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CREATING WOMEN CHARACTERS IN HORROR FILMS USING AI: AVOIDING MALE GAZE CHARACTERS TEMPLATE

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Abstract: *In screenwriting, one of the most essential elements is character. Characters are usually shaped by three critical factors: physical appearance, psychology, and sociology. In horror films, female characters are often used as protagonists, but in the history of horror films, female characters are trapped by the male gaze. The male gaze functions as a mechanism to dehumanize and commodify women, viewing them solely through the lens of heterosexual male desire. Laura Mulvey, in her seminal 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," posits that films serve to strengthen patriarchal structures by portraying women as mere objects for both the male protagonist inside the film and the audience consuming the film. The use of AI in screenwriting continues to grow, although it is still a matter of debate. As we know, AI works by gathering and generalizing information from pre-existing data. This becomes a problem when we want to create female characters that are not considered male-gaze. Of course, not all horror films that have been made use the male gaze, but we must understand how horror films develop occasionally. This paper examines the relationship between artificial intelligence and creating female characters in scriptwriting, especially horror films. A conceptual paper is a paper without data, as it is focused on "integration and proposing new relationships among constructs".This paper also aims to find the next step for us to create women characters with AI.*

Keywords: *AI; scriptwriting; character; male gaze; horror*

Introduction

In filmmaking, one of the fundamental elements is the screenplay. The screenplay is used as a 'bible' throughout filmmaking: development, pre-production, production, post-production, and even in the distribution phase. Screenwriting is a creative and technical process that requires an individual or a group of people, depending on the project. In screenwriting, one of the most essential elements is character. Characters are usually shaped by three critical factors: physical appearance, psychology, and sociology. Characters are significant because they are the agents to move the plot forward.

In the Indonesian film industry, movies in the horror genre are very popular

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with the public. The horror genre dominates the box office. In horror films, female characters are often used as protagonists, but in the history of horror films, female characters are trapped by the male gaze. The male gaze in film has been extensively analyzed in academic literature, especially in the context of feminist film theory. Mulvey said in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" that the function of the male gaze is to dehumanize and commodify women, viewing them solely through the lens of heterosexual male desire (Bayezid et al., 2022).

Barbara Creed (1993) in "The Monstrous-Feminine" and Carol Clover (1992) in "Men, Women, and Chain Saws" analyze the history of horror films, women characters are posited as either victims of violence or as monstrous aberrations. Of course, these perspectives come from patriarchal anxieties about female power and sexuality. Horror movie conventions have ingrained this gendered approach to character development, making it difficult for AI systems that use pre-existing film data to learn from it.

In the Indonesian film context, Krishna Sen (1994) and Michalik (2015). Despite the genre's popularity and cultural relevance, local horror films frequently repeat problematic gender assumptions, as Sen (1994) and Michalik (2015) noted. This makes it particularly difficult to use AI to build characters for horror movies in Indonesia because the systems may use examples from both domestic and foreign sources that support rather than contradict the masculine gaze.

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has developed into a more advanced and accessible technology for everybody in many sectors. Cinema is not spared from technological advancement; it is part of the advancement itself. In a landscape where new media ceaselessly keeps evolving, experimenting becomes the best option to apply and inaugurate the latest technologies that constantly carry liberal ramifications to how cinema is created, permeated, and experienced (Sugiarto & Widiastuti, 2021).

As one of the numerous manifestations of technical progress, artificial intelligence also permeates the art form of cinema. Screenwriting, often called scriptwriting, is one area that artificial intelligence is directly affecting. Screenwriting is the first and most important step in filmmaking. The concept of the male gaze within the realm of artificial intelligence (AI) becomes very complicated, especially when AI gathers information from previous films and series that are mostly considered using the male gaze. This becomes a problem when we want to create female characters that are not considered male-gaze. Of course, not all horror films that have been made use the male gaze, but we must understand how horror films develop occasionally.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing AI tools that can help creators craft more nuanced and equitable representations of female characters in horror films, moving beyond the limitations of traditional male gaze perspectives.This paper aims to answer this question: How to create female characters in horror movies using AI without male-gaze stereotypes?

