

The Cultural Traffic of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Cinema

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Abstract

Classic Indonesian exploitation films (originally produced, distributed, and exhibited in the New Order's Indonesia from 1979 to 1995) are commonly negligible in both national and transnational cinema contexts, in the discourses of film criticism, journalism, and studies. Nonetheless, in the 2000s, there has been a global interest in re-circulating and consuming this kind of films. The films are internationally considered as "cult movies" and celebrated by global fans.

This thesis will focus on the cultural traffic of the films, from late 1970s to early 2010s, from Indonesia to other countries. By analyzing the global flows of the films I will argue that despite the marginal status of the films, classic Indonesian exploitation films become the center of a taste battle among a variety of interest groups and agencies.

The process will include challenging the official history of Indonesian cinema by investigating the framework of cultural traffic as well as politics of taste, and highlighting the significance of exploitation and B-films, paving the way into some findings that recommend accommodating the movies in serious discourses on cinema, nationally and globally.

Furthermore, regarding the film traffic, the films became both the significant arenas and the objects of tensions arising from various politics of taste involving several agencies like the State and its cultural elites, local film producers, local film distributors/exhibitors, local audiences, transnational distributors, and global fans.

In the bigger picture, the thesis also analyzes how international dynamics of political, economic, social, and cultural transformation of trashy films have formed and impacted the ambience of national and global film cultures, including critically encountering the Western-centric concept of Cult cinema.

In establishing the arguments, with archival-led research and a critical historical approach, I will explore various fields of film studies, containing policy studies, distribution/exhibition culture, film reception and spectatorship, and global online fandom.

Table of content

Abstract.....	2
Table of Content	3
Introduction.....	8
The Politics of Global Flows and the Disjunctive Scapes.....	12
Discourses on New Order’s Indonesian Cinema History.	15
Institutions of New Order cinema.....	18
<i>Film Nasional</i> and Cultural Elites.....	21
Discussion on Trashy Movies in Indonesian Cinema Scholarship.....	23
Key Concepts: Cult Movies, Exploitation Films, B-grade Cinema.....	29
Cult Movies, Fan Culture, and Distribution Culture.....	33
Politics of Tastes and Legitimate Culture.....	36
Methodology.....	38
Research Questions and Methods.....	39
Data Collection and Selection.....	42
Approaches and Position.....	46
Structure.....	49
Conclusion.....	51
Section One : Cultural Traffic and the Origin of Classic Indonesian	
Exploitation Cinema.....	53
Chapter 1: <u>New Order’s Paradoxical Policies: The Dynamics of Film</u>	
Production and Politics of Tastes in Indonesia’s New Order Regime.....	54

Theories on Film Censorship.....	56
From “the Old Order” to the New Order.....	57
Early Years of New Order : Resurrection Years.....	59
The 1970s: “The Rise of Trashy Movies”.....	63
The 1980s: The Golden Era of Classic Exploitation Cinema.....	71
The 1990s: The Fall of Classic Exploitation Cinema	74
Conclusion.....	78
Chapter 2: The Subculture of <i>Layar Tancap</i>: Exploitation movies, Traveling Cinema, and Rural Audiences in Indonesia.....	81
Theories on Rural Cinema and Traveling Cinema.....	81
Layar Tancap Shows as Non Theatrical Cinema.....	84
The Subculture of Western Midnight Movies.....	85
The Politics and History of <i>Layar Tancap</i>	86
On Rural Audiences in Indonesia’s New Order era.....	89
Framing <i>Layar Tancap</i>	90
<i>Layar Tancap</i> as Counterculture.....	93
<i>Layar tancap</i> Audience and Their Politics of Tastes.....	95
<i>Layar tancap</i> Owners’ misconduct.....	96
Conclusion.....	97
Chapter 3: <i>Prokjatap Prosar</i> and Other Film Exportations: On Global Distribution of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Movies.....	100
Pre-1982 Film Exportation.....	102

