A Study of Space, Time, Visual, and Audio in the Magical Realist Cinema of Apichatpong Weerasethakul

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Abstract

This research aims to identify key space and time patterns in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's magical realist cinema, and to analyze the role of visual and audio elements in constructing dream-like perception within a magical realist aesthetic. This study is qualitative research by using textual analysis. This research examines three films, including Tropical Malady in 2004, Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives in 2010, and Memoria in 2021. The findings indicate that Apichatpong's magical realism functions not as a narrative mode but as a sensory and audiovisual strategy of perception. Through the integration of space, time, visual, and sound, his cinema constructs a perceptual experience rooted in everyday reality rather than explicit fantasy, contributing to discussions of magical realist cinema and sensory aesthetics in Southeast Asian contemporary film.

Keywords: *magical realism, space, time, audio and visual, Apichatpong Weerasethakul*

1. Introduction

From its early days, cinema has often been regarded as a medium closely related to dreams. Early filmmakers such as Georges Méliès explored the capacity of film to produce illusions and wonders through visible stagecraft, trick effects, and spectacular transformations, establishing cinema as a "dream machine." However, this early cinematic dream primarily relied on overt spectacle and technical display. In contrast, contemporary magical realist cinema operates not through visible trickery, but through subtle perturbations of perception. In Apichatpong Weerasethakul's magical realist cinema, dreamlike qualities are generated not by spectacle or special effects, but by the reorganization of temporal, spatial, visual, and auditory structures that shape perception. The extraordinary is framed as an extension of everyday life, dissolving the boundaries between dreams, memory, spiritual existence, and the ordinary.

Gee (2021) in Magic Realism, World Cinema, and the Avant-Garde expands the theoretical genealogy of magical realism in cinema. She argues that magical realism is not merely a transplant of a single literary tradition but can be traced back to early experiments in photographic reproduction, which destabilized the relationship between reality and illusion. This lineage is evident in the works of Eisenstein, Buñuel, Murnau, and Maya Deren. Gee emphasizes that magical realism should not be defined as a fixed style or movement, but as a continuously generating aesthetic and ideological discourse, centered on atmosphere, indeterminacy, and the openness of perceptual experience. Her framework provides a theoretical foundation for understanding contemporary world cinema that foregrounds sensory, mnemonic, and spiritual experiences.

Previous studies have explored Apichatpong's films from multiple perspectives of magical realism. Song (2022) approaches his work from phenomenology and film ontology, highlighting the centrality of "body and soul" in his creative vision. Song argues that magical realism in Apichatpong's cinema reveals an alternative reality through the juxtaposition of ghosts, cycles, and multiple realities, expanding both the temporal-spatial dimensions and the aesthetic potentials of cinema. Ma (2022) focuses on spatial narrative and identity construction, analyzing how his distinctive audiovisual language constructs layered, surreal magical spaces where humans, spirits, and animals coexist equally, intertwining memory, myth, and culture. Jiang (2018) examines the philosophical concepts of impermanence and causality, exploring how magical realism arises not from narrative spectacle but from the vitality of the image and the perceptual experience of viewers. In this sense, Apichatpong's films use imagery of jungles, caves, ghosts, and memory to construct a perception structure that is rooted in reality yet transcends it, generating personalized and enduring affective and mnemonic responses in the audience. Moreover, magical realism often treats natural environments, such as forests, rivers, and mountains, as entities imbued with spirituality and vitality, rather than mere backgrounds, with ghosts, deities, or uncanny creatures frequently intertwined with nature. Some studies have examined Apichatpong Weerasethakul's magical realist

works from an ecological perspective. Chaipanit (2022), from an EcoGothic perspective, points out that the "haunted landscapes" and "forgotten memories" in contemporary Thai cinema reflect social-ecological traumas. The presence of ghosts and climatic phenomena not only symbolizes ecological memory but also emphasizes the power and fragility of the natural environment, prompting viewers to reflect on the human-nature relationship. Wu (2012), from the perspective of ecological cinematic language, argues that Apichatpong employs the aesthetic qualities of cinema to draw audiences into the primeval tropical jungle, returning to the source of life and evoking an awareness of the essential role of nature in human life.

