diseases spread from one individual to another, often permeating an entire group. This phenomenon can manifest in a variety of forms, including emotional contagion, in which emotions such as fear, anxiety, or panic are transmitted among group members, creating a shared emotional state effect. Dreisbach identifies two main effects of contagion. The first is social dynamic contagion, which refers to the influence of emotional contagion on group behavior and interactions. This type of contagion can unite or disorganized a group, depending on the nature of the emotion being transmitted. For example, fear can lead to panic. The second is psychological effects, such as fear, increased anxiety, or trauma. These psychological consequences can persist long after the initial exposure, greatly affecting the mental state and behavior of individuals.



Figure 9. *Rini disturbed by a ghost*

In this research, it was found in *Pengabdi Setan* in the scene where the character Rini is performing a prayer to deny the evil power that comes from her mother's actions in the past. In the figure, a ghost appears in the form of a mother. Associated with the aspect of contagion, the mother is the embodiment of the curse that comes to disturb Rini's family.

In relation to the theory of icons the figure in this scene is included in functional personal icons. According to Nachbar & Lause (1992), functional personal icons are symbols that serve the interests of individuals within the context of daily interactions. While still related to personal experiences, these icons have practical functions used in more individual activities or systems. An example of such an icon, which can be seen in both movies, is the *mukena* worn by the characters for the purpose of performing prayer. The *mukena* can be considered an icon used by the wearer or character to perform a specific action, in this case, the action is prayer (*salat*). As shown in the data in the figure, it displays the character Rini wearing a *mukena*. In Islam, the *mukena* is a symbol worn by women to perform prayer.



Figure 10. *Ustaz praying*

Another data was found in *Pengabdi Setan* in the scene where the character *ustaz* is praying. *Ustaz* was invited by Rini's family to visit her house after the incident of Rini's grandmother's death. Rini said that she and her family were disturbed by the spirit of her deceased grandmother so Rina asked *Ustaz* to see her grandmother's room and pray for her. It is included in the contagion concept because *ustaz* prays to ward off evil forces. The religious element is seen in the figure *ustaz*, *ustaz* is a person who has extensive religious knowledge and plays an important role in representing the religious and cultural values of society. According to the *Large Dictionary Indonesian (KBBI)* *ustaz* is defined as a religious teacher. In the Javanese context, *ustaz* is usually a community leader who leads prayers. The symbolic role of *ustaz* as a cultural icon connects him to religious and cultural traditions. The role of *ustaz* is closely related to sacred Islamic rituals and practices, such as leading prayers and overseeing religious ceremonies.

In relation to the theory of icons by Nachbar and Lause (1992), the figure in this scene is included in a pure cultural icon. Pure cultural icons are symbols that are understood and appreciated in a particular culture. These icons often have very strong meanings in that culture and reflect broader cultural values, beliefs, or identities. For example, in this film, a turban icon is found, according to *Large Dictionary Indonesian (KBBI)*, a turban is a wide headband (worn by Arabs, pilgrims, and so on), a turban is used by a cleric as a sign that he is an Islamic religious leader. The turban is called a pure cultural icon because in essence it has no function other than as an accessory, in Islam the turban is commonly worn and is widely known by the public that the turban is one of the identities or icons of Islam.



Figure 11. *Tari disturbed by pocongs*

In *Pengabdi Setan: Communion*, contagion is found in the scene of Tari's character while praying. This contagion aspect is similar to *Pengabdi Setan*.

According to Hank Davis and Javor, contagion refers to the spread of fear, anxiety, or even terror-induced behavior among characters within a narrative. This concept illustrates how tension or threat in a horror movie can propagate from one individual to another, intensifying the sense of fear among the characters. Supernatural phenomena such as plagues, curses, or supernatural beings often begin to affect more people, thus amplifying the perceived threat. In figure 11 where the character Tari is performing a prayer to deny the evil power that comes from her actions in the past. haunted by the sins he committed in the past, he prayed to reduce the disturbances he experienced but when he prayed he was still disturbed. Furthermore, contagion also involves a psychological aspect, where fear or paranoia spreads within a community, influencing individuals who were initially unaffected by the threat. Horror movies often utilize this concept to demonstrate how terror can rapidly spread, worsening the situation and escalating the intensity of conflict within the story. An example of this aspect of contagion is found in the movie, where character Tari is praying with the aim of getting rid of the fear caused by ghosts.

In relation to the theory of icons, the figure in this scene is included in functional personal icons. According to Nachbar & Lause, functional personal icons are symbols that serve the interests of individuals within the context of daily interactions. While still related to personal experiences, these icons have practical functions used in more individual activities or systems. An example of such an icon could be a symbol on a personal tool or device used by an individual for a specific purpose, such as a *mukena* or an icon that enables the user to perform religious rituals, prayer or *salat* for women. As shown in the figure, it displays the character Tari wearing a *mukena* while she is doing *salat*. In Islam, the *mukena* is a symbol worn by women to perform prayer or *salat*.

Violation of Person

According to Hank Davis and Javor (2004), the concept of violation of person refers to the unjust harm done to an innocent individual who is the victim of an external force. This violation is not only physical, but also psychological and spiritual. Violation can take many forms, including physical assault, psychological manipulation, or spiritual damage, where the victim is overwhelmed by forces beyond their control. In many horror narratives, this concept highlights the

vulnerability of individuals who are unprepared to deal with the trauma they experience, emphasizing their innocence and helplessness in the face of evil or evil entities. Therefore, the violation of the person creates empathy for the victim and a sense of injustice in the story, as it underscores the cruelty of victimizing the innocent.