The Significance of Prokjatap <i>Prosar</i>	106
Sharp Criticism and Official Justification	114
The Global Influence of <i>Prokjatap Prosar</i>	117
Conclusion.....	122
Section Two : Cultural Traffic and Film Mediation.....	125
Chapter 4 <i>Tromatized: The Political Economy of Redubbing in Troma Team’s</i>	
<i>Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters</i>.....	126
On Troma Team’s Identity.....	129
FFFF as a Troma Film.....	131
“Tromatized”	132
The Redubbing of FFFF.....	135
Conclusion.....	142
Chapter 5 : Indonesian Classic Exploitation Cinema and Digital Distribution:	
The Cases of Mondo Macabro and VideoASia’s <i>Tales of Voodoo</i>.....	143
Discourses on Cult Digital Distribution.....	144
Two Modes of Distributions.....	145
Reworks of the Distributors and Their Importance.....	146
Fans as Collectors	147
The Case of Mondo Macabro: Chaperone Model of Archiving, and Its Implications.....	147
Frame/Preserve the Tastes: Rework as Chaperone Model.....	148
Bonus Special Features.....	149

The Repurpose by Mondo Macabro.....	150
Online Promotion.....	150
The DVD covers.....	151
(Re)Dubbing.....	152
Trailers.....	153
Fans' Critical Responses.....	153
The Case of VideoAsia's <i>Tales of Voodoo</i> : Double Bill, Commercial	
Bootlegging, and Plagiarism.....	154
The DVD Covers.....	156
Sources and Copyrights.....	159
Fans' criticism.....	160
Conclusion.....	163
Section Three: Cultural Traffic and Film Reception.....	165
Chapter 6 Moral Panic and Reception of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Films:	
The Case of <i>Lady Terminator</i>.....	166
Moral Panic vs. Blockbuster Spectators	169
Moral Panic in pre-1989 Indonesia	172
The Case of <i>Lady Terminator</i>	174
The Other Side of "Public"	177
The Tip of the Iceberg	179
Conclusion	182
Chapter 7: "Crazy Indonesia": Politics of Tastes and Niche Criticism by Global	
Cult Fans Towards Classic Indonesian Exploitation Cinema.....	184

Niche Criticism as Fans Texts.....	186
Defining “Crazy Indonesia”.....	187
Specific Sub-Genres of Indonesian Films	193
Discriminating Other New Order films.....	195
Discriminating Post-New Order Indonesian Films	197
Hunting Non-Recirculated Films: Rarities and Exclusivity.....	200
Conclusion.....	202
Conclusion.....	205
Cultural Traffic and the New History of Indonesian Cinema	208
Cultural Traffic and the Indonesian Context of Cult Cinema.....	208
Cultural Traffic and the Origin of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Cinema.....	211
Cultural Traffic and Film Mediation.....	215
Cultural Traffic and Film Reception.....	218
Further Study.....	221
Conclusion.....	222
List of Tables and Figures.....	224
List of Transnational Classic Indonesian Exploitation Films.....	225
List of Foreign actors in New Order’s Indonesian B Movies.....	228
List of Policies.....	230
Acknowledgement.....	233
List of Acronyms.....	237
Bibliography	240
Filmography	267

Introduction¹

It's like KILL BILL- but with oodles of sex. This combination of Asian black magic and Western-style shoot 'em up is one of the key cult movies of the '80s. Even the jaded patrons of 42nd Street were shocked to see how the lustful Lady T dispatched her male victims!

(Promotional material from the DVD back cover of *Lady Terminator* (1988), recirculated in the 2000s By Mondo Macabro).