Scholars have also analyzed Apichatpong's cinema along the dimensions of space, time, visul, and audio. In terms of space, Boehler (2011) notes that the liminality of the jungle and the defamiliarization of the environment create "border spaces" that challenge centralized Thai narratives. Feng (2021) emphasizes repeated spatial motifs such as forests and hospitals, generating a cyclical spiritual world. Regarding time, Zhang and Zhu (2019) show that Cemetery of Splendour presents multi-dimensional time, including memory time, dream time, and supernatural time, allowing reality to escape, drift, and overlap. Feng highlights the temporal splitting in heterotopic spaces, while studies on Memoria (2021) by Li (2024) and Sun and Huo (2025) analyze how dreamlike audiovisual structures and non-linear narration, combined with long takes, create a poetic construction of time, memory, and identity, keeping audiences engaged in ongoing memory formation. For visual, Boehler (2011) emphasizes the defamiliarized visual effects of jungle landscapes, contrasting with domesticated and exoticized depictions in mainstream cinema. Feng (2021) highlights the reinforcement of dreamlike and cyclical sensations through visual repetition and flow, while Zhang and Zhu (2019) argues that set design injects cultural depth into visual experience, immersing viewers in the cinematic world. Regarding audio, Yi (2025) suggests that the "ghostly" aesthetics of sound summon both the specter of the camera and multiple dimensions of nature, landscape, history, and memory, reflecting temporal flux. Pan (2024) demonstrates how estrangement in sound narrative detaches viewers from conventional storytelling, leading them into a sensorial and spiritual engagement with the film itself. While existing research emphasizes each of these dimensions individually, there is still a lack of systematic integration of spatial, temporal, visual, and audio elements in understanding Apichatpong's magical realist cinema.

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Other scholars have approached Apichatpong Weerasethakul's cinema from diverse critical perspectives. Fuhrmann (2024) reads his films through a Southeast Asian queer framework, highlighting how Buddhist concepts of karma and rebirth are reworked to rethink personhood and relationality. Alvaro (2022) introduces the notion of the "ethno-cinematographic rhizome," drawing on Deleuzian philosophy to describe Apichatpong's assemblage of the everyday and the supernatural through memory, myth and dream. De Cock De Rameyen (2021) reconsiders Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives in light of the Rancière–Deleuze debate, challenging linear narrativity and foregrounding event-based temporality. Extending these concerns, Graiwoot (2022) frames Apichatpong's work as planetary cinema, situating it within posthuman and environmental discourse.

Despite these insights, questions remain regarding how space, time, visual, and audio collectively generate the dreamlike, magical realist experience in Apichatpong's cinema. To address this gap, the present study examines three representative films, including Tropical Malady (2004), Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), and Memoria (2021), through a comprehensive analysis of space, time, visual, and audio strategies. By integrating these dimensions, this research aims to reveal how Apichatpong constructs a unique magical-realist cinematic experience and how his films engage audience perception, memory, and imagination, contributing to broader discussions on contemporary world cinema and sensory aesthetics.

2. Objectives

1) To identify key space and time patterns in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's magical realist cinema.
2) To analyze the role of visual and audio elements in constructing dream-like perception within a magical realist aesthetic.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 source of data

The data for this study are drawn from three representative films by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, including Tropical Malady (2004), Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), and Memoria (2021). The films were viewed on streaming platforms to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the visual and audio content. In addition, supplementary materials such as director interviews, academic analyses, production notes were consulted to provide contextual understanding of the narrative and audio-visual elements. This combination of primary film texts and supporting resources ensures a comprehensive and reliable foundation for analyzing the director's use of space, time, visual, and audio in his magical realist cinema.

