

CENSORSHIP AND ADULT FILM STARS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN HORROR CINEMA

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Abstract: There were uproars when film producer Ody Mulya Hidayat initiated to cast adult film stars in his film. It was Sora Aoi, a Japanese porn screen star. These uproars indicated multiple things. Some people are afraid that Aoi will nakedly act in front of Indonesian audiences. However, some others couldn't wait the release date to be announced and buy tickets. All sights are suddenly upon the Indonesian Film Censorship Board, who is responsible to institutionally neutralize all the uproars. The formerly questionable institution is now at a big stake.

Keywords : film, porn star, censorship

Introduction

Sora Aoi is just a beginning. Several names follow afterwards such as Maria Ozawa in *Menculik Miyabi* (Kidnapping Miyabi), Rin Sakuragi in *Suster Keramas* (Shampooing Nurse), Tera Patrick in *Rintihan Kuntilanak Perawan* (The Groaning Virgin Ghost), Sasha Grey in *Pocong Mandi Goyang Pinggul* (possibly, Shrouded Corpse Bathing while Hip Shaking), etc. The very basic motivation of this is to flirt with audiences' attention. Aoi and friends are casted because of their popularity for Indonesian audiences. It is an effective way of selling your films.

The peak question is: how the censorship board deals with the "porn" image of those stars even though they are not playing porn? The Indonesian case

of porn stars casting in non-porn film is a unique encounter between classical star system and a "certain moral collective" that has been a tradition in Indonesia as the biggest Muslim populated country.

Richard DeCordova (1991) wrote that the use of personal aura to attract the audiences had been existing in United States before 1910. This simple logic causes the actor/actress' name that appear on the credit title as not only a commercial lubricant, but also as a new identity production of those pertinent actors/actresses. Through acting in films, stars will deliver a 'life' that grasped together by the audiences as their actual life. In short, "stars' images are used to develop the meaning of a film and build expectation."

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Through the concept of stars' images, film producers got chances to build people's expectation. DeCordova (1991) also noted that publication of stars' real life firstly aired to public in 1914. We nowadays recognize this phenomenon with the term "gossip." At that time, gossip about a certain star has to be similar with their role in their films. The harmony between the role and the gossip enables a star, for example, Mary Pickford, become American Sweetheart. On the contrary, deviations between role and gossip will cause danger for a star's career. The scandal of the comedian Roscoe Arbuckle is one of the earliest cases. On the mayday 1921, Arbuckle held a party where the actress Virginia Rappe attended. Several days after that party, Rappe fell ill and passed away. Arbuckle was accused of sexual harassment. The case was brought to the court and Arbuckle's shining career (as he was a routine collaborator of the famous Buster Keaton) fades away.

The interaction between on-screen and off-screen life becomes tighten alongside the recent developments of media form, notably internet. On the internet, various fan pages endow people to "observe" the stardom of an artist far more freely than those of written on the magazines. In Indonesia, although only 30 percent people have access to the internet, but most of them have access to televisions with massive program of gossip—known in Indonesia as "infotainment". Internet and infotainment in televisions have influence in spreading off-screen life of stars beside what they act in their film.

The case of Tera Patrick and Sasha Grey who were invited by the producer KK Dheeraj or Sora Aoi and Rin Sakuragi who were hired by other producer Ody Mulya Hidayat operates its image in the public space/realm in the same way as ex-

plained above. People had encountered them in their porn films (although the DVDs are not released in Indonesia, people access them freely on the internet). Sasha Grey with her Naughty America is a very famous porn brand in Indonesia. Although Pocong Mandi Goyang Pinggul has been sterilized by the Indonesian Film Censorship Board, hence it doesn't contain any nude scene, people couldn't avoid their porn persona. Even before the film released, there has been a massive stardom of Grey flowing down the public space. People know that there won't be any nude scene, still they come to theaters to grasp Grey's aura based on her previous (porn) films. It is a strategy of producer to promote their films, and nothing is wrong with it.

It's just that how the Film Censorship Board deals with the spilled image of those adult film stars. However you cut the scene, people know that Sasha Grey is a porn star. Then how do religious institutions filter those stars' stardom? What does hardline group Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) want by boycotting the already-legalized version of the films starred by those stars?

This phenomenon doesn't stop by the audiences leaving the theatres. Through the Internet, they will search who Sora Aoi is. Those who formerly don't know her become addicted. The Film Censorship Board plays an ineffective role because however they censor the content, people already grasp the aura. However they shape those stars' image, people got other sources of information, and the whole stardom is the combination of both. What Sora Aoi means for Indonesian audiences is not just her role in *Suster Keramas 2* (on-screen appearance), it is her recurrent performativity (off-screen appearance) in the public

spaces through various media in a quite long time.

Regarding this situation, Indonesia has to choose between the moral (the politically correct standard) of the Censorship Board and the capital motives of film producers. It is because cutting both ways by allowing porn stars to play in Indonesian horror while brutally circumscribed their scenes means government still provides film audiences with vast aura of pornography, which is already forbidden in the anti-pornography law. I am not saying that I am a voter of the anti-pornography law, here, we are talking about consistency. We face a black-and-white possibility: either to prohibit the “import” of porn stars in Indonesian non-porn films, or to allow them to come but with no censor at all. Doing both is like carrying water in a leaked bucket. The censorship scissors are too blunt to determine stardom personas.

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