

'ISLAM' AS NEW GENRE

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ABSTRACT

The revival of Islam in the political discourse in Indonesia after the collapse of new order period implicated in the adoption of Islamic way of life of people in every day life. This situation has brought to the production of movies containing Islamic values. The movies were successful in attracting audience and triggered the same movies produced. The emergence of special movies with Islamic content for religious marketplace-at this context, for Muslim audience-has created a new genre in movie industry during the post new order in Indonesia. As a new genre, Islamic movies were made with their generic convention, including structural codes and patterns, which build the movie texts, such as iconography, characterization, setting, dialogue type, and narration. This paper will identify and analyze what and how the generic convention consisted in Islamic movies within Indonesian context. By using genre analyses proposed by Thwaites *et. al* (1994), this paper will explore the structure of the texts, and link to the context, in order to describe and define the Islamic movies as new movie genre in Indonesia. According to Thwaites *et. al*, this analysis offered the reading of genre focusing on the textual and contextual effects. The analytical process not only reads the structure and elements of representation, but also enables to read and study the choice of subject matter contained in the movies and its relation to the social context of the process of meaning production. This paper also explains the representation of Islamic values, gender relation, and also the depiction of western culture, which often mentioned as the opposite of Islam and middle-east culture. As the conclusion, this analysis will describe on how the Islamic movies represent the face of Islam in the setting of the radical change of mediascape and political regime in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of *Ayat-ayat Cinta* in gaining three million viewers in just three weeks since its release has created a new genre in Indonesian film industry, namely religious film. It is proven by the productions of similar films, such as, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*, or *Sang Pencerah* which successfully gained numerous interests. This genre's booming is responded positively, especially from *ulema* (Islamic religious leaders) for these films use popular culture in spreading Islamic values as well as have recovered the perception on Islam among non-Muslims after the 9/11 bombing. However, there are people who concern on the controversial contents in the films, which are similar to other mass media, like, polygamy, or conservative religious messages that promote ideological ideas through iconic cultural symbols.

Out of the pros and cons, religious films turn out to be promising commodities since they have their own segments. *Ayat-ayat Cinta* can bring religious communities—members of women's religious group, students of Islamic boarding school, religious leaders, and people who mainly avoid mall or theater for their being 'not-so-Islamic'—to visit theaters and to watch this film. Film is not the first medium in term of commercializing religious content through popular culture. By the beginning of 2000s, popular culture had immersed

Islamic elements in its products. For example, Islamic-themed soap operas, religious-themed music, or Islamic literatures were sold during Ramadhan and Eid-el Fitr.

The end of the New Order era had boosted a more democratic system. Free market and globalization brought various influences, including liberalism. Those circumstances helped the emergence of Islamic cultural products. Throughout the New Order era, Islam and its groups were marginalized under former president Suharto's military-styled leadership. Yet, around 1990s, right after Suharto conducted his pilgrimage, Islam and its groups gained better supports from the president himself. It happens since Suharto feels a weakened support from the military (Handajani, 2010, p.97). The fall of Suharto's era had marked the end of authoritarian period and the beginning of democratic governance. This was the time for Islamic groups to grow. In Suharto's age, it was only *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU) and *Muhammadiyah* which represented Islamic groups. When the new era came, groups, like *Hizbut Tahrir*, *Jaringan Islam Liberal*, *Front Pembela Islam*, etc., started to develop.

1990s is the time of expanding industries along with economic liberalization policy and open market implemented by the new governance (Vickers, 2005, p.198). Globalization is responsible for various cultures and ideologies coming to the country. This is when media industrialization era started and controlled by stakeholders. In addition, most of the stakeholders are commercial-oriented. Consequently, media goes hand-in-hand with marketing strategies, which are expected to obtain maximum profits. One of media's potential strategies is to wrap a product with up-to-date issues to attract public's attention. Islam, one of the issues, reaches its momentum after the fall of the New Order era. One of the media used this issue is film.

