Representation of Muslim Women in Indonesian Film Posters with Islamic Nuance

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Abstract—**This research studied the meaning of Muslim women representation displayed by Indonesian film posters in Islamic nuances. This research limits the object research to posters launched from 2007 to 2019. The formulations of the problem study are 1. What are the visual descriptions of poster elements depicted in the posters? 2. Through semiotic study, what is the meaning of Muslim women representations in Indonesian movie posters with Islamic-nuance? 3. How is the social pattern and social assumptions being shown in the posters? Furthermore, this research was conducted with a sign analysis as an interpretive method, and a hyper-semiotic approach. As a result, this study has shown that women are still placed as subordinates, both in their role in the family and in their role in the social environment of the society. The study interprets that women represented in the posters showed that Indonesian society still values women's outer appearances, such as a good-looking woman and good body figure as a commodification of religious theme. In short, movie posters no longer have an informative function of film figures or characters, in the same way; they're not showing a function of persuasion too. However, female figures presented in the posters have become a commodity to achieve other economic benefits and woman-gaze.**

Keywords—film posters, representation, women, Muslim women, interpretation

I. INTRODUCTION

Films and posters are two things that need and are related. Posters help the film get recognized by the general public. It has been a long time since the film industry has used poster media to popularize its films. The film poster, through its elements, follows the trend in its development and has a certain cultural pattern that represents the social community of its era.

Posters are A part of graphic arts that has its own style, flow, and trend that cannot be separated from the level of mastery of technology and lifestyle from an era [1]. In addition to that, Carter and DeNoon stated that posters are an art form that can influence and have a strong impact on the public, can attract attention and provide information to a wide audience and can even change the life of the reader [2].

This also makes the poster a cultural object that records the spirit of the times. The poster at the same time becomes a mass communication medium where the elements in it can be examined, the meaning is revealed to be able to reveal the meaning and meaning of the symbolic interaction of the elements in the poster. The elements in the poster become a symbol of human activities, community activities, contemporary culture, although not always in the form of direct visual communication.

The other side of the poster is how it can change the life of the reader. In this study, there is an assumption when looking at the phenomenon of Islamic film posters, how the representation of Muslim women in the posters has both gaps and is within the boundaries of a social crisis.

Female figures are often present in Islamic film posters because the main actors of these films are usually women. The condition of cultural representation through Islamic film posters from time to time often presents a representation of Muslim women who represent glamor, modernity, have a narrative about the inferiority position of women in the family and society, and the emergence of misogynistic aspects in it. Posters are medium for composing community thinkers. Therefore, instead of arousing enthusiasm such as being able to communicate the freedom of opinion of Muslim women, or the high degree of Muslim women in Islam, contradictory, they're instead displaying the opposite elements. Crisis like this is what makes the writer interested in examining the emergence of Muslim women-themed film posters through the representation of Muslim women that they display. Therefore, interpretative research is needed to be able to describe the socio-cultural conditions of a society, in order to provide a new view of hidden meanings that can penetrate the minds of audiences on social conditions and their perspective on Muslim women through the phenomenon of Islamic-themed film posters.

The Islamic-themed film started and reached its fame point back in 2008, when the appearance of the film Ayat-Ayat Cinta succeeded in reaching many audiences and was successful in the market. Even though Indonesian films with Islamic themes have been around since the 1960s, the moment of their

resurgence after a long absence, namely in 2008, was the beginning of data sampling Islamic film posters in this study. So this research will take some of the most successful film posters in the year from 2007- 2019 as a research material.

The formulated problem can be described as follows:

- How is the content analysis of Muslim women's representations based on social theory related to the signs on Indonesian film posters with religious themes?

- What are the interpretations of the meaning, patterns, and social presuppositions of the representation of Muslim women on Indonesian film posters with religious themes?

The research is aimed to analyze women representation as an effort to change social conditions that aims to open the eyes of many people, change the way of seeing the posters that are full of false awareness that is presented in the posters. Content analysis research also aims to identify visual patterns, visual themes, noodles and the subsequent meanings behind the tangible signs presented.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Women Existence in Film Poster

Behind the attractive visualization, posters as promotional media are never separate from the figure of a woman. Almost all film posters circulating in society contain women as subjects or objects in them. Women are physically very attractive, especially to men. Media advertisers decided to use female figures because they thought they could steal the attention of viewers, consequently become one of the reasons why the women figure is always appearing on film posters. Women tend to reappear in many film posters because of their beauty.

