

Commodification of Religion on Kiblat Film Posters in Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis

Marini

Communication Sciences, Muhammadiyah University of Kotabumi, Indonesia

marini@umko.ac.id



Abstract – The Kiblat or Qibla film is a production from Leo Pictures in collaboration with Legacy Pictures and 786 Production. Directed by Bobby Prasetyib and starring Yasmin Napper, Arbani Yasiz, Ria Ricis and many others. This qibla film has attracted a lot of controversy since the release of the film poster on March 21 2024 which was deemed to contain content that was not in accordance with Islamic law, resulting in the MUI prohibiting the screening of the film because it was not in accordance with Islamic law and had the potential to mislead the people. This research aims to analyze the commodification of religion wrapped in Qibla film posters. This research is a type of Roland Barthes semiotic analysis research with a qualitative approach. The results of this research found that the Qibla film poster contains signs and meanings that identify the practice of commodifying religious values in the film poster.

Keywords – Commodification of Religion, Film, Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of the Indonesian film industry is starting to enter a period where the public is starting to gain a lot of interest. This is considered to be inseparable from the increasing quality of films, which initially only sold elements of sensuality, but have now shifted to interesting stories and plots. Of the many films that are currently on the rise, films in the horror genre still have many fans. Horror films that are in great demand are starting to be used as a platform for capitalism. Of the many film industries in the country, the horror genre is starting to play the role of commodifying religion in the form of selling stories or attributes that have a religious theme [1].

Films, which were originally able to be a medium for conveying da'wah, are now starting to shift in line with the increasing market interest and demand for religious films in the horror genre. [2] The film industry continues to grow, the many types of films in circulation cannot be separated from the commodification of religion. [3]

The shifting of the message of da'wah and its delivery through religious films seems to be the medium of delivery of the message of da'wah which is basically the duty of every Muslim, because Islam is a religion that assigns its people to spread and broadcast Islam to all mankind, as a blessing for the entire universe. Islam guarantees the happiness and well-being of mankind, when the teachings of Islam include all aspects of life and are practiced as a guide by working on Islam as a preaching religion [4] [5].

In the midst of the proliferation of Indonesian cinema, many filmmakers carry out capitalist activities that involve popular culture. This is an element that cannot be separated between commodification and capitalism. So commodification is a process of transforming objects and shifting the use value of goods and services, including in the film industry.

In disseminating lessons about the Islamic religion, or what is usually called da'wah activities, it is hoped that knowledge about Islam will not only be mastered by Islamic religious leaders, but also all people who embrace Islam in the world. By taking advantage of current technological developments, it will be easier to spread preaching content, especially through films.

The Qibla film is a production from Leo Pictures in collaboration with Legacy Pictures and 786 Production. Directed by Bobby Prasetyib and starring Yasmin Napper, Arbani Yasiz, Ria Ricis and many others. This qibla film has attracted a lot of controversy since the release of the film poster on March 21 2024 which was deemed to contain content that was not in accordance with Islamic law, resulting in the MUI prohibiting the screening of the film because it was not in accordance with Islamic law and had the potential to mislead the people.

Given this fact, researchers are interested in analyzing the commodification of religion wrapped in film posters that contain religious elements. From this it can be seen that films can be used as a means of da'wah, but if the placement of religious values is not appropriate, it will actually attract criticism because it seems to be playing with holy and sacred symbols in worship, especially prayers in Muslims, in something that is not in accordance with the Shari'a.

Before the film Kinlat, there were many other horror films that packaged religious retreat as part of the commodification of religion. People can preach through films. People today can make a preaching film accompanied by propositions based on Islam. It is not surprising that horror films containing elements of preaching and religion are popular with the public. So the way to convey da'wah messages is not only in mosques but can be through various other media. In essence, a person who conveys da'wah or is called a da'i is someone who has insight into religion and is a role model for his community. This is very simple and can be reached by anyone, that a da'i is someone who has knowledge about nature and religion. This means from the perspective of Indonesian society that every person who has insight into nature and religion has the potential to become a preacher as long as his scientific insight can create fear of Allah and acknowledge His greatness. Da'i have a very important position and are used as role models for the people in everyday life.