Before the booming of Islamic-themed film in 2000s, religious films had been produced in the previous era. Asrul Sani, a legendary Indonesian director, had made several religious films, for instance, *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh* and *Al-Kautsar*. Some other popular films in the era are *Sunan Kalijaga* and *Wali Songo*, which were regarded more successful in presenting Islamic values as well as becoming a medium of religious teaching, especially in dealing with serious issues (Kusuma, 2008). For instance, *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh* depicted what conservative and modern Islam was. Another example, *Sunan Kalijaga* told about the struggle of Sunan Kalijaga, a well-known religious leader, in spreading Islamic values. Different from the above-mentioned films, *Ayat-ayat Cinta* or *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* put more emphasis to romance wrapped in Islamic values, added with the depiction of life of Islamic youth nowadays.

As discussed above, the booming of religious films bring up the assumption that the films are not essentially functioning as religious teaching media. Current religious films are regarded as commodities that bring profits. As the result, religious films are frequently blamed for bringing up Islamic values as a part of marketing strategies. There is no significant difference between religious and romance films after all. Islamic values are being used to cover up romance narrated in the film. Consequently, messages of the films become superficial and bland.

This paper is not in the capacity of making normative evaluation upon the shift in values in the religious films. The researcher puts greater interest in seeing the way religious films discussing Islam and in what context does the films discussing Islam. Thus, the researcher conducts an analysis on general conventions upon religious films produced after the New Order era. These conventions will explain how Islam is depicted in religious films, as well as the way Islam is presented through storyline, character, iconography, and narration in the films.

INTEGRATING RELIGION AND MEDIA

Debates on religion and media have been done in ages. Religion gives a room for individual faith to his or her Creator. On the other hand, media is regarded as secular for being part of cultural industry. Religion and media are essentially not made for each other. However, development in technology has triggered the media; such as films, television programs, songs, novels, or radio programs, loaded with religious messages. Biersdorjer (2002) refers them as religion finds technology (Meyer and Moors, 2006, p.1).

Problem arises when religion and media are interrelated. Does it mean that religion-a transcendental form of expression-has submitted to commercialization? Mass media has a power in disseminating global messages and commonly used by religious leaders to spread religious teaching. Media is regarded beneficial in term of spreading religious teaching extensively and efficiently. For that reason, media will be the solution to public needs on religious messages.

Nonetheless, there is a shift in the function of media recently. Media has no longer conveyed messages oriented to public needs. They turn to what public wants. Media is not only delivering contents as well as preaches, but also showing the way religious practices presented in media culture's frames. The programs may not be explicitly labeled as religious-themed programs; however, substantially, they refer to certain religious practices. Consequently, there has been commodification in the media. Religious commodification in any media is inevitable. It happens when religion has transformed into media content and its followers become target market. As other forms of commodification, religion has become a lifestyle. As a result, its values will be abandoned.

The success of *The Passion of the Christ* directed by Mel Gibson-depicting the life of Jesus-has opened the practices of religion's commodification made by media, especially in form of films. This film reaches top box office chart; yet, there is barely significant difference compared to other Hollywood products that usually sell director's fame or controversial issue as the film commodity (Einsten, 2007, p.1). This rationale explains how media industrialization is primarily profit-oriented and usually disregarded public needs.

MEDIA INDUSTRIALIZATION AFTER THE NEW ORDER ERA

Media is the apparatus where certain sciences operate. As an apparatus, media has and believe in certain ideology. Althuser (1970) explains how media becomes ideological state apparatuses, that media takes part in state apparatus (in Barker, 2009, p.46). It happens in Indonesia during the New Order era. Media, at that time, was repressed to fully support the state's cause. After the New Order regime, media starts its industrialization. Media has shifted its function, from state's power to market competition. Media no longer runs state's policy; it is then oriented to stakeholders who operate media's commercialization activities. The rationale of industry is how to hit a certain target efficiently and effectively. This rationale has lead media practice to regimented, homogeneous, and procedural; even though, in term of content, media tends to be fragmented and heterogeneous. Media does offer variety of content; yet, its format and genre is still homogeneous (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.4). Media program itself still heavily refers to rating and share. Accordingly, entertainment programs obtain the highest rating and share, since these programs can easily attract advertisers. Hence, media will put forward its content to profitable entertainment programs (Fairclough, 1995, p.10). Postman (2005) mentions that media has put greater emphasis on entertainment programs than informative and educative programs. It is done to support the economic system of media itself. Media contents do offer various discourses; nevertheless, they are wrapped in single format, namely entertainment. Consequently, those discourses become

meaningless. This is what exactly happens to the booming of religious films. Messages on Islamic teaching turn out to be meaningless since delivering the messages no longer become orientation on making those films.