3.2 Sampling Rationale

This study employs purposive sampling, selecting three representative films by Apichatpong Weerasethakul to capture the evolution of his cinematic style and his treatment of magical realist elements across different periods of his career. Tropical Malady (2004) was selected as an early work that exemplifies Apichatpong's initial exploration of magical realism, providing a rich foundation for examining his early approaches to the blending of reality with fantasy. Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010) was chosen as a middle-period work that demonstrates a mature integration of magical realism with themes of memory, reincarnation, and environmental consciousness. Its nonlinear narrative, intricate use of space, and ethereal visual and auditory design make it an ideal case for studying the development of Apichatpong's stylistic and thematic techniques. Memoria (2021) was selected as a recent work that reflects the director's contemporary experimentation with temporal perception, spatial ambiguity, and sound as a narrative device By selecting these three films from different stages of the director's career, the study allows for a systematic comparison of spatial, temporal, visual, and auditory techniques, highlighting the continuity and transformation of Apichatpong's magical realist style and ensuring that the cases are information-rich and representative for qualitative analysis.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through repeated viewings of the three films. Detailed notes are taken on narrative structures, audiovisual elements, and recurring motifs. The focus is on capturing information relevant to four analytical dimensions, including space, time, visual, and audio. Spatial data include environments, settings, and heterotopic spaces. Temporal data include shot duration, pacing and temporal layer. Visual data include framing, light, and color composition, while audio data include dialogue, ambient sounds, and music. This method ensures comprehensive documentation of both the formal and thematic features of the films.

3.4 Research Design
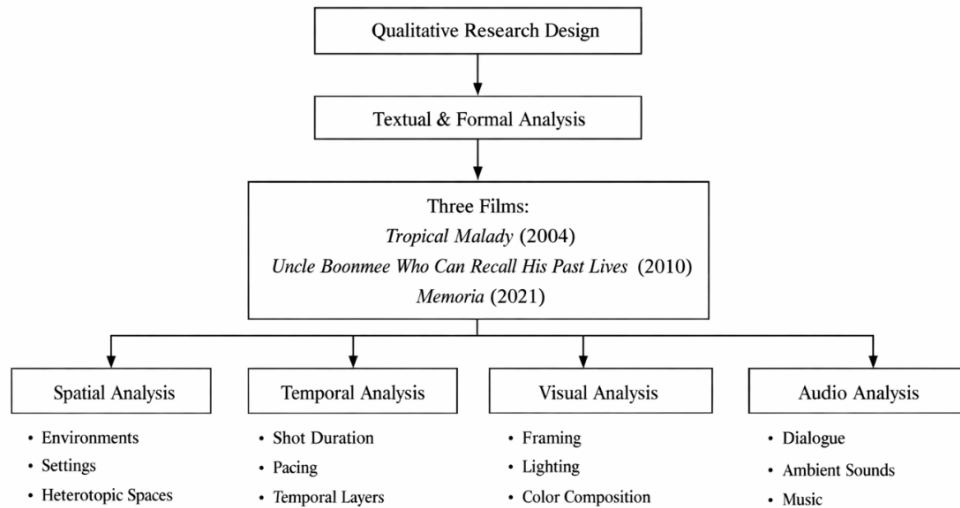
Figure 1 Research design framework

This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing textual and formal analysis to interpret the collected data across the four dimensions of space, time, visual, and audio. Spatial analysis examines environments, settings, and heterotopic spaces, including forests, hospitals, and dreamlike interiors, to explore how they convey memory, identity, and cultural or ecological significance, as well as how characters, spirits, and animals coexist within these spaces. Temporal analysis considers shot duration, pacing, and temporal layers, including past, present, and future, to investigate how non-linear narrative structures, memory sequences, and dreamlike temporality shape audience perception and engagement. Visual analysis evaluates framing, lighting, and color composition to understand how magical realist atmospheres are constructed and how myth, memory, and cultural symbolism are visually represented. Audio analysis focuses on dialogue, ambient sounds, and music, examining how sound design enhances perception, mood, and the evocation of memory or supernatural presence, and how it interacts with spatial and visual elements to create an immersive, multi-sensory experience. By integrating these four dimensions, the research design aims to uncover how Apichatpong's films generate layered, dreamlike, and perceptually rich magical realist experiences. This multi-dimensional approach enables a deeper understanding of how Apichatpong depicts a sensory-driven magical realist landscape, conveying memory, identity, and cultural significance, revealing how his films convey ecological and cultural significance while immersing the audience in a richly sensory experience.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Result
4.1.1 Space and Time

