

Projecting Homes: Domestic Spaces in Three Filipino Films

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ABSTRACT

The house is a fundamental space for a character's consciousness, and this structure is a familiar image in Filipino films. This particular space as a setting in which the narrative and the characters are able to move in, is essential. This paper analyzes the influence of domestic spaces and the characteristics of home, which correspond to the characters' consciousness and the narrative. These are presented in the selected films: *Oro, Plata, Mata* (1982) by Peque Gallaga, "Hello, Soldier," the second episode in Lino Brocka's *Tatlo, Dalawa, Isa* (1975), and *Kisapmata* (1981) by Mike De Leon. The method for assessment consists of three parts: (1) the background in which the films are set, (2) the influence of the house using Gaston Bachelard's notion of the house in *The Poetics of Space* (1994) as a framework, (3) and the behavior of the characters as portrayed in the films. The significance of domestic spaces to a character's experience is illustrated in the selected texts.

Keywords: Philippine cinema, domestic space, house, film, architecture

INTRODUCTION

Viewers go to movie theaters for entertainment, to distract themselves from the troubled tones of daily life. For the past 115 years, Filipinos have been going to the movies, fascinated by the lifelike images onscreen (Quirino 10). Alternatively, cinema lends itself to the formation of reality. Film productions are derived from everyday situations, which are either highlighted by their simplicity or greatly dramatized through the convincing performances of the actors. Apart from film's inherent quality of embellishment, viewers can easily relate to similar events portrayed onscreen, because to some extent, the characters represent everyday people.

Without the audience, there would be no witnesses to the spectacle that film brings. The contribution of film to Filipino culture and history is intertwined with its presentation of a certain period and the social milieu during its production.

Through these aspects, the audience is able to recognize which point in history the film represents. Every film becomes a token of the past when its screen time ends. When the screen fades to black, the moviegoers step out of the cinema, ending their experience in the movie house and resuming their lives. In the comfort of their houses, moviegoers go about their daily routines, unaware of the stories that they are part of, and the individual journeys that they go through. Although their stories might not be the next box-office hit, their role as participants in the experience of cinema is indispensable because they reflect the societal issues and milieu projected onscreen.

Cinema resides in a movie house where cinematic experience happens. Cinema mirrors life, as presented by its narratives. As viewers, we are watching a reflection of ourselves and other people. By using the house and its primary function to “inhabit” and where the occupants claim a space (Bachelard 4), one can assume that from the generic component of a film’s setting, comes the more intimate side of cinema, capturing the audience as they move around their homes. The viewers and their perpetual prying eyes are given attention by filmic narratives. With cinema being a collaborative medium, Gerard Lico explains:

It may zero in on the micropolitical expressions of everyday life, the struggle to eke out a living in a brutal metropolis, the act of sexualities in dark corners or crimes done in the most unusual precincts. Cinema is there to capture the furtive, coddled by elusive spaces and nearly invisible aspirations. (“Dwellers” 84)

Today, film viewing can be done in private or publicly. In the comforts of their own houses, viewers are able to watch a film without concern for other moviegoers. Even if cinema has a designated space, and the audiences have their own homes, the interaction between the two can also involve trading places, occupying each other’s “houses.”

FROM CINEMA HOUSES TO PRIVATE HOMES

According to Lico, the construction of movie theaters in the country at the turn of the 20th century provided people with the spectacle of seeing worlds enclosed in time, societies entombed in space, and characters that share a connection with the viewers. Despite being a new form of entertainment, films quickly became a favored pastime in the country (“Tickets to Dreamscapes” 6). From the comfort of their private homes, moviegoers head to cinema houses to watch.

The concept of cinema houses is primarily attributed to an improvised theater: a hall inside *Salon de Pertierra* at No. 12 Interior in Escolta. The first film screening was held on January 1, 1897 (Deocampo 8). After a string of intermittent attempts in building more cinema houses – from a refurbished *accessoria* (basement) to magnificent movie palaces with elaborately decorated façades, cinema eventually found a home in these structures. However, the Spanish-American War of 1898 hindered the progress of constructing movie theaters. Additionally, there was difficulty in acquiring films because of the distance of the Philippines from the European market (Lico, “Tickets” 10). Despite the unstable condition of film as a medium of entertainment following the war, the union of colonial construction and the start of Hollywood’s influence on the Filipino audience paved the way for cinema to become a more recognizable form of entertainment.