In the 2000s, there has been an international interest in redistributing and consuming classic Indonesian exploitation films. Films such as *Satan's Slave* (*Pengabdian Setan*, 1980), *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters* (*Perempuan Bergairah*, 1982) and *Lady Terminator* (*Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan*, 1988),² have been recirculated and labeled as cult films by transnational distributors in the 2000s.³ According to Thomas Barker, there are 46 titles of these types of films, from *Primitif* in 1978 to *Without Mercy* (a.k.a. *Outraged Fugitive*) in 1995 (Barker 2014, 4-9)⁴. The films are celebrated by global fans through their blogs, online fanzines, and online forums.⁵ These kind of fans call the phenomenon many different names including "Crazy Indonesia"--a term popularized by Jack Jensen when he started a thread titled "Crazy Indonesia" in the *AVManiacs* forum on

¹ Some parts of this chapter were modified and published *In Plaridel Vol. 11 No. 2, August 2014* as the introduction from the guest editor for a special issue titled "The Bad, The Worse, and The Worst: The Significance of Indonesian Cult, Exploitation, and B Movies". Please check Imanjaya 2014.

² *Lady Terminator* is on the list of *100 Cult Cinema* (Mathijs & Mendik, 2011) which includes films such as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) and *El Topo* (1970).

³ For the complete list of the films, please check Barker: 2014, 4-9. Unlike Barker, I started the research from 1979, the year *Primitif* was sold at the Cannes Film Festival, not the year of the production (1978). Also see: List of Transnational Classic Indonesian Exploitation Films.

⁴ Kothar, one of the global fans, in *The Cinehound Forum* dated 5 April 2009 claimed to have 140 Indonesian films, mostly from online shops such as Vomit Bag Video. Check "Introducing Yourself".

⁵ These include Cinema Strikes Back, DVD Verdict, 10k Bullets, Mondo Digital, Monsters At Play, DVD Drive-In, Shocking Images, Box Office Prophets, Eccentric Cinema, DVD Maniacs, Teleport City, and Cinema Knight Fight; and "Crazy Indonesia" thread at AV Maniacs forum as well as Cinehound forum.

September 14, 2007.⁶ Mainly in the early 2000s, transnational distributors - including Mondo Macabro, Troma Entertainment, and VideoAsia's Tale of Voodoo - began to recirculate the films and rework the films by re-titling, re-dubbing, contextualising the films through DVD special features, and so on (as seen in the quote above), thus making them more appealing and more easily consumed by foreign audiences. Apparently, exploitation movies were considered to be the ones that fit with the politics of taste and the demands of international distributors and global fans (Tombs 1997: 66).

Figure 1: Japanese DVD cover of *Satan's Slave*



Source: Jack J, 2009a

Despite the global traffic of the films, it is important to note that all films were mainly produced, distributed, and exhibited between 1979 and 1995 in Indonesia's New Order era (1966-1998).

⁶In the first posting of the thread at *AVManiacs*(14/09/2007), Jack Jensen states that he borrowed the title for this thread from another member, Gaenter Muller, who used it for his website, 'Weird Asia'. Since 2007 until recently, the website is unavailable to access and unfortunately can not be traced with cached Google, Wayback Machine or similar websites.

On his own blog, Jack J started using the term in his article *Crazy Indonesia: Bloody Vengeance & Lady Terminator*1 in 29 June 2009 (J 2009b).

Under President Suharto, this period is commonly known for its security and stability approaches and applied state control and censorship in every aspect of life, ideologically, politically, socially, economically, and culturally (Thomas and Panglaykim 1973, 82; Van Zanden and Marks, 2012: 167-168). During this period, the government not only applied strict censorship, but also controlled all aspects of the film industry, including film production, film organizations, distribution, and exhibition. (Sen 1992; Heider 1991; Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992; Said 1991). They framed legitimate culture by setting the concept of 'Film Indonesia' as a representation of the 'true' Indonesian cultures, which should depict "the real faces of Indonesia" (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu: 1992, 57; Said 1991, 6; Barker 2010, 9), and films should contain educational and cultural issues (known as *Film Kultural Edukatif*). Naturally, domestic exploitation films, full of violence and erotic scenes, consequently got excluded. At the same time, the cultural elites, scholars, journalists and film critics just ignored, underrated and, in some cases, strongly criticized and even condemned the films.⁷ On the other hand, the films were not verily being marginalized because they were watched by mainstream spectators, and some of them became box office hits.⁸

This thesis basically looks at the complexities and paradoxes of the global movements of classic Indonesian exploitation films from Indonesia to overseas, from their time of production (1979-1995) to the 2000s and beyond. I will argue that these particular films are significant as both the arena and objects of interest within both domestic and transnational agencies with their own agenda of politics of taste. In other words, I will interrogate how such film flows (re)produce or challenge the official cultural history of Indonesia as well as the concept of cult cinema in general.