The analysis of Tropical Malady (2004), Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), and Memoria (2021) revealed recurring spatial and temporal patterns that defined Apichatpong Weerasethakul's magical realist cinema. Across the three films, space and time were not treated as neutral narrative frameworks but were structured as perceptual and experiential systems that shaped memory, identity, and sensory engagement.

In terms of environments, Apichatpong consistently contrasted socially constructed human environments with natural landscapes. Domestic spaces, villages, farms, and urban interiors functioned as sites of everyday routines and social order, while forests, caves, rivers, and rural terrains operated as spaces associated with spirituality, memory, and transformation. In Tropical Malady (2004), the village and town environments represented social norms and suppressed intimacy, whereas the forest environment embodied instinct, desire, and spiritual confrontation. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), the farm environment was embedded with personal and historical memory, while the jungle and cave signified cosmological cycles of death and rebirth. In Memoria (2021), urban environments structured Jessica's initial sensory disorientation, while the

rural landscape became a repository of geological and collective memory. These environments functioned not merely as backgrounds but as active forces shaping perception and emotional experience.

Regarding settings, specific locations such as bedrooms, cinemas, pavilions, farms, hospital rooms, recording studios, and caves repeatedly appeared as intimate or transitional spaces. These settings facilitated moments of emotional exposure, memory recall, or perceptual shift. In Tropical Malady (2004) , liminal settings such as cars, cinemas, and forest shelters enabled unspoken intimacy and emotional negotiation. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), the dining table and bedroom allowed living characters and spirits to coexist without rupture, normalizing the overlap of life and death. In Memoria (2021), settings like the sound studio and archaeological site acted as interfaces between internal perception and external reality. These settings supported gradual transitions rather than abrupt spatial shifts, reinforcing a contemplative spatial rhythm.

The most distinctive spatial pattern emerged through heterotopic spaces, where multiple realities, temporalities, and modes of existence coexisted. Forests, caves, dreamlike interiors, and sound-infused landscapes functioned as heterotopic zones that suspended conventional spatial logic. In Tropical Malady (2004), the forest transformed into a psychological and spiritual arena where human and animal identities merged. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), the cave operated as a womb-like heterotopia that connected past lives, present death, and future rebirth. In Memoria (2021), sound itself generated heterotopic space, allowing memory, consciousness, and planetary history to overlap beyond physical geography. These heterotopic spaces dissolved boundaries between self and other, human and non-human, reality and myth.

Temporally, the films demonstrated consistent patterns across shot duration, pacing, and temporal layers. Extended shot durations allowed time to accumulate within the frame, foregrounding stillness, bodily presence, and environmental rhythms. Slow and uneven pacing reduced narrative urgency and encouraged contemplative viewing, privileging sensory perception over plot progression. Layered temporal structures replaced linear chronology with overlapping past, present, and future, integrating memory, myth, and anticipation into a unified temporal field.

Together, these spatial and temporal patterns formed an integrated cinematic system in which environments shaped temporal experience and heterotopic spaces enabled layered temporality. Space functioned as a carrier of time, memory, and affect, while time unfolded through spatial immersion rather than narrative causality. The results indicated that Apichatpong's magical realist cinema consistently constructed a sensory-driven space–time continuum, in which perception, memory, and spirituality were experienced simultaneously rather than sequentially

4.1.2 Visual and Audio

The visual analysis demonstrated that Apichatpong Weerasethakul consistently employed framing, lighting, and color composition to construct a dream-like perceptual experience within a magical realist aesthetic. Across the three films, visual elements functioned not as narrative illustration but as sensory mechanisms that shaped emotional resonance, spiritual presence, and altered states of perception.