GENRE ANALYSIS AS A RESEARCH METHOD

This research, focusing on religious films, used genre analysis method. This method became the analysis tool that enabled the researcher to identify and to analyze general conventions used among the films. In conducting genre analysis, the researcher found out tendencies on structure among the religious films when discussing about Islam. According to Thwaites *et.al.* (1994, p.95), this analysis proposes genre reading which mainly focuses on textual and contextual effects. In this case, analysis process not only reads the structure or element represented by a certain genre, but also enables the researcher to read and analyze choices of subject matter from the chosen genre and its social context relation in the process of meaning production.

In conducting the analysis, the researcher used genre method by Jane Stokes (2003, p.97) by identifying several elements, namely basic ideas, characters, setting, iconography, and narrative events seen in eight religious films which became the object of the research. The eight films are listed as followed.

Table 1. List of Films under analysis

No	Titles	Year of production
1	<i>Kiamat Sudah Dekat</i>	2003
2	<i>Ayat-ayat Cinta</i>	2008
3	<i>Perempuan Berkalung Sorban</i>	2009
4	<i>Ketika Cinta Bertasbih – 1 and 2</i>	2009
5	<i>Dalam Mihrab Cinta</i>	2009
6	<i>3 Doa 3 Cinta</i>	2010
7	<i>Sang Pencerah</i>	2011
8	<i>Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah</i>	2011

RELIGIOUS (ISLAMIC-THEMED) FILMS AFTER THE NEW ORDER ERA

Islam In Indonesia

During the New Order era, under the leadership of Suharto, Islam as a social and political movement had gone through a subordination. Authoritarian governance led by Suharto and supported by military force was the main cause of it. Islam's exclusion was started by the rejection on *Syari'ah* system-registered by Islamic groups-to be part of the state's ideology. This rejection was based on the understanding that Indonesia is not an Islamic state.

Suharto, as the supreme leader in the era, had declared *Pancasila* as the only state's ideology. Consequently, it then made Islam excluded. The existence of Islamic groups at that time was mainly independent and non-affiliated to any political interest. It then drove these groups to stand against New Order's policies and political power (Collins, 2007, p.154).

The end of Suharto's governance had started the revival of Islam in the 1990s. At that point, Suharto started to lose support from the military. He then turned to Islam as a potential power to support his presidency. The government's form of support to Islam was by approving new Islamic organization named ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia/Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals*). According to Vickers, ICMI is

designed to attract the attention of middle class societies as the influential group in Indonesia at that time. In the following years, ICMI was successful in accommodating Muslim communities' aspirations (2005, p.200-202). New Order also forms Department of Religious Affairs to take care of religious matters, like, marriage, inheritance, and *zakat* (alms) (Collins, 2007, p.157). Suharto also conducted his hajj or pilgrimage to confirm his attention to Islam.

Suharto's support to Islam is considered successful in creating significant changes in how Islam is expressed in public (Robison, in Handajani, 2001, p.96). The increasing number of women wearing *hijab* (headscarf) and the development of Islamic-themed pop culture, such as, novels, television programs, soap operas, songs, etc., were substantial indicators to illustrate how Islamic identity had been expressed in public space.

Suharto's regime ended in 1998. The post-Suharto's government gave greater room for Islamic groups to expand their organizations into social and political movements. In this era, there were new Islamic-based social and political movements. There were various ideologies used by the organizations, such as, liberal, democratic, radical, and militant. All fought for Islamic ideology to be adopted by the state.

The Emergence Of 'Islamic' Consumer

The emergence of broader space for Islamic groups during New Order era was followed by the adoption of Islam as a way of life by the public. The sound of *adzan* (prayer's call) got more and more familiar during praying times; the greeting of *assalamu'alaikum* during phone calls or at times Muslims meet one another were getting more common; women wearing *hijab* were developing; or, still considered constant controversy, polygamy as part of Muslim men's identities was discussed to wider audiences. The demand on making the Islamic values and norms as way of life is getting stronger, for example, ideas on applying Islamic laws in many areas in Indonesia and movements to stand against pornography.