Initial questions occurred when I started this research: why are Indonesian films of the 1980s and 1990s being internationally circulated and celebrated abroad 35 years after their original release? Why is there interest in exploitation films and not "Indonesian Films" as a representation of official

⁷ Please check the subchapter titled *Discussion on Trashy Movies in Indonesian Cinema Scholarship* in this chapter.

⁸ Regarding that account, I need to underline, as highlighted by Krishna Sen (Sen 1991), that commonly in Asia, it is complicated to say that popular films are marginal, including Indonesian exploitation films. Sen writes:

It is difficult to think about many of the Asian cinemas as marginal. Popular films of Hong Kong or Bombay are not, of course, marginal at all to the cultural life of millions of spectators in south, east and southeast Asia- But then Kolker and Burton are dealing with either politically engaged cinema or 'art' cinema, which are largely insignificant to these audiences. Especially in Kolker's case, the art films he is concerned with are frequently those made with the international film critic, rather than a local population, in mind (Sen, 1991).

and legitimate culture? Why were there many trashy films produced and circulated nationally and transnationally in the New Order period, the years commonly known for strict censorship and state-control within film industry?

In order to answer the aforementioned preliminary questions, as well as the undermentioned research questions, one should understand several topics:

First, since I am going to analyse the global dissemination of the films, one should have a better understanding of global flows and cultural traffic.

Second, understanding the contexts of what happened in Indonesia and within the Indonesian film industry between 1979 and 1995 is important to understand the cases of the films being analysed. For this topic, I will interrogate particularly the series of contradictions of New Order's policymaking and how the mainstream works have discussed the films.⁹

Third, since politics of taste is one of my core discussions in this thesis, I will underline the interplay of various kinds of politics of taste that have direct implications in the internationalization of these films. I argue that there are taste battles among various stakeholders related to the phenomenon, namely the New Order regime, cultural elites in the New Order time, local film producers and distributors in the 1980s and 1990s, transnational distributors both in the 1970s-1990s and 2000s-2010s, and global fans both in the 1980s-1990s and the 2000s-2010s.

Fourth, as the films are globally recognized as cult films, I will apply some basic concepts related to cult, exploitation, and B movies. I will elaborate upon the basic understanding of the key terms, and will examine to what extent the process and the label of cult status of the films can make us understand the internationalization of these films as well as its politics of taste.

Fifth, fan culture and distribution culture are two important terms, as cult followings are the essence of the cultness of the movies, whereas film distribution and consumption are closely related. In particular, this thesis has a direct link with the general practices of both the marketing

⁹ There are at least two books discussing these kind of paradoxes in film industry. First, *Krisis dan Paradoks Film Indonesia* (Crisis and Paradoxes of Indonesian Cinema) (Nugroho & Herlina, 2013), which was later translated into English (Nugroho & Herlina, 2015). Second, a chapter in Salim Said's *Shadows on the Silver Screen (A Social History of Indonesian Film)* (Said 1991). Both discuss the matter in a more general context.

of current transnational distributors and the discrimination of global fans towards classic Indonesian exploitation movies.

Below, I will elaborate upon each element.

The Politics of Global Flows and the Disjunctive Scapes

This thesis is primarily about the transnational cultural traffic of the films, particularly about the migration of Indonesian classic exploitation films from their original place of production/distribution/exhibition (namely, Indonesia) to the other countries as well as from their original time (late 1970s- mid 1990s) to the millennial era. Therefore, it is closely related to, as Arjun Appadurai puts it, “Global Flows”.