In terms of framing, Apichatpong favored fixed framing, long takes, and restrained camera movement to suspend narrative progression and intensify perceptual awareness. Subjective framing was selectively employed to destabilize the viewer's position and blur the boundaries between human, animal, and non-human consciousness. In Tropical Malady (2004), subjective and low-angle framings in the forest suggested a non-human or spiritual gaze, while extended static shots allowed emotional states to emerge gradually without narrative emphasis. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), fixed medium and long framings normalized the coexistence of humans and spirits, particularly in domestic spaces such as the dining table and bedroom, where supernatural presence appeared without visual disruption. In Memoria (2021), prolonged fixed shots and distant framings minimized character-centered narration, foregrounding duration, silence, and environmental rhythms. Across all three films, framing operated as a contemplative device that encouraged observation rather than interpretation, contributing to a dream-like viewing experience.

The analysis revealed a consistent reliance on natural light across the three films, reinforcing the films' sensory realism while enabling spiritual and temporal ambiguity. In Tropical Malady (2004), shifting sunlight within the forest created fluctuating patterns of shadow and illumination, transforming natural environments into spaces of spiritual encounter. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), soft daylight filtering through curtains and windows blurred the visual boundary between the living and the dead, particularly during scenes of spiritual visitation. In Memoria (2021), natural light shaped both urban and rural spaces, allowing

environments to retain material realism while subtly evoking memory and geological time. Rather than dramatizing supernatural elements, lighting remained subdued and organic, enabling magical presence to emerge as part of everyday perception.

Regarding color composition, Apichatpong adopted restrained and earthy palettes dominated by greens, browns, muted blues, and neutral tones. In Tropical Malady (2004), dense green hues of the forest contrasted with the subdued tones of human environments, visually marking the transition from social reality to spiritual terrain. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), warm and desaturated colors within domestic and rural settings conveyed intimacy, memory, and temporal continuity, reducing the visual distinction between present life and past existence. In Memoria (2021), muted urban grays and natural earth tones emphasized emotional restraint and perceptual quietness, while avoiding expressive color symbolism. Across the films, color composition avoided visual excess and instead supported a calm, meditative atmosphere that reinforced the films' dream-like texture.

Taken together, framing, light, and color composition functioned as an integrated visual system that shaped dream-like perception without relying on visual spectacle or overt surrealism. The results indicated that Apichatpong's magical realist aesthetic emerged through visual restraint, temporal extension, and sensory subtlety, allowing perception, memory, and spiritual presence to unfold organically within the cinematic image.

The audio analysis revealed that dialogue, ambient sounds, and music played a central role in shaping dream-like perception within Apichatpong Weerasethakul's magical realist aesthetic. Across the three films, audio functioned not merely as narrative support but as a perceptual structure that guided emotional states, temporal experience, and spiritual awareness.

Regarding dialogue, Apichatpong consistently employed restrained, minimal, and sometimes destabilized vocal expression. In Tropical Malady, spoken language gradually receded in the second half of the film, giving way to non-verbal and non-human communication, including distorted radio noise and the ambiguous human-animal voice of the tiger spirit. Dialogue in this context no longer served narrative clarity but contributed to perceptual uncertainty and the blurring of human and non-human boundaries. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), dialogue between living characters and spirits was delivered in calm, ordinary tones without dramatic emphasis, normalizing supernatural presence and integrating it into everyday reality. In Memoria (2021), dialogue remained sparse and understated, often surrounded by silence, reinforcing Jessica's isolation and positioning sound itself, rather than speech, as the primary carrier of meaning. Across the films, dialogue was reduced in expressive dominance, allowing silence, tone, and vocal texture to shape dream-like perception.

