

Three Psychic Areas of Jacques Lacan in Kimo Stamboel's *Ivanna* (2022)

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Abstract

Jacques Lacan divides the human psychic area or subject into three parts, namely the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. In Ivanna by Kimo Stamboel, the character Ivanna passes through these three spaces as a ghost who is looking for her head. Ivanna tells about the terror of the ghost of Ivanna, who suffered a tragic death done by Japanese soldiers who killed her. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method that processes selected scenes in the film Ivanna for analysis to find three psychic spaces that Ivanna passes through as a head-seeking ghost. The Real is experienced when Ivanna's ghostly body is destroyed, thrown in a well, and burned. Ivanna experienced The Imaginary when Ambar saw a projection on the wall regarding Ivanna's past. Ambar, who was able to translate the meaning of the projections on the wall, finds Ivanna's demands, in the form of bodily integrity. Meanwhile, Ivanna goes through The Symbolic while hunting for the heads of people living in a nursing home. Ivanna got her wish, but because the head she took did not match her wishes, she continued hunting for new heads.

Keywords: *The Real, The Imaginary, The Symbolic, Ivanna*

Introduction

In Indonesia, horror films are exclusively defined as movies that contain ghost appearances. Other genres like psychological thriller, slasher, and other kinds of horror subgenre are not really popular and limited to only a number of films (Kusumaryati, 2016). Indonesian film of horror genre features ghost characters that are represented as terrifying characters and spreading terror in human life (Permatasari & Widisanti, 2019:86). Larasati added that Indonesian horror films tend to portray women as ghosts (Larasati in Larasati & Adiprasetyo, 2022:22). It is shown in the form of the ghosts' appearance depicted in female embodiments, such as having long hair, wearing clothes that resemble a dress or other that is identical to what women usually wear, decorating, and other aspects. The frightening aspect of these ghosts is their feminine body, because almost all the female characters turn into spirits in horrible forms (Kusumaryati, 2016). The women's ghost characters that often appear in Indonesian horror films are divided into three types: Kanilanak and Sundel Balo; Siluman; and various magical creatures that are frightening in nature but cannot be called ghosts such as Nyi Roro Kidul and Nyi Blorong (Kusumaryati, 2016). These ghosts, according to Soh, come from women who may have been victims of sexual violence and murder that reappear to avenge and terrorize not only men but also women (Soh dalam Heriyadi et.al, 2021:186). According to Kusumaryati, the best way to approach this very typical movie is to consider what the monsters are like and where they come from. (Kusumaryati, 2016).

The Indonesian horror film discussed in this article is *Ivanna* (2022) by Kimo Stamboel, which was released on June 14, 2022. *Ivanna* movie depicted the ghost of Ivanna without a head. Ivanna's ghost has more power than a man. It can pull a human head away from the body. Ivanna's behaviour is based on revenge, which leads to her rebirth as an invincible and eternal ghost or monster. In Lacan's principle, the aspect that brings Ivanna's ghost back to life is called desire. Desire arises because of unfulfilled demands, then evokes a memory of "loss" and "lack" (Ali, 2016: 11).

Desire arises due to Ivanna's ghost fantasies about her whole body and the treason of the local people. Fantasy is what forms desire (Ali, 2016:47). In the *real*, desire has yet present, what exists is a need. Lacan, however, allows us to solve the problem by completely turning around its presuppositions, that is, by claiming that what we see is always and already an effect of the invisible Real, insofar as reality itself is a field that it holds up (Lacan in Vighi, 2005:244).

"The Imaginary" is related to demand. In the imaginary domain, there is a mirror stage as a stage of identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image – whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term *imago* (Lacan, 2001:1-2). If "the Imaginary" owned by the subject is the first insight into self-consciousness through narcissistic identification with the other, the information of subjectivity proper can only be secured in the symbolic, the realm of language and meaning (Lacan in Vighi, 2005:237). "The real, the imaginary, and the symbolic" are Jacques Lacan's categorizations of the psychic realms that make man a subject. Man cannot give up his desire, because without desire man cannot be a subject (Ali, 2016:8). The human journey in these three spaces is caused by an unfulfilled desire (Ali, 2016:9). As a ghost, Ivanna in Kimo Stamboel's film enters the three psychic spaces in her desire to rediscover her lost body parts, while at the same time avenging her so that she becomes a subject whose powers outweigh mankind.