Appadurai highlights the complexities of the global cultural flows, which is elaborated as “complex, overlapping, disjunctive” (Appadurai 1996, 32, 37), and basically it relates with the essential disconnection among economy, culture, and politics (Appadurai 1996, 33). In relation to this claim, Appadurai theorizes that there are five scapes that are independent and disconnected and unforeseeable one to another, and have become the focus of the politics of global culture. The scapes are ethnoscapas (person), mediascapas (media/images), technoscapas (machinery), financescapas (economy), and ideoscapas (politics, ideas) (Appadurai 1996, 33, 35, 37).

Appadurai underlines the importance of “the new role for imagination in social life” as “an organized field of social practices, a form of work and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility”, and the five flows are the building blocks of what he called “imagined worlds”.¹⁰ (Appadurai 1996, 31, 33).

Since this thesis focuses on the worldwide movements of the analysed films, it will principally be related to the mediascape. Appadurai defines the term as “the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information...and to the images of the world created by these media” (Appadurai 1996, 33). The media within mediascapes includes newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios (Appadurai 1996, 35)

Appadurai also emphasises that the fundamental issue of the global interactions is the dynamic tension between what he called “cultural homogenization” (including Americanization and Commoditization) and “cultural heterogenization” as well as “indigenization”. (Appadurai 1996, 32). As the impact of the global migration of media, both being exported from and imported to other countries, the direct and indirect influences of foreign values towards local media and cultures are inevitable and might raise some issues, such as moral panics and the establishment of policies to protect the national culture from global “bad influences” and at the same time the emerging Americanized lifestyle towards local cultural/entertainment products and the taste of the audience.

On the other hand, the process of adaptation and modification as well as hybridization towards the transnational media and values occurs during this process (Jung 2007, 17)¹¹. The foreign media being imported to another country can be locally reformulated and adjusted for various kinds of (re)purposes. A film producer can provide modifications and a hybridization of his/her films in order to reach wider audiences and tastes, both nationally and transnationally. And lastly, a national media being globally exported worldwide will adopt new approaches in order to reach new international markets.

¹⁰ Appadurai defines “Imagined worlds” as “the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe”. The term is an extension of Benedict Anderson’s term “imagined community” (Appadurai 1996, 3).

¹¹ Also see Iwabuchi, 2002, 43-44. Related to the context of this thesis, Heider also mentions this kind of tension (Heider 1991, 128). Please see the subsection Discussion on Trashy Movies in Indonesian Cinema Scholarship in this chapter.

Related to this, the term “deterritorialization” mentioned by Appadurai, is very important to note. Appadurai defines the term as a detachment of cultural forms from their origins of places and people that are making them (Appadurai 1996, 37-38; Jung 2007, 14). In consequence, as discussed by Appadurai, it had global fundamentalism in the one hand, and “new markets for film companies, art impresarios, and travel agents” in the other hand (Appadurai 1996, 37-38; also see Jung 2007, 14). For Appadurai, deterritorialization “...affect the loyalties of groups....their transnational manipulation of currencies and other forms of wealth and investment, and the strategies of states” (Appadurai 1996, 49). In other words, deterritorialization endorsed mediascapes (and ideoscapes) to circulate beyond their own boundaries and played their roles in the global network (Heyman and Campbell 2009, 133).

Specifically, the thesis will also focus on the consequences of the deterritorialization of the movies being analysed towards “new markets for film companies” which led to the decontextualisation and recontextualisation of the media, such as the reworking and repurposing of the movies, as I will specifically analyse in Section 2.