The influx of movie houses in downtown Manila from the 1900s to the 1930s proved that cinema has earned a place in the people’s interest (Lico, “Tickets” 9). At the tail end of the Second World War, the city of Manila was greatly damaged and cinema houses did not escape the intense shelling. These once magnificent buildings were slowly rebuilt, but did not return to their former splendor as they were replaced by gigantic “cinemaplexes” in the 1970s and soon after, the arrival of Betamax and VHS tapes, VCDs and DVDs promptly led to home viewing (Lico, “Tickets” 6).

Whether a film has been silently screened or has managed to fill an entire theater of curious audiences, these moviegoers ultimately return to their houses, returning to reality. According to Jose Quirino, the experience of cinema is essentially rooted in “spectacle” – a form of escape from reality (10). When watching films, the audience is placed in another world, in a moment filled with a multitude of memories from the past, a vivid mirror of the present, speculations of the future and even an alternate history.

The three films in this essay were produced during the Marcos era, and their narratives illustrate the restrictions imposed by the government. The youth revolt of the 1960s against President Marcos necessitated a change from the “dreadful” habits of the “Old Society” in order to open up the country’s future by establishing a “New Society,” which supposedly represented “all things good.” When Martial Law was proclaimed in 1972, daily life was defined by the rigidity and desires of government overlords who employed mass media for their service, controlling all the information that the public received. This is where cinema became a form of protest. Film was a key component of a society disconcerted by contradictions within the ruling class and between the sociopolitical elite and the masses. Marcos

and his technocrats wanted to regulate films, to control the content of movies by insisting on some form of censorship, and this was conducted through the Board of Censors for Motion Pictures (BCMP). Depictions of sex, violence, and squalor, which were banned during the time of Marcos, were portrayed in the selected works.

In addition, the curfew imposed on the citizens meant that they had to stay indoors. And since they spent a large amount of time indoors, the house became an important place in terms of providing a variety of functions. More than its intended residential purpose, it also functioned as a meeting place, a refuge, and a place for transients who cannot return to their own houses.

DOMESTIC SPACE, HOME, AND HOMING

Home is perhaps one of the most evocative words that a person can encounter, and while sentiments vary on this matter, I find it interesting how these domestic spaces, our own houses, are relevant to a household and an individual's consciousness. Whether it pertains to the structure, the rooms' design, or their various functions, the experiences we have in our homes contribute significantly to our being, on a personal and a collective plane.

There is a series of available descriptions in defining "domestic space." However, this study anchors on Ritzuko Ozaki's notion that a domestic space "is a symbolical practice and a cultural phenomenon, the use of domestic space, as well as the design of a home, reflects our underlying values and norms" (97). Therefore, there is human intent in its usage, and the domestic space becomes more noteworthy than its original function because of the meanings ascribed to it. In addition, the term is used in the paper as a blanket reference to the types of houses presented in the three films.

The term "house" pertains to the structure – a building that has the ability to be occupied for habitation. It includes different kinds of dwellings ranging from rudimentary huts to complex structures composed of many systems (Kahn 214). In the Filipino context, the structures of houses vary from quaint nipa huts to the sturdy *bahay na bato* and grand Neo-Castilian mansions, from the shanties in various corners of the city, to concrete bungalows situated in gated communities, to condominiums, and modern apartments.

"Home" is defined as a place of residence or refuge. It also refers to the geographical area (a suburb, town, city or country) where a person grew up, forging an attachment to the place. Occasionally, as an alternative to the definition of "home" as a physical locale, home may be perceived as having no physical location. Instead, home may

relate to a mental or emotional state of refuge or comfort (Terkenli 324-334). Humans are generally creatures of habit; the state of a person's home has been known to psychologically influence his/her behavior, emotions, and overall mental health (Terkenli 329). The loss of a home – through accidents, natural disaster or repossession – can be a valid cause of relocation. Consequently, displacement occurs, which causes a psychological change.

Ozaki also notes that “the design of ‘home’ carries a ‘reflexive power’, conveying our lifestyles and associated values and norms to others and back to ourselves” (97). This exchange of ideals is a recurring matter for the occupants in a specific home, which relates to the concept of “homing.” In biology, homing means to go or to return to one's residence or base of operations. In this essay, it refers to a movement towards a favorable home, which is expressed by the characters in the three films.