Methodology

Our paper examines the relationship between artificial intelligence and creating female characters in scriptwriting, especially horror films. A conceptual paper is a paper without data, as it is focused on "integration and proposing new relationships among constructs". This approach is particularly suitable for examining the intersections and ongoing tensions between emerging fields where empirical

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data may be limited.

In a conceptual paper. A literature review method is crucial to gather the necessary information. A literature review is "an excellent way of synthesizing research findings to show evidence on a meta-level and to uncover areas in which more research is needed". The goals of this research is to establishing familiarity and bridging the knowledge of prior researches and papers. We summarize the important parts to highlight the topic, comprehend current developments of the roles of AI in filmmaking (especially scriptwriting), and generate new perspective on the topics.

We studied the concept on feminist theory works in film by academics such as Mulvey, Clover, and Creed. Followed by reviewing fundamental literature regarding the male gaze in horror films. After that, we examined how this male gaze concept related to recent advancements in AI technology, especially on the process of AI system and spotting further potential of gender bias in scriptwriting.

We use the conceptual analysis by involving a narrative literature review across three areas. The first one is feminist film theory. Second is artificial intelligence in filmmaking, especially scriptwriting. And the last one is gender bias in AI system. To understand how these three areas connect with each other, we examined scholarly articles, industry reports, and theoretical frameworks. Finding patterns in the potential effects of AI deployment in the scriptwriting process on gender representation in horror films was a primary focus of the research.

We synthesized insights from studies regarding the male gaze in film with combination of current research on gender bias in AI system. We hope the synthesis will help us to identify potential challenges and opportunities in using AI to avoid traditional stereotypes and male gaze perspective when creating women character

in horror film.

This conceptual paper utilizes a semi-systematic review, effectively identifying themes, theoretical perspectives, or joint issues within a specific research discipline or methodology. The result and discussion in this paper draw from literature about male gaze and

Result

This paper gathered a literature review on creating women characters in horror films using AI and the challenges of avoiding the male gaze.

In her essay, Mulvey (1975) presented the male gaze in film. According to Mulvey, the male gaze views women through the lens of heterosexual male desire. It's a mechanism to dehumanize and commodify women. The male gaze elaborates on the relationship between men and women characters in the film, as the notion of patriarchy and its mechanism of dominance over women in film (Bayezid et al., 2022).

Patriarchal structures have fundamentally shaped the creation of women characters in the history of cinema. Indonesian cinema demonstrates how the film industry reinforced patriarchal ideologies through its male-dominated production structures. Sen's analysis stated that with men occupying most key creative positions, women characters were viewed as objects of desire for both male characters and viewers (Sen, 1994). This pattern is continuous in contemporary Indonesian cinema.

In horror films, this woman's objectification is more noticeable. Previous studies have shown that these representations have endured across decades, indicating deeply embedded cultural beliefs that impact information produced by humans as well as content supported by artificial intelligence.

Pangastusi in her research specifically examines films from different periods - including Sundel Bolong (1981), Gairah Malam III (1996), and Air Terjun Pengantin (2009) - revealing consistent patterns of female sexploitation despite changing social contexts. These patterns are so ingrained that they now influence not only human-created content but also AI-generated material (Pangastuti, 2019). As Hariyadi et al. (2021) observe in their study of contemporary Indonesian horror films, even when female characters display agency and power, their portrayal often remains entangled with traditional modes of objectification.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become increasingly prevalent in the film business, impacting all phases of the production cycle (Li, 2022). Animation films that are based on AI and machine learning technology have produced new visual representations as a result of the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the film industry (Wan & Ren, 2021) Additionally, AI has been used in the manufacturing sector of illustration, demonstrating its potential to revolutionize traditional production techniques (Putra et al., 2022). The impact of AI on the creation of artistic digital content, namely in the fields of online poster design and video design, has been examined. The report highlights AI's enormous potential to change content.