Regarding the five flows, Heyman and Campbell critically responded to Appadurai’s claims on the scapes. They think that the five scapes being elaborated upon are not totally disconnected and equal, because finanscape, particularly financial capital (from states, idea networks, transnational companies, and so on), and ‘landscapes of centralized political power’ to some extent, have more power and impact upon the global community than other streams, (Heyman & Campbell 2009, 132). By doing so, both scholars can gain a better understanding of global inequalities and claim that (geographical) boundaries still play important roles (Heyman & Campbell 2009, 132, 135). They state: “Geographic spaces are constructed over time, and flows do not only erode geography; rather, they may create it, reproduce it, transform it, or undermine it. (Heyman & Campbell, 2009, 144)

In addition, Appadurai highlighted that he primarily discusses the 1970s and 1980s eras, the years the phenomenon of transnationalisation of classic Indonesian exploitation films originally happened. Appadurai writes:

This theory of a break—or rupture—with the strong emphasis on electronic mediation and mass migration, is necessarily a theory of the recent past (or the extended present) because it is only in the past two decades or so that media and migration have become so massively

globalized, that is to say, active across large and irregular transnational terrain (Appadurai 1996, 9)

Discourses on New Order's Indonesian Cinema History.

As I discussed earlier, in Indonesia, popular Indonesian films, especially exploitation movies, are overlooked and shunned by most film critics, film journalists, and film scholars, except when discussing controversial topics or particular fields of study such as gender studies or analysis of social classes. The majority of books, works of journalism, and academic papers dealing with Indonesian cinema history, both in English or Indonesian, generally exclude the significance of classic exploitation cinema.¹² They only discuss these kinds of films if there are some controversial issues associated with them, such as the withdrawal of *Lady Terminator* from movie theaters (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992) by censorship boards due to sexual and violent scenes in 1988 (Said 1991), or if representation of social classes and gender are explored, as discussed by Krishna Sen in relation to “prostitution genre” (Sen 1994) and *Primitif*.¹³ Before 2014, only a few proper texts have discussed the phenomenon of exploitation films (see the subchapter titled *Discussion on Trashy Movies in Indonesian Cinema Scholarship* below).

In order to get the bigger picture of what happened in Indonesia during the New Order period, I will highlight the general history of Indonesian cinema in the New Order era, in relation to the policies and milestones, as written in scholarly publications.

The New Order regime era was established in 1966 and ended in 1998.¹⁴ The years 1965-1966 were a big transition point for Indonesia. In the previous decade,¹⁵ there were ideological battles and political polarizations among many parties. The Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, or *PKI*) attacked many organizations and industries, including film producers, and accused them of “not supporting revolution” (Said 1991, 59; Tjasmadi 2008, 78). The PKI also spread the spirit of anti-Americanism through the establishment of a film policy that eliminated

¹² For a general bibliography of Indonesian cinema written in English, please check Imanjaya 2012.

¹³ Please see Sen 1994, 20-23

¹⁴ On broader political context of Suharto leadership and the New Order government in general, see Vatikiotis, 1998.

¹⁵ One of the scholars who discussed this particular era is Krishna Sen. For example, she wrote a chapter in her seminal book, titled *Political Polarisation and Cinema: 1956-66* (Sen 1994). Also see: Sen, 1995.

this Western influence, The American Motion Pictures Association in Indonesia (AMPAI). In 1964. The AMPAI was banned because it was considered to be the dominant power of the film market (Sen 1994, 57). As a result, there were no Hollywood films being screened in Indonesia from 1964 until 1966, the year the Old Order was replaced by the New Order.

In 1965, The PKI was blamed for the killing of six high-ranking military generals and also accused of attempting to take over the government. Major General Suharto overcame the situation and in 1966 became President. He later eliminated and banned the PKI and everything related to Communist and Marxist doctrines. His apparatus tried to prevent the influence of Communism by applying several policies that were, as time went on, broadened to exert a total control of daily life, a control which included media and film.¹⁶ Learning from the final years of the “Old Order”, an era that was marked by economic and political instability, Suharto’s “New Order” framed all aspects of potential Communist infiltration of cultural output as subversive and put the film and media industries under military control, and thus established a level of oppression and censorship.¹⁷

At the same time, Suharto tried to build the nation, including the film industry (Sen 1994, 105). Due to the levels of control exerted by the Suharto regime, this era has become notorious for its enacting of a state-controlled totalitarian system of government which dominated every aspect of life under the guise of security, development, and stability (Sen 1992; Heider 1991; Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992; Said 1991). For example, in the film industry, the government applied strict censorship and controlled all aspects of film production from screenwriting to distribution and exhibition.¹⁸ As result, some films were either left unproduced or banned during the New Order era.¹⁹ At the same time, in order to make a film, one had to first join one of the official film

¹⁶ For more discussion on the political turbulence in 1956-1965 and the political transition era, see Kingsbury 2005.