TIME, PLACE/SPACE, AND MEMORY IN DOMESTIC SPACES

The significance of domestic spaces to the characters and the narrative has several qualities, which contribute to the succeeding discussion.

Time plays a significant role in the formation of space and memory-making. Moreover, there are stories about time. The time of cinema in the world is remembered, above all, in terms of the temporality of repetition and routine in everyday life, of the “cinemagoing habit,” the visit to the pictures as it slotted into one's other ordinary activities (Kuhn 108). Time places an event or a person in a moment, where it becomes a memory. A character's experience is rooted in the strength of recalling where and when an event happened. Yi Fu Tuan defines this as “topophilia” or the affective bond between people and place, which is the primary theme that examines environmental perceptions and values at different levels: the species, the group, and the individual. It directly translates as “love of place” and describes a strong sense of place or identity among people. Tuan holds culture, topophilia, and environment as distinct aspects in order to show how they mutually contribute to the formation of values. Tuan claims that topophilia “can be defined widely so as to include all emotional connections between physical environment and human beings” (67). In this study, the sense of place is directed to domestic spaces, wherein houses or any inhabited space has an essence of home (Bachelard 5). While permanence is relative in time and space, memory-making takes place within the two elements.

Place and space are synonymous, but it is experience that sets them apart. To further clarify these features, Yi Fu Tuan also differentiates the perception of experience in “space” and “place.” Tuan examines the interactions and implications

of space and place as basic components of the lived world within the perspective of experience. One of the interesting dialectics Tuan uses is “place is security, space is freedom” (Tuan 3). In relation to discussing domestic spaces, place equates to “home,” which offers security, while “homing” is likened to space, where a person, being inside his comfort zone, is allowed to be free.

The spatio-temporal world Tuan discusses shows how time and space go hand and hand in interpretation. A person is essentially capable of identifying himself/herself with the place, depending on his/her demeanor. Edward Relph states, “to be inside a place is to belong to it and identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are, the stronger is the identity with the place” (49), creating an impact on the personality that one has acquired, via the influence of the place. Tim Cresswell defines “place as a way of understanding” (32), which is an essential factor in discovering the place, its memory and its humanistic geography. Despite permanent location being an unimportant aspect in spatial comprehension, the involvement in the experience and the association of the place contributes to its significance to the person. Henri Lefebvre argues that “space is a social product, or a complex social construction based on values, and the social production of meanings” (26), which affects spatial practices and perceptions.

Memory is integral to space-making and place-attachment. It is because of one’s recollections that these places, particularly our homes, come alive. A person keeps coming back to where he/she has the strongest connection because of a concrete memory, whether it is a positive or a negative one. Memories shape a person’s consciousness and outlook; therefore, an individual’s history is a combination of spatial and personal memories.

PROJECTING HOMES

This essay takes note of related studies corresponding to the idea presented in the research. In order to illustrate the significance of the house and its representation, three films have been chosen due to their multifaceted environment, treading on the psychosomatic element of the house as being influential on a character, or entwined with the human characters and the narrative. I use the term “domestic space” for the selection of houses presented in the films: from the mansion to the hut, to the shanty and the bungalow house. The types of domestic spaces seen in the films correspond with the social class, representing different ideologies, in which their inhabitants belong. Domestic space has several definitions; however, Ozaki’s description of a domestic space as a reflection of a person’s fundamental values and norms is pertinent to the study, and it is also applied to the aforementioned structures as a collective term. The films were produced during

Marcos' dictatorship, which influenced the social and historical themes in the narratives. The three chosen films represent different periods in Philippine history – the early 1940s, the 1960s, and the 1980s.

This approximation of at least 20 years in history illustrates different historical and social conditions, including classes. In the first chosen film (*Oro, Plata, Mata*), the mansion and the hut have pivotal roles in showing the change in attitude of the characters during World War II, because “the recreated narratives were filled with horror, pain, longing, love, and heroism” (Soriano 7), which are prominent features of Philippine wartime movies. The characters in the second film (“Hellow, Soldier” from *Tatlo, Dalawa, Isa*), which depicts shanties in the city in a post-war period, are evidently shaped by their condition and location. Rolando Tolentino declares that:

The affect is produced in the landscape of poverty that becomes the motivation for the characters to be alienated and confined in film and in the film narrative. Using actual locations of dump sites, seedy alleys and spaces in urban poor communities ... the film characters are made to dwell in the abyss of poverty ... where characters live in confined spaces and have very little room for social mobility. (121)

This is exhibited by the insubstantial materials that their shanties are built with and the limited area they occupy. In the third film (*Kisapmata*), the initial neutrality of middle class families and type of housing is important in the plot's progress, including the characters' layers, for a middle-class home “represents in any certain terms a city space that is benign and, therefore, functions as a foil to what is yet to unfold in terms of narrative and spatial visualization” (Campos 143).