According to Ismiani, if in an advertising between medium and the presence of the characters are the same - male and female - then women are usually chosen. The criteria are, among others, because of their beauty, women are often a source of inspiration, including in giving birth to a product [3]. There are quite a number of advertising media targeting large audiences, either women or men audiences will prefer women who are graceful, polite, and beautiful. In addition to that, men audiences prefer to like women who are look sexy. A woman tends to be a subject of the poster, even when the main character in a movie is man. Furthermore, Islamic nuance film posters in Indonesia are doing the exactly the same thing since the growth of Islamic movie in 2008.

There are many things growing in Indonesia that differentiated women and men position in society. Commonly, women will always related to their outer-look, appearances of beauty standards, and their behavior ruled by eastern inherited norms and traditions. Only a few sociological rules at certain regions in Indonesia where has matrilineal system in their traditional norms.

In contrary, in Islam, gender differentiation wasn't being developed since early Islam development until today's society. Quote Siauw's [4]: a woman in Islam is highly respected where as her position is not different than men. Unlike patriarchal system where women are always behind men, Islam positioning women in the same level to compete the same path to pursue wealth, throne, and love, in this life which will certainly be dominated by men. In short, Muslim Women are never being in a subordinating position compared to men. There are certain rules in Islam showing women in graceful positions than men, and men fully responsible for taking care of their women (mother, daughter, sisters, and wife) in each and every step of women's stages of life. These rules are often seen as a form of a co-dependency, while others view this as proof that women are a dignified human being, that cannot be abandoned or let alone in each life stage because of their worthiness.

B. Representation Theory

Representation is something that we believe after we absorbs symbols and signs, verbally, visually, or signs in cultural system. Representation often giving false signs to the sign receiver, moreover, representation is not reflecting the equal thing to its representment. Representation is not the real reality (real world) [5]. On the contrary, media is a representation of the social world (social world). Therefore, there will always be a gap between real reality (real world) and media representation of the social world (social world). In other words, there may be a confusion of meaning between actual values and the values represented through the media. Stuart Hall in Syah also said that representation is a construction of meaning being produced through language using symbols which manifestation is not only through verbal cues but also visually [5]. The gaps of the differences are something that we analyzed within this research on film poster visualization.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research has aimed to analyze women's representation as an effort to change social conditions that were aimed to open the eyes of many people, change the way of seeing the posters that are full of false awareness that has had presented in the posters, by using representation of semiotics theory. Content analysis research also has aimed to identify visual patterns, visual themes, noodles, and the subsequent meanings behind the tangible signs that have been presented.

IV. DISCUSSION

As a discussion of the research, there are 12 movie samples which became our data sampling. The sampling was taken since it was showing a great number in gaining an audience. The pioneering movie in Islamic nuance is Ayat-Ayat Cinta in 2007, which soon gained 1,5 million viewers at that time. Decades after this movie are a series of Islamic movie sequences that were showing in theatres.

TABLE I. HIGHLIGHTS TIMELINE OF INDONESIA ISLAMIC FILM THAT SHOWING MUSLIM WOMEN IN ITS POSTERS

Highlights timeline of indonesia islamic film that showing muslim women in its posters. Source: Researcher 2020		
Movie title	*Year*	*Viewers number [a]*
Ayat-ayat Cinta	2007	3,5 million reviewers
Ketika Cinta Bertasbih 1	2009	3,1 million reviewers
Ketika Cinta Bertasbih 2	2009	2 million reviewers
Perempuan Berkalung Sorban	2009	700 thousand reviewers
Sang Pencerah	2010	1,2 million reviewers
99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa	2013	2 million reviewers
Assalamu'alaikum Beijing	2014	500 thousand reviewers
Bulan Terbelah di Langit Amerika	2015	900 thousand reviewers
Surga yang Tak Dirindukan 1	2015	1,5 million reviewers
Surga yang Tak Dirindukan 2	2017	1,5 million reviewers
Ayat-ayat Cinta 2	2017	2,8 million reviewers
Hanum dan Rangga	2018	400 thousand reviewers

[a.] Source of viewer: various sites shown at google.com

We divided these movies based on their visualization in their posters into two groups. There is one group in which its posters represent subordinating women roles and positions, while another group is showing women independence. We tried to analyze that is our hypothesis of these divided groups is valid or not. We tried to know whether the visual representation showing signs that once we thought of.

The first group film poster are from movies (figure 1): Ayat-Ayat Cinta (1st & 2nd), Ketika Cinta Bertasbih (1st & 2nd), Sang Pencerah, Surga yang Tak Dirindukan (1st & 2nd), Hanum dan Rangga.

Source: google.com/images

Fig. 1. Poster of Ayat-Ayat Cinta (1st & 2nd), Ketika CInta Bertasbih (1st & 2nd).