Ambient sounds emerged as a dominant auditory layer in all three films, contributing significantly to the construction of immersive sensory spaces. In Tropical Malady (2004), dense jungle soundscapes composed of insects, wind, and distant animal calls occupied the foreground of the sound design, transforming the forest into a spiritually charged environment. These sounds were not backgrounded but remained persistently present, creating a sense of being enveloped by sound. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), minimal ambient sounds during nocturnal scenes, such as soft insect noise and subtle air movement, reinforced a meditative atmosphere in which life, death, and memory coexisted. In Memoria (2021), environmental sounds such as rain, wind, footsteps, birds, and flowing water were recorded with heightened clarity and duration, functioning as markers of time rather than narrative cues. Across the films, ambient sound shaped a sensory experience in which time appeared stretched, suspended, or cyclical, reinforcing dream-like perception.

The use of music, particularly popular music, displayed a distinctive pattern of discontinuity and transition. In Tropical Malady (2004), popular songs appeared at structurally significant moments, such as the transition between narrative halves, where music functioned as an auditory threshold rather than emotional reinforcement. In Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), the sudden insertion of popular music near the film's conclusion created a rupture between meditative spiritual space and modern everyday life, generating perceptual dislocation. In Memoria (2021), music appeared primarily in localized cultural contexts, such as rehearsals and public spaces, grounding the film in specific social and historical environments while contrasting with the protagonist's internal auditory experiences. Across the three films, music did not guide emotional response in a conventional cinematic manner but instead marked shifts in perception, reality, and temporal alignment.

When considered alongside the visual results, the audio findings indicated that sound and image operated as an integrated perceptual system. While framing, light, and color composition slowed visual rhythm and encouraged contemplative viewing, dialogue reduction, ambient sound emphasis, and discontinuous music design guided the audience toward heightened sensory awareness. Together, visual and audio elements constructed a

dream-like cinematic experience grounded in perception rather than narrative causality, allowing magical realist moments to emerge organically through sound, silence, and duration.

4.2 Discussion

This study conducts a multidimensional analysis of the magical realist cinema of Apichatpong Weerasethakul, focusing on patterns of time and space as well as the role of visual and auditory elements in the construction of dream-like perception. The findings indicate that Apichatpong does not organize time and space through conventional narrative logic. Instead, he employs shot duration, spatial repetition and displacement, and gradual transformations of color and sound to construct a perceptual structure akin to the "time-image." Through this approach, cinema becomes a magical realist tableau centered on sensory experience rather than narrative causality.

In terms of spatial dimensions, the results demonstrate that space in Apichatpong's films does not merely function as a narrative backdrop, but operates as a carrier of emotion, memory, and cultural experience. This observation closely aligns with Zhang's (2024) argument in The Aesthetics of Cinematic Space: Scene Design and Emotional Expression, which posits that cinematic space is a natural extension of emotion and narrative rather than a purely decorative visual element. In Apichatpong's works, spaces such as jungles, villages, hospitals, and domestic interiors recur across films, yet undergo perceptual transformations under different temporal conditions. As a result, space itself becomes a site of emotional flow and psychological projection. This spatial strategy enhances viewer immersion and enables Apichatpong's cinema to remain perceptible and intelligible across cultural contexts, echoing Zhang's (2023) observation that the abstract themes and minimalist narratives of Apichatpong's films facilitate cross-cultural reception.

At the visual level, the study further reveals the significant role of color in emotional and psychological construction. Wang (2017) notes that the color green in Apichatpong's films symbolizes the release of primal desire and a return to the "id," functioning as a form of spiritual redemption under conditions of social repression. This research finds that color does not operate in isolation, but interacts with natural environments, long takes, and low-intervention cinematography to produce a slowly unfolding sensory experience. Rather than guiding viewers' emotions through dramatic conflict, this visual strategy gradually draws them into the characters' psychological states.