Industry sees a commercial side of the aforementioned Islam-related issues and makes them into products. It then creates products specifically designed to fulfill people's need in adopting Islam as a way of life. As an example, a famous shampoo brand, *Sunsilk*, introduces product for women who wears *hijab*. Another example is food products sold with *halal* label. Islamic schools are developing rapidly, from playgroup to university. Cosmetic products and women fashion are also fast-growing. Nowadays, *hijab* is not only seen as a compulsory among Muslim women to cover up their body parts, but it is also a lifestyle. Therefore, there are many *hijabers* communities to unify these Muslim women who put forward *hijab* fashion. It marks the emergence of Islam's target market or customer—those who become the targets of Islamic products.

Feally marks the aforementioned phenomenon as Islam commodification. In Indonesia, Islam as a commodity goes hand-in-hand with socio-economic, technological and cultural shifts. The shifts have driven individuals to pursue improvements in morality, spiritual enrichment, and religious identity (2008, p.16).

In addition, Feally explains that consumption on Islam as religious commodity has driven a cycle of Islamization—that Islam as a religion and a product are closely related (2008, p.26). The more religious a person is, the more he or she puts preference on Islamic products as a way to express his or her faith. Additionally, the more the products consumed, the bigger the market of those products. The growing demand on Islamic products had boosted the booming of religious films since 2000s which reached its peak in 2008.

Islamic-Themed Films As A New Genre In Indonesian Film Industry

Indonesian film industry collapsed in 1990s and started to rise in 2000s. Since then, Indonesian films are mainly produced under several genres, such as, horror, comedy, drama,

action, and thriller. The booming of Islamic-themed films was started when a phenomenal film entitled *Ayat-ayat Cinta* released in 2008. This film produced by MD Entertainment and directed by Hanung Bramantyo. It becomes momentous since the film spectacularly acquires three million viewers in three weeks. Another achievement is the range of the viewers. Various groups of viewer, like, young adult, religious groups, and government officials, enjoyed this film. As mentioned earlier, *Ayat-ayat Cinta* successfully brought religious groups to watch the film in theater. Formerly, these groups stood against Movie Theater for its being ‘not-so- Islamic’.

Ayat-ayat Cinta is claimed as the most successful Islamic-themed film in Indonesian film industry. The trend is then followed by the production of films under the same theme. Hanung Bramantyo, the director and producer of *Ayat-ayat Cinta*, states that this is his first religious film production. Manoj Punjabi, co-producer of *Ayat-ayat Cinta*, mentions that the film tells romance, marriage, and the way Muslims put perspective on Non-Muslims in simpler ways.

Supports to *Ayat-ayat Cinta* came from numerous respected figures. Former president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, rated *Ayat-ayat Cinta* as not only a medium to give proper understanding upon Islam, but also a way to spread Islamic values. Jusuf Kalla and Hidayat Nur Wahid—vice president and head of People’s Consultative Assembly, respectively—shared similar comments on the film. Dien Syamsuddin, former leader of Muhammadiyah and a member of the advisor board, stated that *Ayat-ayat Cinta* was expected to be a medium of spreading the Islamic teaching. He believed that *Ayat-ayat Cinta* as an Islamic-themed film had successfully discussed love as a universal language.

On the other hand, this film creates controversy. Critics claimed that *Ayat-ayat Cinta* was just exploited romance. In addition, a statement on labeling it as a religious film was regarded too much. This film was another young adult’s romance, similar to other Indonesian films.

Similar films are made following the accomplishment of *Ayat-ayat Cinta*. As a director, Hanung Bramantyo had an obsession to make more Islamic-themed films. He then directed *Doa yang Mengancam*, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*—both are adapted from best-selling novels—and *Sang Pencerah*, a phenomenal biopic based on a legendary *ulema*, KHA Dahlan. Two other popular films adapted from best-selling novels (written by Habibburahman El-Shirazi, the author of *Ayat-ayat Cinta*) are *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih 1 and 2*. These two films were popular for the casting processes. The producers were not only looking for actors and actresses based on their appearance and acting capacity, but also their background and personality. The aforementioned prerequisites should meet the Islamic characters shown in the novel. Under the direction of Chaerul Umam, a senior filmmaker, *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* claimed to be the first Islamic-themed film shot in Egypt—the novel’s setting, unlike *Ayat-ayat Cinta* which failed to meet the requirement to shoot its scene in Egypt. Next, Habibburahman El-Shirazi directed one of his famous novels, *Dalam Mihrab Cinta*.