¹⁷ Please see Paramaditha 2012.

¹⁸ There are at least three main books discussing the film industry during the repressed situation caused by the New Order, namely Krishna Sen (1994), Karl Heider (1991) and Salim Said (1992) all underline the same concern.

¹⁹ *Max Havelaar* (Fons Rademaker 1975) was held for 10 years by the Censor board. *Krisis X* (Crisis X, Turino Djunaidy, 1975), was threatened with a ban by the censor because it portrayed excessive moral degradation, but was passed after a major revision of the story. *Yang Muda yang Bercinta* (*The Youngster in Love*, Sjumandjaja, 1977), starred a rebel poet WS Rendra and contained some critical thought and poems by Rendra, was banned and got screened 16 years later, in September 1993. *Bung Kecil* (*Little Brother*, Sophan Sophian, 1978), a sharp social critique of feudalism and the loss of idealism in those who fought for the country’s Independence, was on the censorship board’s table for five years before being passed by the censor in 1983. Another Sophan Sophian film, *Suami* (*Husband*, 1988) had to change its title five times. (Imanjaya 2007)

organizations, and then submit their first draft of the script with a recommendation letter from the organization (Sumarno & Achmas 2002, 152-170).

All of the aforementioned was condoned, and even endorsed, by the cultural elites as were the policies supporting their vision, which were defined as supporting “national film”--films which presented the “face of Indonesia” on screen, as part of an Indonesian-ness (Sen 1994, 105; Barker 2010) to be able to become truly “national” in character (1989 Basic Guidelines for the Promotion and Development of National Film”, Department of Information of Republic of Indonesia, Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 15-16).

Another important term is *film kultural edukatif*. The Information Minister, Ali Murtopo, had defined the term while closing the congress of *Majelis Musyawarah Perfilman Indonesia* (Consultative Council of Indonesian films) in 1993:

The concept of cultural educational film is the foundation of Indonesian cinema. The work program of this conception is to make Indonesian films as the hosts in their own country, so that the Indonesian cinema could be capable of functioning as public communication, public education, and public information. (“Kultural Edukatif, Dasar Filsafat Perfilman Indonesia”)

In line with Murtopo, Narto Erawan (Director for Guidance in Film and Video Recording of the Department of Information, and Secretary General of the National Film Council) emphasized that national films should “...contain socio-cultural values which reflect the personality and the character of the nation making it “(*Film Kultural Edukatif*) (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 71-72).

On the other hand, The New Order had several policies designated to rehabilitate the development of the film industry and support the import of foreign films. Ministerial decrees were enacted to improve film development with a focus upon a “quantity approach” or “audience approach,” one such decree stating that in order to import a Hollywood film, a film importer should make five, later reduced to three, films. As a result, after being banned in 1964 due to anti-America political pressure by the PKI, Hollywood films dominated the film industries again, and influenced the style of local exploitation films. There were also a surplus of “bad” films produced by film importers.

It is important to highlight that from the 1970s through the 1980s, many Indonesian exploitation films were bestselling films nationally, particularly loved by those from the working and lower classes. These audiences flocked to seasonal and traveling cinemas that operated in both rural and suburban areas (Van Heeren 2012) where these marginalized films were showcased. According to van Heeren, these channels of distribution and exhibition were out of the radar of censorship and excluded from the National Film Development Program or other policies until 1993, when the New Order founded an official organization for these kinds of exhibitions (Van Heeren 2012, 33-34). This kind of mode of exhibition and their audiences were also ignored by The Indonesian Statistical Bureau (PBS), hence it is difficult to find out the exact numbers of audiences or screens all over Indonesia (Sen 1994).