However, the current problem is that many religious horror films are starting to make sacred signs and symbols in religion into something that is highlighted and sold. However, the inappropriate use of religious attributes can cause the audience to criticize. This also happened to the film Qibla, produced by Leo Pictures, which caused a lot of controversy. This cannot be separated from the misuse of religious attributes and sacred movements in Muslim worship, namely prayer.

The image used as the poster for the film Qibla began to receive a lot of criticism from the MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council), religious figures and community leaders, requiring the film Qibla to change its poster. In this study, researchers are interested in analyzing the commodification of religion found on the Qibla film poster, both before and after it was revised after receiving a lot of criticism from various elements of society. The analysis used uses Roland Barthes' semiotics with the research aim of finding out the meaning of signs and symbols contained in the commodification of religion in the Qibla film.

II. LIBRARY REVIEW

A. Commodification of Religion

Literature review is very important for researchers to carry out. And the results of the research carried out by the author, from various books and scientific papers which review the commodification of religion [6] from various aspects, can be used as material for consideration and as a reference for the author, including:

In the book Culture and Society, Kuntowijoyo explains that there are two types of culture in life, the first is mosque culture and the second is market culture [7]. These two cultures describe two opposing cultures in people's lives. Mosque culture depicts religiosity and is far from extravagant living or hedonism. Meanwhile, market culture is a culture full of deception and always prioritizes material interests [8]. Therefore, if we look at it traditionally, these two cultures are two cultures that have different places and meanings and are completely unrelated. However, recently mosque culture and market culture have experienced upheaval and have synergy [9]. There has even emerged market hegemony over mosques. All of this cannot be separated from market behavior which designs religious practices in such a way as to obtain large profits [10].

As a country with a population with the largest number of adherents of the Islamic religion in the world, the majority of adherents of the religion [11] Indonesia refers to dawahtainment which is a term to describe religion which is packaged in accordance with

market demands which are presented with the concept of demand and spectacle. Departing from this phenomenon, this research is intended to find out how the commodification of religious symbols in the Qibla film is represented.

Previous research on the commodification of religious symbols in advertising has been published. First, research by Agustian Bhaskoro regarding the commodification of religious symbols in advertisements labeled halal. This research found that the commodification of religious symbols in television advertisements labeled halal can be concluded as a transformation of the values of a religion from normative ones based on belief in God to exchange values that are equated with the needs of each individual in the form of advertisements on television. There is an element of intention in it with the hope that consumers will be interested. This commodification of advertising through television does not always have a negative value, but positive values can be taken from what is shown in the advertisement because it contains Islamic values in it. However, the basic thing that can be obtained from the analysis in

above is the real interest of a product producer/advertiser, namely economic profit. This is the same as research conducted by Gusti Vita Riana regarding the commodification of religious values in television advertising.

B. Religion and Religious Commodities

Religion in this case is only seen as a market system commodity, the message conveyed in this religious soap opera is no longer formulated in terms of the themes raised or how deep the religious message is to be conveyed in this film but is instead measured by the audience rating. Capitalist people take this religious horror film as a means to reap huge profits. The religious scenes in this soap opera are just a camouflage to attract the market. If the market camouflage likes the soap opera, the existence of religious soap operas will automatically grow. However, on the other hand, if people start to get bored with the religious films being shown, then automatically these religious soap operas will disappear by themselves. In this case, the image of the Islamic boarding school is only used as an interest to obtain big results.

KCommodification comes from commodity, which among other things means commercial objects or trade objects. So, commodification of religion is the commercialization of religion or changing faith and its symbols into commodities that can be bought and sold for profit. When technology is combined with "capitalism", the spirit and formula of economisation enters various sectors of life. It cannot be separated from the cultural and religious sectors which are packaged in such a way as to become a commodity. The market potential of religious communities in Indonesia, more specifically the Muslim community, is very promising, creating new business opportunities in selling religious values, of course with an appearance that is easily accepted.

Commodification of religion was born due to consumer ritualized symbolic practices (consumption of religious symbols). The consumption of religious symbols contains five supporting factors, namely:

- 1) Consuming religious symbols creates objects of religion that can be sold and consumed through social processes and spread through social networks in society. A simple example is the sale of religious books.
- 2) The consumption of religious symbols creates religious advocacy in social communities. Activities or rituals that are commonly carried out are objectified after which they receive defense like a product.
- 3) Consuming religious symbols creates religious performances/spectacles.
- 4) Consumption of religious symbols as a means of seeking profit and seeking psychological peace.
- 5) Consuming religious symbols as a rational service developer. This is influenced by modernization theories such as McDonalidization, religious practices or activities must be created as rational as possible so that they can be accepted by urban society.