Another outstanding film is *3 Doa 3 Cinta* starred by Indonesian well-known on-screen couple, Dian Sastrowardoyo and Nicholas Saputra. The film was featured in some international film festivals and was considered effective in depicting Islam in Indonesia. *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka’bah*, *Khalifah*, and *Sang Kyai* are also regarded successful both in gaining viewers and in being featured in international festivals. These films mark the new era of Islamic-themed film as a new genre in Indonesian film industry. This genre has attracted viewers in a considerable amount. The following table shows the number of viewers of Islamic-themed films under study.

Table 2. Number of Religious Films' Viewers

Film title	Number of viewers
<i>Ayat Ayat Cinta</i>	3.581.947
<i>Ketika Cinta Bertasbih 1</i>	3.100.906
<i>Ketika Cinta Bertasbih 2</i>	2.003.121
<i>Sang Pencerah</i>	1.206.000
<i>Dalam Mihrab Cinta</i>	623.105
<i>Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah</i>	520.267
<i>Perempuan Berkalung Sorban</i>	293.277
<i>Kiamat Sudah Dekat</i>	No data
<i>3 Doa 3 Cinta</i>	No data

Source: www.filmindonesia.or.id

Based on the above table, it can be concluded that Islamic-themed films have gained considerably large number of viewers. It makes the films potentially profitable for producers. As mentioned earlier, this genre is not only successful in gaining viewers, but also in winning awards in local and international film festivals.

General Conventions Of Religious (Islam) Films

Films under same genre have the tendency to share common characteristics. The aim of using genre analysis method is to find out structural tendency in Islamic-themed films. The following data are general conventions found in Islamic-themed films made after the New Order era.

1. Arabian style

The tendency appears among Islamic films under study is Arabian style or Arabic culture which then identified as Islamic culture. This style is shown in two themes, namely style of fashion and Arabic terminology.

Style of fashion

Islamic-themed films always portray fashion, which reflects Islamic values, namely Islamic style of fashion. For women, this style is reflected in the use of headscarf and clothes, which fully cover the body. Muslim women have the compulsory to cover up their bodies since it is mentioned in Holy *Quran's* verse. For men, the style of fashion is labeled *baju koko* which consists of loose pants and *sorban* (turban). This type of fashion is then identified as the style of good Muslim men.

Proper style of fashion among Muslim women, as mentioned previously, emphasizes an image to the film's viewers that those wearing such attire are considered good Muslim men and women. In the films, there are characters that do not wear the aforementioned style. Hence, they are not devoted Muslims.

Style of fashion for Muslim women is meant to strengthen the identity of its users (*muslimah*/Muslim women). In religious films, main character with pious, kind, and perfect attitudes will be strengthened with his or her way of dressing. It goes in-line with Sonja Van Wichelen's thought that specifically points out the use of headscarf. She states that headscarf wore by a Muslim woman confirms her status and level as a Muslim (2007, p.102).

Arabic terminology

Protagonists in Islamic-themed films always use Arabic terminologies in their utterances, such as, *Insyah Allah*, *Alhamdulillah*, and *Astaghfirullah*. Besides, the words *abi* or

ummi are commonly used to replace the term *ayah* or *ibu*. These terms, similar to the use of Islamic style of fashion, strengthen the identity of the user as a Muslim.

2. Gender representation

Islamic-themed films represent male and female characters in similar ways. Interestingly, gender representation shown in those films is quite different from dominant discourse—on man and woman—as discussed in Islam. There are three parts in this paper in discussing this issue.

Islamic masculinity

Islamic masculinity adopts social construction perspective on masculinity which puts emphasis on man as the frame of social and religious structure (Ousgane, 2006, p.2). Islamic masculinity gives special position to man to legally rule. Man is leader in his family, in his workplace, as well as in his political surroundings.

Discourse on Islamic masculinity or the way Muslim men presented in Islamic-themed films is different from the dominant discourse on discussing religious man. For example, in discussing polygamy, Islamic-themed films illustrate it as a non-preferable choice among religious men. Polygamy is seen as a though practice, in the way treating wives fairly. In the chosen films, there is no lead male character practicing polygamy. *Ayat-ayat Cinta* does discuss polygamy. At the end of the story, it highlights that polygamy potentially raises problems and monogamy gives better ending.