The films are analyzed in context using Gaston Bachelard's discussion of the house in *The Poetics of Space* (1994). The work implies the importance of association with private spaces and its effect on a person's outlook once he/she steps out of the house. While the statement treads on a larger perspective, I intend to forward Bachelard's notion of the house having power over its occupants' viewpoints and behaviors. In the chapter on “House and Universe,” the house is described as an entity that transfers its reactions and emotions onto its occupants:

The house acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body. It braces itself to receive the downpour, it girds its loins. When forced to do so, it bends with the blast confident that it will right itself again in time, while continuing to deny any temporary defeats. Such a house as this invites mankind to heroism of cosmic proportions. (46)

Privacy is a factor informing the mind of the possibilities of what could transpire outside our homes. The book also incorporates the importance of inside space, which has power over the human psyche and its subsequent influence on the persona outside of the house.

Supporting this claim, Theano S. Terkenli argues that psychologically, “The strongest sense of home commonly coincides geographically with a dwelling. More often than not, the sense of home attenuates as one moves away from that point, but it does not do so in a fixed or regular way” (332), leading to homes triggering self-reflection.

It is an indispensable fact that our consciousness is first shaped within our houses, where a person’s initial awareness and perception of the outside world are created. The house bears a protective atmosphere and the structure itself stimulates the idea of firmness (Bachelard 17). As a setting or a character, the house employs a personal and more intimate connection with the audience, and it is also a reflection of ideals and social conditions in relation to history. In this line, what is the significance of the domestic spaces projected in the selected films? How does one’s personal history affect his/her attachment to the house? These questions correspond to the following issues: time, space/place, and memory.



Figure 1. The Lorenzo Mansion

THE MANSION AND THE HUT IN *ORO, PLATA, MATA* (PEQUE GALLAGA, 1982)

Peque Gallaga’s period film, *Oro, Plata, Mata* makes use of an old maxim that means “Gold, Silver, Misfortune” (in the film’s entry in the British Film Institute’s database,

it is translated as “Death”). It is an architectural myth that guarantees safety and prosperity to the homeowners if the design of the house, particularly the number of steps of its staircases, does not end with the third word. The mansion, inhabited by the wealthy characters, provides them with all their needs and evokes a sense of security. As their fortunes change, the hut also becomes a vital figure and structure in the narrative.

The film is arranged in three parts, each one depicting a distinct phase in the characters’ lives. Set in the province of Negros during the Second World War, the film follows two aristocratic families – the Ojedas and the Lorenzos, both caught in the midst of war. The segment titled *Oro* (Gold) presents a picture of their comfortable lives in the city and displays their extravagance. *Plata* (Silver) depicts the changes in their lives because of the war. Both families continue to try living their less-affluent but still-luxurious lives, despite the disturbance brought on by the war. *Mata* (Death) illustrates their evacuation from the mansion to the forest lodge.

The film begins with the lavish debut party of Maggie (Sandy Andolong) at the Lorenzo mansion. Around the stately house, the wealthy guests feed themselves with generous portions of gossip. In several rooms separated by thick walls, conversations about different subjects reverberate throughout the house, with each group maintaining a sense of privacy. Young men and ladies socialize in the *sala*. Older women are holed up in an adjacent room near the porch, where they exchange news, while the men are in the smoking room conversing about the imminent war and the transitional government.



Figure 2. The forest lodge

Childhood sweethearts Miguel (Joel Torre) and Trining (Cherie Gil) share their first kiss in the garden, with the latter running off into the house as soon as their lips part. After the party, Maggie (Sandy Andolong) receives news about her fiancé Ramon (Andoni Alonso), who might be missing in action. Upset, she stumbles into the mansion's roof deck, where Miguel is tinkering with his telescope. He manages to calm her down, and his consoling eventually leads to a kiss.

News of the war continues to spread and the Ojedas move in with the Lorenzos to their *hacienda*. They continue their pompous living – playing *mahjong* in the spacious sala and idly gossiping in the porch as their servants bring them their afternoon *merienda*. When information about the Japanese slowly advancing to their location breaks out, they haphazardly take all of their belongings and leave the mansion empty.