Commodification of religious films is carried out in order to attract the attention of the audience, so it is related to how the content is used for advertising positioning through film posters so that this activity can generate income for the film industry.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a type of Roland Barthes semiotic analysis research with a qualitative approach. Basically it is a method used in an effort to understand the ideology underlying a communication system. This research method is semiotic analysis. Semiotics itself is used as an analytical tool to see the relationship between signs, symbols and meaning.

A. Semiotika Roland Barthes

In this research, Roland Barthes' semiotic concept was chosen. In Roland Barthes' concept, there are levels of meaning that differentiate in analysis, namely; denotation, connotation, and myth. Denotation itself is the true meaning. About how to interpret visible signs. Then the meaning of connotation is a meaning that is built on other existing systems. This meaning is subjective, of course related to the cultural values contained in the perception of each subject. And finally, Barthes added myth as a complement to his semiotic concept. Myths are cultural references or originate from existing culture which present certain meanings based on the historical and cultural values of society. In his thoughts, Roland Barthes added that semiotics is always related to signs and values, which have developed in society and the values that have developed have occurred as naturally as possible and are integrated into the cultural traditions of a society. Barthes also created a model of semiology or the science of signs to read about a phenomenon by looking at Saussure's concept, namely sign analysis 'Signifier/signified=sign'. In semiotics, Roland Barthes divides the levels of meaning into two levels, namely primary signification in the form of denotation signs and secondary signification in the form of connotation signs. From these two levels, Barthes then explained Saussure's thought that signifiers, which initially only had denotative meaning, were able to become meaningful connotative meaning.

Roland Barthes' structural semiotics aims to understand the world (humans and culture) by basing it on an unobserved ideological structure, but in analyzing a meaning, the meaning of denotation and connotation is used. Both are also commonly referred to as two orders of signification (two-stage signification or two orders of marking). In the first stage, signification is the relationship between the signifier (expression) and the signified (content) in a sign to external reality. Then Barthes called it denotation or true meaning. Meanwhile, connotation according to Barthes describes the interaction that occurs when signs meet. Simply put, what a sign depicts about an object is a denotation, while how a sign describes it is a connotative meaning.

1. Signifier (penanda)	2. Signified (petanda)
3. Denotative sign (tanda denotatif)	
4. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER (PENANDA KONOTATIF)	5. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED (PETANDA KONOTATIF)
6. CONNOTATIVE SIGN (TANDA KONOTATIF)	

Figure 1: Roland Barthes' Semiotic Map

In Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, there are signs in the form of signifiers and signifieds which refer to the meaning of denotative signs which then refer to connotative signifieds and myths in the analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the Qibla film poster before it was revised, the meaning of denotation, connotation and myth on the Qibla film poster before it was revised can be analyzed and the commodification of religion contained in the film poster image.

A. Mecca film poster before revision

1) Meaning Denotation

Denotational meaning is the true meaning. This meaning refers to Roland Barthes' semiotic study of signifiers and signifieds. On the Qibla film poster before it was revised, you can see various meanings of signs indicating the commodification of religion based on the film poster used. You can see the figure of a Muslim woman who is praying and doing the prayer movement, namely bowing but in an upside down position. He was standing on a prayer mat with a scary and frightened face, then beside the woman there was a headless figure with a neck full of blood facing the woman. The real meaning of the markers and signs shows worship activities on the edge of the forest in a tense atmosphere, then under the poster there is the word "Qibla" in red writing.