Furthermore, it is imperative to consider the application of machine learning techniques in the creative industry while developing an artificial intelligence (AI) system for scriptwriting. Gaussian mixture regression and Gaussian Process regression were used by Osa et al. (2018) to depict mappings from time to states and contexts to trajectories, respectively. Moreover, the creative process has highlighted the use of AI engines like ALICE, indicating that AI has the potential to aid in scriptwriting (McIntyre et al., 2016). Furthermore, the application of artificial

intelligence and machine learning in the film industry has been demonstrated in predicting box office success and movie performances, underscoring the importance of these technologies in the entertainment sector (Kim et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018; Liu & Xie, 2018).

Studies show that AI-based decision-making systems can exhibit gender bias, affecting people and communities, giving rise to worries about the development and application of AI technology (Nadeem et al., 2022). Furthermore, the incorporation of feminine gender characteristics into AI products, including chatbots and robots, has affected people's acceptance of AI as well as their perception of them as human-like. This demonstrates the effects on gender that result from AI design and deployment (Borau et al., 2021). The rapid development of AI technology raises concerns because of previous studies that indicate gender bias in AI-based decision-making systems (Nadeem et al., 2022). Researchers have also prioritized examining the consequences of gender bias in AI systems in every sector. Algorithmic design can be one of the keys to fixing these biases. Promoting diversity, raising awareness, and incorporating design processes can be taken (Hall & Ellis, 2023).

Concerns about the unintentional effects of artificial intelligence (AI) on bias and inequality in society have been rekindled by the recent investigation of AI-based facial recognition software. Gupta et al. (2021) have addressed the ethical and social implications of gender bias in AI. Specifically, they have highlighted the potential risks and hazards related to the ethical, legal, and societal elements of using AI, with a focus on gender concerns. In addition, there has been greater discussion about how AI technology might address issues raised by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

such as issues related to diversity and ethics (Parra et al., 2022).

The collection of language data in artificial intelligence (AI) demonstrates biases and raises concerns regarding impartiality and equality. For example, there are some occupations words, that are related to gender (Caliskan et al., 2017).

Furthermore, gender bias in coreference resolution systems has been successfully reduced by employing debiasing techniques, such as the use of debiased word embeddings (Webster et al., 2018). However, despite these efforts, concerns about demographic biases in AI applications persist, prompting calls for further research and correction of gender bias in natural language processing (Costa-jussà, 2019).

It has been noted in the natural language processing (NLP) community that while bias in artificial intelligence (AI) has long been studied, methods for addressing gender bias in NLP in particular are still in their infancy (Sun et al., 2019). Researchers have also looked into the relationship between gender and artificial intelligence (AI), particularly as it relates to chatbots and digital assistants. The high percentage of female representation in these AI entities has drawn criticism (Costa, 2018). Additionally, when examining how AI affects gender equality, researchers have found that bias problems in AI systems may make it more difficult for AI to advance gender equality (Özdemír et al., 2021).

Although the literature is increasingly acknowledging gender bias in AI, persistent issues remain, especially in domains where AI systems have been observed to perpetuate prejudice and discrimination. The influence of past exclusion of women in gathering data and less involvement of women in the field of artificial intelligence have been identified as factors contributing to gender bias in datasets used for machine learning (Dar-ney, 2020).

Discussion

In the history of cinema, patriarchal structures were the foundation of creating women characters. It happened because the film industry was considered a male industry, where key people were mostly men. Women characters are usually created as objects of desire of male characters and the viewers.

The male gaze widened into contemporary filmmaking. This phenomenon is distinguished by a prolonged gaze that objectifies the feminine physique and gratifies the male observer with sexual satisfaction. The shot of the male gaze is usually helped by cinematography, editing, and even sound that underlines women as sexual objects, and importantly, the male gaze externalizes the hierarchical power relations and gender portrayals in visual media (Scanlon & Lewis, 2016).

The male gaze appears frequently in modern cinema and is also a theoretical concept. This phenomenon can be identified by a prolonged look that satisfies the male observer's sexual desires while objectifying the feminine physique. Oftentimes, this visual focus is in rhythm with the film camera, which influences how the spectator relates to the male lead character and reinforces traditional cinematic dynamics in which men watch. Women are thought to be the focus of male attention. In addition, the masculine gaze is a well-known emblem in feminist theory related to cinema and television, signifying the hierarchical power structures and gender representations in visual arts.