Another issue is hyper-masculinity. Islamic-themed films encourage empathy to people with different beliefs. Violence is strongly prohibited. In *3 Doa 3 Cinta*, the representation of religious men is shown in *santri* (student of Islamic boarding school) who behaves differently from man joining Islamic radical and militant movement. Men who join this type of movement are presented in mass media as those who fight felony through violence.

Men in religious films are neither aggressive nor powerful. They are people with characters, as Pam Nilan (2009) states, of personal/moral self-regulation. As stated in Foucault's theory on 'Technology of the self', personal/moral self-regulation refers to the power of the self, in which the (male) person put forward his logic than emotion. In fact, this character is based on Javanese philosophy and represented in the figure of Suharto. In the implementation, the male character is illustrated as a religious man, like, regularly conducting the five-time prayers, reciting the Holy Quran, and attending religious gathering. The character Fahri in *Ayat-ayat Cinta*, Khoirul Azam in *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*, Syamsul in *Dalam Mihrab Cinta*, and KHA Dahlan in *Sang Pencerah* are the examples of men with personal/moral self-regulation.

Religious men in these films are also those who fully respect women. For example, Fahri, in *Ayat-ayat Cinta*, protects Aisha from a man who tries to hit her in a Metro. He also gives explanation to an American journalist about men's obligation to be tolerant and fully respect a woman.

Next, man does not control woman. In *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, a man who controls and conducts violence to woman is the antagonist of the film. In Islamic-themed films, male superiority is not in his physical state but in his manners.

Empowered women

Women in Islamic-themed films are certainly not the passive ones. They are empowered. Women in these films are intelligent, attractive, wealthy, and fearless characters. They are capable of making critical decisions, for her, and, even, for men around her. Women are able to express their opinions and reliable when given trust.

Aisha in *Ayat-ayat Cinta* and Anna in *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* share similar characters. They are intelligent, attractive, and fearless characters. Aisha is the decision maker for her husband, Fahri, in term of polygamy. This decision is then a solution to free Fahri from calumny. Anna, a postgraduate student of Al-Azhar University, boldly asks Furqon, her husband, about his reason to avoid coitus. Anna finally decides to file for divorce when she finds out that her husband suffered from HIV/AIDS. Annisa in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* is a courageous character for she stands against discrimination done by her father—an Islamic boarding school owner—for her being woman. Annisa also escapes from domestic violence done by her husband. Sarah in *Kiamat Sudah Dekat* is a character who positively changes Fandy, the lead male character in the film, to be a religious man (conducting the five-time prayers, reciting the Holy Quran, and being sincere). Sarah also boldly refuses to marry a man chosen by her father. Nyai Ahmad Dahlan in *Sang Pencerah* is a person whose opinions always listened by KHA Dahlan, her husband. Zizi in *Dalam Mihrab Cinta* shows no doubt in defending Syamsul, the lead male character in the film, at times when many people are not in their sides.

The representation of woman in these films is certainly different from general narration on woman. Woman is regarded subordinate, passive, and obedient to her husband. Woman is the second gender, based on three theological assumptions: a) God's prime creation is man, since woman is created from a man's rib; b) Woman is the cause of mankind's downfall, since it was Eve who made Adam discarded from heaven; c) Woman is not only created from a man, but also for a man. She should function as an instrument and does not have a fundamental meaning (Becher, 1990, p.38). Based on the aforementioned assumptions, woman is frequently seen as a complement rather than a lead figure.

Homosexuality issue

Discourse on homosexuality is not specifically discussed in these Islamic-themed films. Gender then becomes interesting to be discussed when homosexuality is not abandoned. *3 Doa 3 Cinta* slightly illustrates the issue of homosexuality. The film either defends or blames homosexuality. *3 Doa 3 Cinta* tries to address that homosexuality may take place everywhere, even in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) considering as religious place. This idea is in contrast to the idea of Islamic radical groups that strongly rejects homosexuality. In addition, these groups assume that homosexuality is equal to immorality. They often conduct indiscriminate attacks to homosexuals under the assumption that homosexuality is disgraceful.