In line with Kusumaryati, this article is to analyse the existence and origin of ghosts or monsters. Kusumaryati uses Bhaktin's theory of grotesque to explain female grotesque in contemporary Indonesian horror films, which offer representations of broader political and social anxieties in Indonesian society. The female grotesque exposes traumatic history as well as covers it, substituting comfortably unified stories for disorderly violent events (Kusumaryati, 2016). Unlike Kusumaryati, this particular research will be based on three psychic spaces in Lacan to trace the origin of Ivanna's ghosts through the narrative and cinematographic aspects of the film.

On the cinematographic and narrative aspects, Lestari and Firdaus in the article "*Ekranisasi Novel Ivanna Van Dijk dalam Film Ivanna*" find that Ivanna movie, which is adapted from Risa Saraswati's novel *Ivanna van Dijk*, has nine character additions and characterizations, as well as four background additions. Ambar, Dika, Agus, Rina, Artur, Grandpa, Grandmother Ani, Grandma Ida, and Yudi are the characters that Risa did not present in *Ivanna Van Dijk*'s novel. As for the background, Kimo Stamboel's film adds a bus, a road to the nursing home, a basement, and a bathroom (Lestari and Firdaus, 2023:323). The narrative and cinematographic aspects of this study are broken down in order to find and demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship between the three psychic spaces of Lacan.

Research Method

This qualitative research uses analytical descriptive methods, i.e., methods of deducing and analysing. (Ratna, 2010:336). Lacan's theory of three psychic spaces is used to discern the narrative and cinematographic aspects of *Ivanna*. In the first stage, the author will identify the characters, the background of time and place, as well as the cause-and-effect relationship between the images. The causal relationship of this effect, then presented narratively to show the origin of Ivanna's ghost, reviewing Lacan's theory of three psychic spaces.

Discussion

The *Ivanna* movie, released on June 14, 2022, is an example of a national horror film produced during pandemic that everything was under strict protocols (Setyaningsih, 2023:66). The shooting of this film finished on January 10, 2021 (Octaviyani, 2021). It is estimated that the process of photographing took place for a month (Wildan, 2022). Manoj Punjabi, as the producer of *Ivanna*, informed that the production cost of the film reached 12-13 billion rupiah to accommodate the vision of Kimo Stamboel as the film director of *Ivanna* (Septina, 2022).

To this day, when this article was written, there are nine novels by Risa Saraswati that have been adapted into films. *Ivanna* is a spin off of *Danur 2: Maddah*, released on March 28, 2018. Compared to eight other adaptations of Risa Saraswati's novel, *Ivanna* became the best-selling film with 2,793,775 viewers, whereas *Danur: I Can See Ghosts* with 2,736,391 viewers (Penonton Pada Tahun 2007 - 2024, n.d.; Lestari & Hermanto, 2022:35). One of the viewers of this particular movie, Panji Respati put *Ivanna* at 22½ stars rating. According to Respati,

...*Ivanna* [film] builds tension slowly and builds an atmosphere slowly to invite the audience to see the sweetness that happens in the film. What I think is rather unfortunate is that the film does not explore the story and the characters, plus there is a lack or minus in the use of dialogue that is irrelevant to the setting. Gorily speaking, the film is quite satisfactory, and the construction of the atmosphere is still to be quite safe (Respati, 2022).

Different from Panji Respati, Alesandra Langit in her article "Ivanna's Revenge Story of the Dutch Lady's Sadist Spirit" that was uploaded in the paraphan.co, explains that the director's audience gives room for compassion to understand *Ivanna*'s revenge. Therefore, according to Heaven, *Ivanna*'s ghost is not presented as an evil figure, even though she took the heads of the Malay people she encountered (Langit, 2022). Sympathy for *Ivanna* is built through Ambar, a teenage girl who has limited eyes. Ambar can't see human activity clearly because of her blind eyes. However, she could witness mysterious things, including *Ivanna*'s persecution in the past, which could not be seen by ordinary humans. According to Heaven, the audience is invited to be in Ambar's position to see everything vague and vague. (Langit, 2022). In addition to the blurred and vague visual, Stamboel also uses wall projections as a medium to reveal *Ivanna*'s ghost past. Wall projections about the past of *Ivanna* show *Ivanna*'s fantasies to have her body back intact, becoming one of the stages that mark the formation of the *Ivanna* ghost desire.