In horror films, this woman's objectification is more noticeable. In previous studies, these representations have endured across decades, indicating deeply embedded cultural beliefs that impact information produced by humans as well

as content supported by artificial intelligence.

The woman of horror is most likely the victim of a string of horrifying crimes; she is harassed, threatened, assaulted, raped, and killed—all for the satisfaction of the audience as well as the satisfaction of the fictional victim. The film's cinematic architecture encourages the viewer to participate in the terrorization of filmed women, so perpetuating patriarchal institutions in both the media and society at large (Hankins, 2020).

The idea of the "male gaze" in the context of artificial intelligence (AI) has drawn increasing interest and concern due to its potential to reinforce gender bias and have profound effects on society. According to Laura Mulvey's conceptualization, the male gaze refers to the objectification of women and the sexualized portrayal of them, usually from the perspective of heterosexual men (Long, 2023).

A trend has evolved as AI technologies are used more and more in screenwriting and character development. AI systems may unintentionally reinforce and even magnify gender biases when they rely on preexisting data sets. Our analysis of numerous studies brought to light the serious difficulty this presents in trying to develop female characters who do not conform to the male gaze, since the AI may perpetuate prejudices and preconceptions found in its training set.

With the development of AI in screenwriting, screenwriters can be helped by AI when they create characters. Turns out that creating women characters with AI, especially in the horror film genre is a little bit complicated. As we know, man has monopolized the film industry since the early days. AI may collect data from previous films, especially when it comes to physical appearance, psychology, or sociology of a woman's character. For example, if we use ChatGPT for creating women's

physical appearance for horror films, the keywords that come out mostly are to represent beautiful, striking, and sexy women. Meanwhile, in the real world, women are very diverse in terms of physical appearance, but that kind of representation does not appear. In horror films, gender representation is quite problematic. This still proves that the role of the male gaze in horror movies is very strong and hard to let go of. Also in horror films, the Final Girl trope is very popular. Lots of people think it's very empowering. Even before her ultimate triumph, those women characters have to deal with extreme violence and sexualization.

This begs the big question, if AI is so problematic, why don't we avoid using AI in screenwriting especially when creating female characters? There have been many anti-AI movements in filmmaking and scriptwriting. Recently in the screening of A24's Heretic, there was a disclaimer "No Generative AI was used in the making of this film," where they opposed the use of AI in the film.

On the other hand, many people, such as filmmakers, production houses, or festivals, support the use of AI in filmmaking. The 2024 Bucheon International Film Festival (BIFAN) held an AI film workshop and competition, where filmmakers made films using an AI video generator provided by the organizers. This debate will go on for a long time. But as filmmakers and academics, we feel the use of AI is inevitable. With that, we have to optimize research related to AI and filmmaking.

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have expanded significantly in the context of data analysis and computing, which usually enables the applications to operate intelligently (Sarker, Furhad, et al., 2021). Machine learning (ML) is often considered the most popular current technology of the fourth industrial revolution. It typ-

ically gives systems the capacity to learn and improve from experience automatically without being specifically designed (Sarker, Hoque, et al., 2021).

Gender bias in AI is an issue that is being sought for mitigation, not just in film and script writing but in other areas as well. It suggests that technological solutions alone may not be sufficient to address this issue, and we need a holistic approach, like cultural awareness and critical analysis of gender representations in media.

Conclusion

As AI continues to play an increasingly significant role in media production, including screenwriting, addressing these challenges will ensure that technology contributes to more equitable and diverse representations in cinema, rather than reinforcing harmful stereotypes and biases.

To help writers create women characters in horror films, AI is getting better and better, but we need to gather more data to contribute to datasets used for machine learning, especially from films made by women. It can ernrich the representation of women in AI dataasets. This paper suggests the following next research directions:

1. Creating and evaluating AI systems particularly meant to produce diverse and non-stereotypical character representations.

2. Investigating how AI might be used to detect and measure gender bias in current stories and scripts.

3. Examining the long-term social effects of media content produced by AI on attitudes and perceptions about gender.

4. Evaluating different debiasing techniques concerning character development and creative writing.

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