They move into the forest lodge owned by the Lorenzos with hopes of eluding the Japanese and the *tulisanes*. Despite having limited supplies, they try to maintain their lavish lifestyles. This abrupt spatial dislocation affects the families who are not comfortable living outside the city, and this phase is represented by the hut. Despite the simplicity of their temporary residence, they find satisfaction in having their own place. The attempt of the occupants to sustain their old habits illustrates how they start finding comfort living in the hut, though they remain clouded in fear (Bachelard 5).

A quarrel erupts between Viring (Lorli Villanueva) and Melchor (Abbo de la Cruz), their foreman, when she accuses him of stealing her jewels. As it turns out, Melchor sees his act as compensation for his services to them and leaves. The hut becomes a place of torture when the bandits, led by Melchor, attack. Jo (Maya Valdez) remains unhurt because of her medical assistance to the bandits. Melchor attempts to rape Inday (Fides Cuyugan-Asencio), which renders the privacy of her room invalid because of forced entry. Viring's hands are slashed when she refuses to give up her jewels, while Nene (Liza Lorena) is forced to play a complicated game of Russian roulette and cards with the bandits. They are incarcerated in the living room, a pre-supposed communal space, not an area reserved for detention. The hut is emptied of their supplies and the bandits leave. As they prepare to leave, Melchor takes notice of the young Trining, who voluntarily goes with them in retaliation to Maggie and Miguel's disappearance. It is revealed that the two had a tryst the night before, and decided to hide when they heard the bandits coming. For Miguel, the family's relocation is a relevant period where a significant change in his character takes place. From being a docile son in the mansion, he becomes more assertive during their stay in the forest lodge. The subsequent paragraph illustrates his preparation for a "way out" (Bachelard 111).

The assault leaves the Ojedas and the Lorenzos traumatized to the point of foregoing their daily activities. The hut is notably silent and gloomy. Miguel notices how they cannot seem to move on from the trauma, and proceeds to open all the windows in the house, all the way to the front porch. This indicates a push toward more positive thinking – of survival and moving forward. Once more, Inday, Nene, Jo, and Viring are seated around the *mahjong* table, exchanging gossip as if nothing happened.

A vengeful Miguel intends to take Trining back, and hunts down the bandits. He locates them in an abandoned hospital in the city where they deposit all their loot. In a fit of rage, he kills them all and ends his carnage by shooting a girl taken by the crooks. In this scene, the old hospital becomes a battlefield instead of serving its customary function: nursing people and saving lives. Both the hut and the hospital have witnessed atrocious acts inside them, coinciding with the progressive disturbances felt by the characters from the mansion to the hut.

The film ends with another party in a smaller mansion, celebrating the engagement of Maggie and Miguel. The war is over and the privileged are now able to resume their lives. The rooms inside the mansion are filled with news about the Americans' triumph over the Japanese, in contrast to the opening sequence, where their conversations are solemn, suggesting negativity. Prior to the war, Maggie, Miguel, and Trining are young and carefree, but the war has pushed them to become adults sooner than they are expected to; and they return to the house as mature individuals. Trining delivers the most powerful line in the film which sums up their experience – the war has changed them into brutes.

The mansion and the hut are significant domestic spaces which lend a hand in the transformation of the characters' consciousness. The memories in the space where people first became sentient beings remain strong, in spite of displacement (Bachelard 100). The familiarity with the domestic space where an occupant first becomes conscious is the most favorable. The characters all share a personal history in both spaces, and there is a collective, enduring memory of their experiences, in the hut and in the mansion.

THE SHANTY IN "HELLOW, SOLDIER" FROM *TATLO, DALAWA, ISA* (LINO BROCKA, 1975)

"Hellow, Soldier" is the second episode in Lino Brocka's film trilogy, *Tatlo, Dalawa, Isa*. Set in post-war Manila, the film follows a young slum-dweller named Gina (Hilda Koronel) as she waits for her American G.I. father, Tom (Claude Wilson) to come and take her to the United States. Her mother Lucia (Anita Linda) appears to

be supportive of her daughter's determination to leave the country but is in fact, terrified of facing her greatest fear of living without Gina. The slums of Tondo present an ideal setting for the perpetual struggle to rise from poverty, and in the film's context, from the effects of war.