3. West vs. Middle East

Islamic-themed films create dichotomy or binary opposition upon West and Middle East. West represents United States and European countries, while Middle East represents Egypt. West equals to freedom and modernity; on the other hand, Middle East equals to Islamic values. The abovementioned binary opposition is shown the following table.

Table 3. West and Middle East Binary Opposition

West	Middle East
Women do not wear hijab and dress in tight clothes	Women wear hijab or headscarf
Men with bad behavior	Religious men
Evil women	Religious women
Prostitutes	Polite women
Infidels	Islam

In *Kiamat Sudah Dekat*, the comparison between west and Middle East is illustrated in the characters of Fandy and Farid. Both of them fall in love to Sarah, the daughter of Haji Romli. Fandy represents the west since he was raised in United States and lived freely. He cannot perform *shalat* (the five-time prayers) and recites *Quran*. Farid, on the other hand, is a son of *kyai* (religious leader) who represents the Middle East and studies in Egypt. Farid represents an Islamic figure. Haji Romli prefers Farid than Fandy since Farid is a typical Middle Eastern, kind and religious.

Similarly, in *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*, west is shown in Eliana. She is charming, grew up in France, and from a family of diplomat. The character is depicted as glamorous, modern, and aggressive. Eliana loves Azzam; nonetheless, her appearance makes Azzam left her. She is not 'Islamic' and tends to behave like a Westerner. The aforementioned claim is made since she does not wear *hijab*.

In *3 Doa 3 Cinta*, an American entrepreneur shows his greediness by purchasing land cheaply and turning it into factory. It denotes a typical American capitalism. As in *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*, United States of America equals to free lifestyle, which leads to AIDS.

Based on the abovementioned explanations, west is in equivalent to negative sides. Interestingly, Islamic-themed films do not completely reject western influence; otherwise, west also brings good impacts. A contradictory scene appears in *Kiamat Sudah Dekat*. Haji Romli is so anti-west; yet, he frequently uses terms in English similar to what Fandy says. By the end of the story, it is Fandy who successfully conquers Sarah and Haji Romli's hearts, instead of Farid. Fandy finally understands the key of *Ikhlas* (sincerity). Hence, his wedding party holds in a cruise ship, a typical westerner's way.

In *Sang Pencerah*, Dutch as a sovereign is not depicted as cruel and evil ruler. The Dutch in this film gives chance to KHA Dahlan in developing education for local people. KHA Dahlan is described as a good violinist—a classic western music instrument. In one scene, many traditional groups refuse KHA Dahlan and accuse him infidel. It turns out that the antagonists in the film are Islamic traditional groups than the Dutch.

4. Terrorism

Terrorism is not a main issue discussed among the Islamic-themed films, except in *3 Doa 3 Cinta*. In this film, Huda, one of the male characters, joins a religious gathering, which belongs to Islamic radical group. In each gathering, messages being delivered mainly blame the United States and encourage the members to conduct *jihād* (fight in the name of Islam) to destroy infidels. However, Huda withdraws from the group. By the end of the story, *santri* (students of Islamic boarding schools) are watching news about World Trade Center's bombing. Police officers followed Huda when he was still in the radical group. In the end, it is the *kyai* and other group members who are arrested for planning a terror action.

Islamic radical and fundamental movements are signified as threats to the real Islamic teaching. Thus, Islamic-themed films do not give room for this concept. Radicalism and fundamentalism legalize violence; therefore, it is a crime (Kusuma, 2008). In *3 Doa 3 Cinta*, the *santri* reject idea of radical and fundamental groups, which refers Christians and Jews as infidels and deserves to be abolished.

ISLAMIC-THEMED FILMS BETWEEN ISLAMISM AND MODERNISM

The rise of Islam in post-New Order era has enhanced the development process of Islam itself which gives impact on the implementation of Islamic values in daily life. This process has also improved the implementation of Islamic concept, which mainly makes Islam as an ideology applied in every life aspect (Fealy and Bubalo, 2005). Therefore, radical and fundamental groups offer a movement against western ideologies, like, capitalism,

modernism, and feminism, which are not in-line with Islamic teaching. These groups create a movement that brings Islamism to anarchy.