Regarding temporal structure, the findings show that Apichatpong weakens linear temporality while emphasizing the perceptual and material qualities of time through precise control of shot length, segmentation, and rhythmic variation. This is particularly evident in Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010). Although viewers may not consciously recognize this structure, such segmented temporal organization produces layered experiences of time, further exemplifying the non-causal and non-teleological temporality characteristic of Deleuze's (2013) concept of the time-image.

In addition, Zhang and Weerasethakul's (2020) interview-based study of Apichatpong's treatment of time and space provides important theoretical support for the present findings. Apichatpong regards magic as an integral part of everyday life rather than as a dramatized spectacle. This perspective allows supernatural elements to overlap naturally with ordinary reality, generating a form of psychological realism. The present study finds that this "everyday magic" is achieved through temporal delay, spatial stillness, and the environmentalization of sound, gradually guiding viewers into a dream-like perceptual state without overt narrative cues.

At the level of audio and overall sensory experience, the findings also resonate with Apichatpong's remarks in an interview (Nascimento Duarte & Bértolo, 2016), in which he emphasized that cinema is shifting from storytelling toward experience and asserted that film has always been an imitation of dreams. The study shows that through the use of ambient sound, natural noise, and silence, sound in Apichatpong's films ceases to function as a tool for narrative advancement and instead participates in the shaping of time itself. Together with visual elements, sound contributes to a boundless sensory experience. This experience-oriented creative strategy imbues his films with strong ecological and cultural implications, encouraging viewers to engage with the cinematic world through embodied perception rather than rational interpretation.

In conclusion, this study argues that through the multilayered interweaving of time, space, visual, and audio, Apichatpong Weerasethakul constructs a magical realist cinematic landscape driven primarily by sensory experience. This creative mechanism not only transcends the structural limitations of traditional narrative cinema but also offers a new perspective for understanding how contemporary films construct cinematic worlds through perception, memory, and cultural experience.

5. Conclusion

This study conducts a systematic analysis of Apichatpong Weerasethakul's magical realist cinema through four dimensions: space, time, visual, and audio. The findings indicate that his films do not rely on conventional linear narrative structures or dramatic conflict; instead, they construct a sensory-centered cinematic form through the careful orchestration of perceptual experience.

Temporally, Apichatpong employs long takes, controlled pacing, and segmented structures to produce nonlinear and multilayered temporal configurations. These strategies guide viewers into a dream-like mode of perception rather than toward a clearly defined narrative resolution. Spatially, natural landscapes and everyday environments are no longer treated as mere narrative backdrops but emerge as affective fields that carry memory, identity, and ecological consciousness. On the visual level, variations in composition, lighting, and color intensify emotional atmosphere and symbolic resonance. Audio further complicates perceptual boundaries through the interplay of environmental noise, dialogue, and music, blurring distinctions between the real and the supernatural and deepening viewer immersion.

By integrating these four dimensions, this research demonstrates how Apichatpong transforms magical realism into a "normalized" mode of perception, one rooted in everyday experience rather than explicit spectacle or fantasy. His cinema does not present an escapist dream detached from reality but instead constructs a magical realist landscape woven from time, space, and sensory perception. The study concludes that sensory experience occupies a central position in Apichatpong's cinematic aesthetics and offers new analytical pathways and theoretical perspectives for the study of time, space, and perception in contemporary art cinema.

6. Suggestions

6.1 General Suggestions

Lecturers in movie or media studies programs can be encouraged to include magical realist films in their curricula to help students understand how Asian directors like Apichatpong Weerasethakul challenge and enrich global visual and audio languages.

6.2 Future Research Suggestions

The researcher could analyze how storytelling is interpreted and reproduced across the different receiver groups.

The educational fields of television series and motion pictures can apply the findings of this research on Apichatpong Weerasethakul's films as valuable case studies to examine how visual and audio techniques adapt to different periods and platforms.

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