Figure 3. Gina closes the window, blocking the crowd's view of their home

Gina and Lucia live in a house with flimsy, wooden walls, signifying the weak status of their relationship. Lucia cares greatly for Gina, but this concern is never reciprocated. Their shanty is filled with American paraphernalia: from Gina's bedroom to the living room, the walls are plastered with posters of American films, photos of singers and Hollywood stars. American songs are heard playing on the radio but the channel is switched to the news of Lyndon Johnson succeeding the recently assassinated US President John F. Kennedy. The shanty in the film reflects the occupants' past and future prospects, illustrating how the house is also an "embodiment of dreams" (Bachelard 15).

An ecstatic Gina receives a letter from Tom, who intends to pick her up in Manila and take her to the States. Lucia tries to be happy for her. Their movement throughout the house is unobstructed by doors, and there are only curtains to serve as a partition between the rooms. This indicates the lack of privacy in cramped spaces. In the nature of slums, everything seems to be out in the open, because living quarters are either stacked upon each other or situated extremely close, sometimes, even sharing a piece of wall.

Gina and her mother prepare generously for their future guests. When Tom finally arrives with his wife, he is welcomed by a swarm of slum-dwellers screaming,

“Victory Joe! G.I. Joe!” (referring to a post-war colonial mentality). Gina hears the chanting and quickly asks a drunken Lucia to stay inside her bedroom, without uttering a word. The bedroom becomes a hiding place, a private space where a person can conceal himself/herself from the outside world. Domestic spaces are still shared spaces; however, an inhabitant can claim a corner for himself/herself. Certain corners in a domestic space that a person can consider his/her area include the kitchen, the study area, the porch, or a bedroom.

Gina opens the front door, which indicates her eagerness to welcome an opportunity. She sees a bunch of people standing on her porch with her American guests and tries to pacify the crowd. She invites the couple inside their shanty, and then closes the door on her neighbors, shutting out the public from her personal affairs. In the scene, the exterior space is separated from their shanty’s interior space, because of the door and the windows. Gina’s actions also demonstrate her preference for privacy by closing the door and the windows on her neighbors (Bachelard 211).

Inside the house, Tom greets his daughter and starts to interrogate Gina about her life, including her mother. She asks to be excused and an argument ensues between Tom and his wife. Lucia creates a commotion inside her room while Gina attempts to calm her down. The lack of doors allows Tom to follow Gina into Lucia’s bedroom and the teenager witnesses a nostalgic meeting. The bedroom transforms from a private space, a hiding place for the mother, into a communal space, for a confrontation between Lucia and Tom, who reminisce about their first meeting and their eventual separation. After an emotional recollection, Tom’s wife barges in. Naturally, Lucia as an inhabitant is protective of her space when threatened and outwardly throws out the American couple.



Figure 4. The confrontation inside Lucia’s room

Gina is devastated and proceeds to confront her mother about breaking her silence. The bedroom turns into a place of confessions and remembrance when Gina and Lucia exchange harsh words. The confrontation relieves Lucia of her unsaid views about Gina's plan. Lucia eventually falls asleep and wakes up to an empty house. The silence in the shanty and the thought of being alone in a shared space injects fear in her (Bachelard 43). Thinking that her daughter has finally left her, she calls for Gina over and over. Lucia looks for Gina all over the neighborhood and sees Gina carrying a stack of laundry. Gina stays and finally accepts her fate – a life with her mother in the shantytown.

THE BUNGALOW IN *KISAPMATA* (MIKE DE LEON, 1981)

Based on Nick Joaquin's article, "The House on Zapote Street" (1968), *Kisapmata* by Mike De Leon depicts a tension-filled middle-class home controlled by an iron-fisted father named Dadong (Vic Silayan), who is the root of the conflict. The family resides in a modern bungalow, protected by a corroded steel gate and cement walls decked with barbed wires. From the arrangement and the appearance of the house's exterior, passers-by could perceive how the structure is enclosed in such a dismal and overprotected perimeter. This is reflective of the terror inside the household.

The film opens with Mila (Charo Santos) anxiously informing her father that she is getting married to her boyfriend Noel (Jay Ilagan). Despite the mother (Charito Solis) being present in the discussion, the daughter addresses only her father. The mother is barely noticeable; she serves only as a background, unable to express her thoughts on the matter. Whenever she intends to speak, she has to be mindful and cautious about her responses in order to avoid incurring the rage of the domineering patriarch. The mother's role in the household as an auxiliary figure proves that the father has absolute power over practically everything that happens within the house. Onyang (Aida Carmona), the household help, also experiences the father's hostile and over-controlling nature.