On the other hand, according to Burgoon (2016) presents a contrasting perspective on the concept of violation of person, particularly in the realm of interpersonal communication. Violations of audience expectations are generally perceived as negative or disruptive, in certain contexts, these violations can prove more beneficial than situations in which expectations are simply met. This perspective suggests that when norms are violated, the resulting discomfort or tension can lead to change. In some cases, the violation itself challenges individuals to rethink their assumptions and adjust their behavior, leading to deeper understanding. This notion highlights that not all violations are inherently harmful, such as opening the door to deeper communication or resolution, depending on the context and the individuals involved.



Figure 12. *Ustaz disturbed by a ghost*

In this research, it was found in *Pengabdi Setan* in the scene where the character *ustaz* saw a shroud that resembled his son named Hendra. *Ustaz's* family, who are the helpers of Rini's family, are trapped in evil forces. Starting from Hendra, *ustaz's* son who died tragically in an accident while trying to help Rini's family, an act of goodwill that eventually led to his death, then the next victim was *ustaz* who died from being attacked by a living corpse that looked like Hendra. This incident resulted in *Ustaz* being forced to face the consequences of his family's involvement with the cursed Rini family. In violation of person context, an innocent person who becomes

a victim of evil forces, where the victim was from the *ustaz's* family who initially wanted to help Rini's family but instead became a victim. The religious element that appears is *ustaz*, as a figure in the Islamic religion who understands and teaches religious teachings.

In relation to the theory of icons by Nachbar and Lause, the figure in this scene is included in functional cultural icons. According to this theory, a functional cultural icon is a symbol that has meaning in a particular cultural or societal context and has a practical function that can be accepted by many people. The icon figure here is manifested in the form of an *ustaz*. *Ustaz* is someone who has high religious knowledge, who plays an important role in representing the religious and cultural values of the community. In *Large Dictionary Indonesian (KBBI)*, *ustaz* is a religion teacher. In Java, *ustaz* is usually a community figure who leads prayers. The symbolic role of *Ustaz* as a cultural icon is to connect him with religious and cultural practices. His character is associated with Islamic sacred rituals and practices, such as prayer and the management of religious rituals.



Figure 13. *Ian gives something for Rini to Eat*



Figure 14. *Ian leads a ritual*

In *Pengabdi Setan: Communion*, violation of person is found in the scene of Rini's character where the evil figure Ian, is performing a ritual to kill his entire family. In violation of person context, an innocent person who becomes a victim of evil forces. In this scene, Rini is forced to eat something by Ian that makes Rini hallucinate. In the violation of person aspect, Rini is a victim of the ritual. Ian forces Rini to consume something that causes her to hallucinate. The leaves that Ian gave her that Rini must swallow as a means to manipulate her mind, making Rini feel confused between reality and illusion causing Rini to fall deeper into an altered state

of consciousness, leaving her vulnerable and helpless. Rini who became a victim of ritual, ritual not only functions as part of the supernatural, but as a symbol of violation of religious teachings, rituals use practices that violate religion, namely using spells to perform the ritual which depicts them worshipping something other than God.

In relation to the theory of icons, the figure in this scene is included in functional local icons. Functional local icon refers to a symbol or sign that carries practical meaning and relevance within a specific social or group context. In this sense, these icons not only serve as recognizable markers but also as tools that facilitate communication and interaction within the life of a group or community. The existence of these icons is highly dependent on the specific needs and conditions of the group. For example, a functional local icon can take various forms, such as the leaf icons found in this movie, which induces hallucinations and is used during a ritual. This icon plays a crucial role in building social connections within the community, as it creates a shared understanding of what is considered important and how to interact within that social space. Because this scene shows a ritual activity, in which the ritual uses leaves that make hallucinations as one of its tools. The ritual is an activity that is only carried out by Ian's followers, and only they will understand it.

C. CONCLUSION

Religious element is element related to religious beliefs, practices, or symbols in a work, whether in film, literature, or other media. Religious elements are used to create emotional tension while deepening the meaning of the story, such as through rituals, symbols, and culture combined with supernatural themes. This research found that elements of predation, contagion, and violation of person are consistently present in the movies *Pengabdi Setan* (2017) and *Pengabdi Setan: Communion* (2022). These three concepts, as explained by Hank Davis and Javor, are manifested through religious elements, such as the use of supernatural creatures, the spread of family curses, and the violation of physical and spiritual boundaries of the characters. In addition, the theory of icons are found in this research, included functional personal icon, functional cultural icon, and functional local icon. This research shows

how these elements create a complex sense of fear through a combination of religious horror and local culture.

These findings have theoretical benefits and can be concluded from the theory used in this research, namely the Hank Davis and Javor theory useful for future research, which conducts research on other genres, for example the horror comedy genre. Significant benefits in cultural, literary, and film studies, especially in understanding how religious elements can be integrated into the horror genre to create a narrative that is both locally relevant and universal. In addition, this study can be a reference for the development of cross-disciplinary studies on the relationship between religion, culture, and popular media, as well as providing insight for filmmakers in exploring the potential of religious elements to build an authentic and meaningful horror atmosphere.

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