The *Ivanna* movie opens with events that took place in 1943. In a well, right in the back of the house, the Japanese soldiers killed all the Dutch citizens who were still living in Hindia Belanda. *Ivanna* witnessed the voices and shadows coming out of the slaughter of these Dutch people from behind the door. Knowing of the events, she rushed to rescue all the indigenous people who were being imprisoned. However, after she liberated the locals, the Japanese army led by General Matsuya, caught *Ivanna* and dragged her through the middle room, the living room, until *Ivanna*'s body was eventually thrown to the courtyard of the *Ivanna*'s house.

Ivanna who met Matsuya begged for forgiveness and freedom, because, in fact, she as a Dutch had betrayed his own people in order to help the local people. *Ivanna*'s request was denied by Matsuya, who continued to choke her, until Syaiful (*Ivanna*'s local close friend) freed her.

The incidents of 1943 at Ivanna's house show the *real* of Ivanna. However, the real began to change towards the imaginary, when the local people she had saved betrayed her. The local that she had rescued dragged her from the dining room to the middle room and she was beaten and threatened. She was separated from Syaiful by a local and had injured his leg.

The persecution continued until Matsuya came and added torture to Ivanna. When Ivanna fell down in front of the locals as a result of the Japanese army's blow, she said, "Every drop of my blood will make your lives miserable". This sentence is an embodiment of Ivanna's transition to the symbolic, when Ivanna was later slaughtered by Matsuya in front of the locals that she had helped. On the incidents in the Imaginary and the Symbolic level, the incidents taking place is a retrospective from the point of view of Ambar in 1993. Both of them cheated on each other to show their connection to the real.

The Ivanna movie tells about two events at different times. Firstly, in 1943 when Ivanna became human. Secondly, in 1993, telling the stories of the lives of Ambar, Dika, Agus, Rina, Arthur, and grandmother and grandfather who are residents of the nursing home. In 1993, Ivanna's body turned into a statue. Syaiful murdered her after Matsuya cut her neck in 1943. The retrospective that Ambar witnessed in each dormitory room is different from the retrospective of other residents in the dormitories, except Ambar. If Ambar witnessed a live retrospective with her eyes, the other dormitory residents witnessed through the shadows highlighted by light bulbs into the walls and the sound of the incidents broadcast through the intercom. Games on imaginary territory through projection on walls or on other media are also applied in some movies. For example, the film *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961), directed by Alain Resnais. Although Resnais did not use projectors highlighted on the walls, the reflection of various objects on the mirror indicated the desires of female characters that cannot be fulfilled by male characters (Resnais, 1961). Later, Rofi Nasution, through *The Boy With Moving Image* (2020), showed the imagination of the character through the animation that appeared on the wall, right behind the standing figure (Nasution, 2020). The film's characters are directly related to the projected fantasies, but in *Ivanna*, Ambar is another subject linked to Ivanna. We can witness that, figuratively, Ivanna's eyes have the same colour as Ambar's.

The story in 1943 continues with the vision of Ambar, who was present at the Ivanna massacre. Ambar witnessed the entire process of digging Ivanna's body, whose head was thrown out of Matsuya's well. Syaiful witnessed the release of Ivanna's neck until her head was cut off. He brought Ivanna's body to the basement to bury it in a statue.

When the projection of Ivanna's death was completed, Ambar witnessed the appearance of a ghost who began to hunt the heads of the nursing home. In fact, on the night of Lebaran, after Ambar first saw Ivanna's projection in the dining area, Grandma Ani was beaten by the ghost Ivanna. From the doors started opened, the sound of the turntable lit up, culminating in the sight of Ivanna's figure releasing Grandma Ana's head from her body.

Ivanna's presence as a ghost in the dorm indicates that she, as a subject, has entered a symbolic stage. She has suffered fractures at the imaginary level because of her need to be protected by the locals. However, since the need was not fulfilled, the worse part was that she was separated from the local, who once called her 'Mother'.

The destroyed need had turned into a demand that reminded her of the fact that she was a Dutch that was different from the local and not part of them who had called her 'Mother'. It became clear when one of the locals told Syaiful that she was Dutch.