The father, a retired police officer, turns the vacant space into a pigpen where he raises hogs. In another area of the house, the father also keeps an earthworm farm. Both are mere decorations. He says that regardless of his status as a retired police officer, he should try to keep himself busy (Cruz). It is evident how the father's preferred activities take over the available spaces in their house. The other members of the household are strictly confined to their designated corners and rooms. This shows the father's extensive command over the household.



Figure 5. Mila's dream before the wedding

His overbearing attitude puts another level of strain on the family when the young couple gets married. After persuading Noel to move in on the day of their wedding, the father's scheming continues when he forces them to stay in his house for a week. Mila obliges but Noel is apprehensive about his wife's decision. At one point, Noel comes home late, and finds the gate locked. He sees the lights inside the bungalow and expects that someone will open the door anytime soon. These lights indicate activity, a sense of life. The father looks from the front window with a predator's eye and sees Noel at the entrance, but intentionally turns off the lights inside the bungalow, leaving the young man outside.

Noel's invasion of the family's carefully arranged status quo further agitates the father. Dadong does not follow the values of societal norms despite being a former police officer. He and his wife are not married, which explains why he does not consider Mila's marriage to Noel as a chance for his daughter to escape his grip. He even tries to extend his control over Noel by asking the young man to drink with him one evening, but the young man declines and proceeds to look after his sick wife. This happens during one of Dadong's recollections of his work as a cop and when Noel rebukes his request, the father starts mocking him, labeling Noel as weak and unfit for his daughter. Eventually, Noel can no longer bear to stay inside the tension-filled house and insists that they move out, since his inclusion into the problematic household provokes more changes in the father's idea of full control over his household.

The house is seemingly ordinary. From the outside, the unassuming bungalow is in fact, holding a monster inside, jealously guarding its occupants. The interior of the house reflects the father's disturbing nature. Despite its ordinary arrangement, the

architecture is elaborately designed to serve the father's scheming (Cruz). Mila's room is directly across her parents' room on the second floor of the house, with a communal bathroom in between. Mila's room does not have a doorknob, which indicates that others are free to barge in anytime. The functional significance of the doorknob in allowing privacy and of the lock as a psychological threshold is ignored by the father (Bachelard 73-81). From the stairs located in front of the parents' room, the living room is an open space devoid of corners. In addition, the living room is clearly seen from the kitchen. The telephone is placed beneath the parents' room, which makes it nearly impossible for anyone to walk from one part of the house to another, or to even use the telephone, without the father knowing or at least hearing.



Figure 6. Dadong's last act of control over the household

The father's intense display of authority appears to be beyond the typical nature of parents who are concerned for their only child; indeed, there is a reason that explains Dadong's controlling character. It is revealed that incest takes place in the house. Mila's marriage to Noel is taken by the father as an insult to his machismo because his daughter is now with a man whom he perceives as substandard to him (Cruz). In a dramatic turn of events, Mila and Noel escape to the town of Los Baños, where they temporarily stay with Noel's relatives. Frustrated by their departure, the father is reduced to tears – visibly upset and deflated because his masculinity is damaged due to Noel and Mila resisting his control. Mila and Noel have left the bungalow, but the mother is left in the house with the psychotic father. She corners the young couple when they return to the house to gather their possessions, which gives the father a chance to catch them before they get to leave the house again. One by one, they are shot by Dadong, who also commits suicide.

The characters in the film are portrayed as regular people, yet the apparent normalcy in their lives is only a projection, because the house nurtures a dangerous individual, who tries to show that he is, instead, good-natured. *Kisapmata* presents a sinister aspect of a seemingly ordinary family. Social taboos such as incest and marriage without the sacrament are committed by the family. Whether it's because of the changing times – people taking a more liberal approach at life, or the blatant disregard for social institutions – the bungalow does not function as a comfort zone for the family, but is instead shaped and made to work like a penitentiary, and ultimately, a space for their macabre ending.