Denotative that we saw in these posters can be inferred that women were positioned as a subordinate person. Another similarity is the same visual pattern found where a Muslim woman is wearing the religious symbol of the hijab. This Muslim woman seems to be competing with female figures who don't wear any religious symbols. The man is in the middle, facing the woman wearing the Muslim attribute, while the position of the woman as the third person is slightly away from the male and female Muslim pair. In the second edition of the poster, numbers of people are shown more which makes the visual relationship between the male and female figures more complicated. On the poster of the film Ayat-ayat Cinta 2, there is only one man and four women. Meanwhile, in the poster for the film Surga yang Tak Dirindukan 2, there are two female figures with two male figures facing each other. Overall, if you pay attention to other films in this first group, the visualization of the posters of the films signifies the relationship between the love triangle story, with the addition of other characters from the complexity of the love triangle story. Showing there is woman who is in subordinated position. Above all, women representations in these posters are not as a focal point, they were always on the left and right of the poster.

The first poster group is showing an interpretation that the Islamic theme is merely a commodification. This happened because the visualization that was displayed only borrowed religious symbols without paying attention to the real religious messages. This poster is designed to ignore conventions, codes, life values, religious values, and the social meaning of how a pious person has to become. Commodification of religion only makes a religion an industrial commodity of supply [5]. The supply sold to increase economic benefit. Muslim women represent here have nothing to do with religious messages they should bring within the movie. Only in the film Sang Pencerah which visualizes different values, even so, the female figure shown is positioned as subordinate too. The relation of a love triangle represents a hype theme that intriguing people's curiosity, passion, and ecstasy in life. Women in posters are not showing character they played in the movie or as an actress, they showing perfections of women stereotype in beauty standard, just to get men's attention. Thus these first group of poster is only an industrial object of commodity as Piliang [6] wrote what capitalist society does to culture is making culture obey to the law of commodity. Society like such is only has an outcome of a cultural industry. A movie poster with women represent on it is one commodity product of cultural industry.

The second group film poster is from movies: Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 99 Cahaya di Langit Amerika, Assalamu'alaikum Beijing, Bulan Terbelah di Langit Eropa. These movies are sample in reflecting other posters which are similar.

In the second group, denotation was presented from signs that emphasizing the female figure to be the center point. In addition, women displayed a bigger size in the middle. Several posters present a female figure without presenting a significant relation with a male figure. The meaning of the poster connotations in this second group, represents independence,

freedom of action, and opinion. As we all know that has been an issue about Islamophobia, Allen [7] wrote that Islamophobia – the demonization of human beings for no other reason than their Muslim faith. Muslim world have been trying their best to diminish this phobia. As these second group of poster also shows the same thing.

As we can see that in these posters were showing free acts to communicate to other social groups other than Muslims and to express how the real Muslim world is, how Muslim women deliberately live and socialize in this world. This kind of act were stated and suggested in Copenhagen Declaration, as rewritten by Allen [7] the freedom of expression was far from absolute and that legal recourse was necessary against incitement to violence, discrimination, or spread hatred towards any groups in the society on the basis of religion, race or sex.

Source: google.com/images

Fig. 2. Poster of Bulan Terbelah di Langit Amerika, Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa, Assalamu'alaikum Beijing.

Furthermore, the Copenhagen Declaration also suggested that there should be a bridge of dialogue to encourage understanding of various of different faiths and cultures. These posters depict icons of multiculturalism that were showed by

how Muslims women dress up, landmarks and buildings of other cultural countries, beliefs and faiths that were also used as story backgrounds in their movies. In short, the posters in this second group present foreign nuances, with the presence of European, American, and Beijing countries, both in the story and in the visual signs that are presented on the poster. A flag appears in the background, a typical foreign building facade shows, together with fashion attributes that adapt to the season and weather of a foreign country are shown here.

The second group of posters aimed to eliminate the stigma of Islamophobia and the issues of restraint of women in Islam are trying to neutralize here. Instead of representing Islamic nuance with religious messages, the film posters here offer the dreams of many Indonesian women who want to migrate and live independently abroad. Thus, the posters in this group are having connotations meaning to diminish social issues. These posters of the group also showing the relationship between women's thoughts in the contemporary world with all its demands to be independent, and powerful so that it can change the women's way of thinking to empowered many other women across cultural/religious group.

V. Conclusion

Representation of Muslim Women in Islamic film posters is merely a commodification and business. They still visualize a good-looking woman who follows the global beauty standard and does not represent Muslim women in the real world. The visualization only represents the fascination of classic mindset on how beautiful human being women are, excluding Muslim's convention, codes, and values.

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