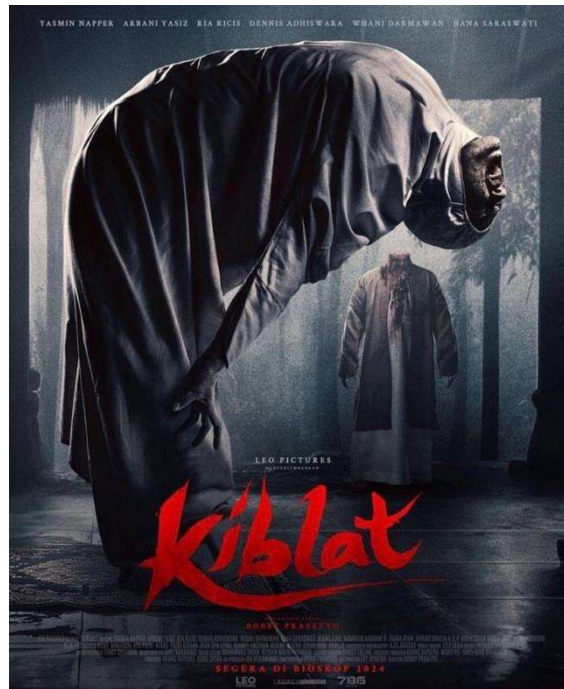


Figure 2: Mecca film poster before revision

2) Connotation Meaning

In Roland Barthes' semiotic studies, there are signs and signifieds which have connotative meaning. The sign is seen in the form of a white mukena with a prayer mat which depicts the sign [8] in the form of the meaning that prayer is synonymous with something holy and clean. Facing the Qibla, which means directly facing the Kaaba, is the direction of prayer. Then another sign is the appearance of a headless figure standing at the edge of the surau, indicating a tense atmosphere, far from the meaning of solemnity in carrying out prayers. Then there is a sign of the facial expression of a Muslim woman who is scared, in pain, and scary with the bowing position in an inverted position, which is opposite and contrasts with the meaning of peaceful and calm prayer without any feelings of anxiety or fear, let alone being disturbed by creatures not in the eye caste.

3) Meaning of Myth

The sign in the meaning of this myth can be seen from the color white, which should reflect purity and purity, to something scary. This can be seen from the meaning of the sign which shows the frightening expression of a Muslim woman while making movements during prayer. In fact, by praying, you can avoid unwanted things and not create a scary prayer image.

4) Commodification of Religion Qibla Film Poster before revision

Commodification is a means in the Indonesian film industry to gain as much profit as possible. This can be seen from the use of Muslim attributes, namely mukenas, prayer mats, surau, as well as prayer activities which involve linking worship activities with

horror nuances wrapped in religious elements in order to get the attention of Indonesian audiences who are predominantly Muslim.

B. Mecca film poster after revision

1) Meaning of denotation

The meaning of denotation in Roland Barthes' semiotic studies is the true meaning. In the Qibla film poster after being revised, several signs and signifiers can be seen that refer to the true meaning of the commodification of religion. This can be seen from the poster which depicts a small child looking scared with his head clutched, by a woman with a strange smile where the woman's head is also gripped by a headless figure whose neck is covered in blood. Then behind it there are 6 white cloths hung and distributed under a poster with the words "Qibla" written in red.



Figure 3: Qibla film poster after revision

2) Connotation Meaning

The connotation meaning in the form of a figurative meaning in Roland Barthes' semiotic study shows an expression of fear and a bitter smile that seems to hold many question marks. This can be seen from the signs and signifiers expressed by the facial expressions of the actors in the film Qibla in a quiet location and far from busy elements.

3) Meaning of Myth

In Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, there is a mythical meaning which describes the figure of a small child who is frightened by the grip of a woman. This depicts discomfort with a headless figure who is also holding the woman's head. This is a shift in meaning from the previous poster which received a lot of criticism. After being revised, the religious meaning in this film poster shifted with sacred symbols hanging up, this representation can be seen from the collection of white cloth hanging up.

4) Commodification of Religion

The commodification of religion that can be seen in the film poster after it has been revised shows the meaning of the signs in the form of hanging cloths and the figure of a woman without a hijab who is clutching the head of a small child, behind whom there is a headless figure with blood still flowing. Then under the poster there is red writing that depicts the words "Qibla".

V. CONCLUSION

In the film poster studied, namely the Qibla film poster, signs and meanings were found that identified the practice of commodifying religious values in the film poster. The commodification process that appears on film posters, the center of content commodification, can be seen from the signs and depictions on the poster. Commodification of media content occurs through the reconstruction of reality, which in this case is the Islamic religion. Film Qibla tries to sell its message to the public through posters that are displayed using controversial Islamic movements and attributes so that it reaps a lot of criticism and condemnation so that Film Qibla withdraws the film poster that has been circulating and replaces it with a new film poster with a touch of religious commodification that is still attached to the film's title, namely "Qibla".

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