PLACE-ATTACHMENT

Among the presented films, the attachment to the house corresponds to each character's personal history with the place. The fundamental aspect of "inhabiting" produces an individual's primary characteristics (Bachelard 4). A character's personal history of his/her home and attachment to it influences his/her outlook and belief, as one's consciousness is essentially shaped in a space where he/she feels most at home. In addition, this strength of connection is manifested through a specific setting wherein a person is able to recall an event, because the intangible quality of memories can become concrete if these are set in a particular place (Bachelard 9).

The families in *Oro, Plata, Mata* illustrate the comfort provided by the mansion and the eventual ease that they found in the hut. Both domestic spaces grant security for the inhabitants. However, they work otherwise when they are invaded. For instance, instead of keeping its occupants at peace, the hut becomes a house of horror due to the atrocities committed inside the space. The traumatic experience significantly changes the occupants' lives. For the young Ojedas and Lorenzos in *Oro, Plata, Mata*, their lack of awareness of societal conflicts is attributed to their consciousness, which is confined in the perimeters of the mansion where security and comfort are guaranteed. Once they are forced to leave the stately home for the hut in the forest, they begin to grow more curious about each other's lives. Consequently, when they return to the mansion after the war, they have become different characters. For the adults, the traumatic experience of the war is a realization that they cannot forever rely on other people's protection and they must rely on themselves and learn to move forward.

Gina in "Hellow, Soldier" presents how her attachment to the shanty is a result of the inherent need to occupy space. Although she is given the liberty by her mother to choose whether to stay or leave for the United States with her G.I. father, in the end, she decides to stay when she realizes her mother's sacrifice in independently

raising her. Despite living in a shantytown, she does not see herself as a local, and the interior of their house reflects her intense desire to be in America. In the shanty, Gina and Lucia are constantly reminded of their past, but the young woman intends to change the course of her life. However, regardless of all her efforts to leave their home, she is not able to do so in the end.

The attachment to the house presented in *Kisapmata* is imposed by the father's controlling nature. Throughout the film, the other characters' desire to escape from the prison-like house is evident in their actions because the house also gains the occupants' values through their activities in the space (Bachelard 46). Instead of the house being a reassuring space where they feel most "at home," it takes on the characteristics of a place of incarceration. In addition, the bedroom has a significant role throughout the film. The bedroom is where the father commits incest, functions as Mila's "cell," and where they all meet their deaths in the hands of the patriarch. The characters' attempt to get away from the bungalow is futile because even in death, these troubled souls are perpetually confined to the bungalow.

INSIDE DOMESTIC SPACES

In the closing scene of *Oro, Plata, Mata*, the characters are seen celebrating in a manor, similar to the opening of the film. While the elegant display in the mansion indicates that they have returned to their old lives, what was said by Trining proves that there is an intrinsic transformation. From the mansion to the hut, the significant change in their nature proves that displaced individuals do not change the space, but their characteristics adhere to the principles of the space (Bachelard 206). The setting presents their attachment to the familiar domestic space, which remains strong. This is exemplified by Gina in "Hellow, Soldier" who chooses to continue living with her mother in the shanties, indicating that she ultimately, cannot leave her home. In this case, the bitter reunion with her American father that takes place in the shanty is loaded with tension, illustrating how even a small space carries a "psychologically complex" set of memories (Bachelard 14). For the household in *Kisapmata*, the bungalow is a place where home lacks nurturing and security, from which the characters try and fail to escape.

In the course of the films' narratives, the characters considered leaving or departed from their own homes with an indefinite or strict knowledge of returning. However, the attachment that they all have cannot be easily severed, and under different circumstances, they continue to occupy these domestic spaces. Time is an important factor in spaces where people interact and are affected by the memories they have. More than the architectural features and design of a domestic space, it also

demonstrates how a materialized process of self-awareness is influenced by other characters moving inside the house, whether as occupants or transients. The spaces where significant events in people's lives have occurred continue to stand physically, or as structures located in the mind.

Through examining how houses contribute to memory-making in the selected films, this study presents that the houses built by cinema are inhabited or occupied by characters who reflect particular social conditions, who convey the values of their time. Temporal values and their various conditions affect the consciousness about a person's identity. These domestic spaces allow the construction of a character's personal history, through the strength or weakness of their attachments to the domestic spaces, influenced by their experiences. The projection of the house in the three films serves as a mirror of the most basic unit of society – the household interacting within the limits of the house, and expressing how time, space, and memory naturally blend in a medium that is prone to the ravages of time, under constantly changing structures, yet stands firm against the continuous erosion of memories.

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