Islamization process after the New Order era has offered a plural image of Islam in Indonesia. Media industry, especially film industry, has also offered a dialogue on Islam. Film-as an industry and a product of industry—cannot escape from commercial rationality. Product is made with a purpose to gain maximum profit. In free market system, media, including film industry, has an agenda to make profit by creating potential market. Film industry uses Islamization process to generate consumption culture on Islam as a new market niche. Consumption culture on Islam puts forward Islamic values and products, like, *hijab*, hajj travelling service, *umrah* (religious trip), Arabic herbs, etc.

Based on this rationale, dialogue on Islam on Islamic-themed films is a negotiation or solution between Islamism and modernism. To accommodate Islamism, films are made from things related to Islam, such as, Islamic style of fashion and Arabic terminology. However, Islam appears in the films is just a packaging, out of its substance.

Islamic-themed films never let out of Islamic symbols. Islam is seen from its simplified version, the Arabic culture. Devotion and individual spirituality can only be seen from religious symbols. The most obvious mark in appreciating one's spirituality is by way of dressing and terms used during conversation. Both represent Arabic style regarded as Islamic characters.

The use of Islamic symbols successfully introduces religious groups, which previously do not exist in films. It signifies that the use of Islamic symbols is not only a proposal to present Islamic values through film, but also an approach to create a new market.

Film, as a modern product, cannot escape from modern attributes and symbols in its content. It mainly signifies politics of representation. Symbols of modernization appear in Islamic-themed films are:

1. Gender equality issue

Feminism movement coming from the west has brought a conscience on gender equality. This movement has enhanced the emergence of men's movement. Feminism fights for integrity on gender; on the other hand, men's movement tries to review traditional masculinity discourse which proposes male superiority and domination into a more feminine view, protective man (Beynon, 2000).

Gender representation in Islamic-themed films is a solution to Indonesian film industry upon Islamism and modernism. Therefore, gender discourse used in this context will accommodate feminism and men's movement.

2. Human rights issue

There are issues on terrorism and violence against human rights. In this case, Islamic-themed films do not give positive response on terrorism and violence issues. Additionally, the films also do not overly stigmatize homosexuality issue. By accommodating human rights issues, Islamic-themed films offer the image of Islam as a tolerant religion.

3. Western representation

Modernization is a western concept. Hence, a process to be modern will always include western or American concept. To this point, Islamic radical and fundamental groups always make United States of America and the west as enemies. They consider United States of America and the west as sides, which try to destroy Islam, as shown in their actions to Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. However, it is not featured in Islamic-themed films. West may not represent kindness and spirituality; yet, it brings modernity or advancement. In these films, west equals to advancement; therefore, being modern is well-accepted.

4. The display of modern products

Similar to James Bond's or other Hollywood films, Islamic-themed films also feature global products and brands which symbolize modernity, such as, Apple, Nokia, Sony, and Mercedes Benz. In-line with the third point, Islamic-themed films tries to offer modernity as a part of Islam. Otherwise, the films try to portray a particularly more modern Islam. Therefore, Islamic-themed films attempt to compromise with Islamism and modernism.

The way Islam is presented in the films is a part of Islamization process and an improvement of Islamic consumer culture after the New Order era. By accommodating these points, religious films become more marketable and profitable. As mentioned earlier, unlike Islamic-themed films during the New Order era, Islamic-themed films after the era are not mainly functioned as means of propaganda. However, the recent Islamic-themed films considered successful in depicting a more tolerant Islam. As a media of propaganda, Islamic-themed films considered fail, since the contents are superficial and stuck in symbols. Thus, Islam becomes merely a packaging.

Islamic-themed film is another marketing product. It is marketable and profitable, loved by customers, and earned big income to its producers. So, Indonesian film industry has made Islam as a potential commodity. It is the moment when religion commodification takes place.

CONCLUSION

Islamic-themed films after the New Order era are an arena to build Islamic identity and a way to promote Islamic values and practices. The formation of Islamic image and identity is conveyed through Islamic-themed films, which become solution to accommodate Islamism and modernism in Indonesia, especially after the fall of New Order regime. This solution is an effort to respond Islamization process happened in the country and followed by the improvement of Islamic consumer culture. However, the films fail to be means of propaganda. They tend to simplify Islamic symbols. Eventually, Islamic-themed film has no significant difference to other film genres. Islam becomes a label, which signifies symbols, like, *hijab*, Arabic terminologies, and other things related to the Middle East. It certainly is not a final representation; however, there will always be a negotiation process in linking market interest and Islamic values.

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