

Kristianto, Bayu, University of Indonesia, Indonesia

Pintu Terlarang: A Disconcerting Spatial Interpretation of Urban Dystopia

Pintu Terlarang (The Forbidden Door), directed by Joko Anwar, one of Indonesia's leading film directors, was declared the Best Film at 2009 Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival in Korea. International film critics from TIME, Hollywood Reporter, and EMPIRE have expressed praises for *Pintu Terlarang*, screened in twenty film festivals around the world including those in London, Rotterdam, Sitges (Spain), Vancouver, and Udine (Italy). Gambir, the movie's main character, attained success in the art world by making statues of a pregnant woman in different poses. It is part of his creative process to insert dead fetuses in the wombs of the pregnant statues. His troubled soul met a request for help by a child written in various spots. The journey to find the child leads him to a secret door, which reveals a terrifying reality of a dehumanized world, where pain becomes the core of a favorite pastime. The use of space in creating a sense of dystopia of city life in the film is interesting. The city inhabitants' dystopia is formed in the tension between narrow and massive spaces. The city, commonly characterized by a sense of vastness, of freedom to occupy space, is set in opposition to small, enclosed spaces where human beings converse with their utmost self. The dead fetuses are put in a tiny space inside the wombs of the statues, while scenes of violence are enjoyed by people in locked rooms, with characters in the scenes all imprisoned in narrow spaces. The questions I will explore are: How is a new significance of space in urban settings created? What is the role of space in engendering urban dystopia? In what ways does the selection of different space settings help make a dehumanized world? I argue that urban dystopia is created when city inhabitants return to enclosed spaces as a way to find existence. When individuals prefer enclosed spaces, a contradiction to the idea of the city, the tendency toward dystopia will emerge and city life is deconstructed. The paper will utilize a number of theories from Cultural Studies to articulate what signifies space in the city, such as those by Michel de Certeau, Richard Dyer, and Peter Stallybrass and Allon White. Furthermore, a number of concepts by Michel Foucault on the idea of utopia and dystopia will be used as part of the theoretical framework.