Institutions of New Order cinema²⁰

As mentioned above, the New Order applied state control, initially to prevent communism penetrating the country again. Therefore, film institutions were strictly filtered and controlled. Krishna Sen mentions several institutions: film councils, which connect between government ministries and the film communities; *Festival Film Indonesia* (Indonesian Film Festival, FFI); and representative organizations of specific professional workers in the movie industry. (Sen 1994, 51). Sen writes:

Together these institutions define what constitutes Indonesian cinema and determine who becomes a filmmaker. These cinematic institutions are, of course themselves shaped by the economic and cultural institutions of the society (such as education and religion). Who has access to literacy, schooling and urban life limits the group of people who will ever come into contact with a film studio and have the option of becoming a filmmaker. (Sen 1994, 51)

Sen notes that the first New Order film council, *Dewan Produksi Film Nasional*, (National Film Production Council, DPFN) was founded in 1968 as a facilitator for filmmakers to produce quality films in order to upgrade spectators' appreciation towards local films and to value and select the proposals of production to get the funding (Sen 1994, 52). A year later the new Minister of Information, Air Marshal Budiarjo, modified the body, and it became *Dewan Film Nasional*

²⁰ This title is the sub-title of the third chapter in Krishna Sen's *Indonesian Cinema, Framing the New Order*.

(National Film Council), as the advisor of the Minister of Information regarding policies. Between 1968 and 1969, DFN produced four films, including the box office hit *Djampang Mentjari Naga Hitam* (*Djampang in Search of Black Dragon*), and the award-winning but box office flop *Apa Jang Kau Tjari Palupi* (*What are You Searching for, Palupi?*). However, in 1970 the production was stopped. (Sen 1994, 52). DPFN was disbanded because of an “excess of funds” (Said 1991, 82-83),--the euphemism for “corruption” (Barker 2011, 55).

In 1972, under the new Minister of Information Mashuri, the consultative role was diverted to a smaller organization, the Institute for National Film Development (LEPFINAS). But again, after a year, the new Minister of Information, Ali Murtopo, restructured the new film council, and became *ex-officio* chairperson. And in 1983 the new Minister of Information Harmoko changed the film council again and the main role then was “making recommendations to the minister about promoting the film industry of the country” (Sen 1994, 53).

Festival Film Indonesia (FFI) also played an important role as a means of control. Sen writes that the juries are chosen by the organizing committee of FFI and authorized by the Minister of Education (Sen 1994, 54). Although the membership of the jury changed annually, a few senior newsmen and scholars were constantly selected. Regarding the significance of FFI related to politics of taste, Sen writes:

On the whole, the jury’s opinions have run very close to those expressed in the film reviews of such elite national publications as the weekly *Tempo*, and journalists from prestige magazines and dailies are regularly included among the jury. The Film Festival award can be seen to represent the values, ideals, and interests of the urban intelligentsia of which the film-makers themselves are a part, as against those of the bureaucrats and financiers. The festival award system operates not by punishment (like censorship), or through exclusion (like the market), but through the privileging of certain films and their makers, and by extension of certain perspectives on art and society. (Sen 1994, 54-55).²¹

²¹ All of the committee members and juries of FFI should be appointed or approved by the government and verified by ministerial decrees. For example, decree no. 80a year 1985 (SK Menpen 80A/KEP/MENPEN/1985) on Completion Guidelines for the film festival (*Penyempurnaan Pedoman Pelaksanaan festival Film*) (Biro Hukum: N.d)

Professional organizations are another key instrument. After the New Order was established, the only professional organization left after 1965 was *Ikatan Karyawan Film dan Televisi Indonesia* (Union of Film and Television employees, KFT), because SARBUFIS (*Serikat Buruh Film dan Sandiwara*, Film and Theatrical Workers Union), *Lembaga Film Indonesia* (Indonesian Film Institution), and *Panitia Seniman Untuk Film* (Artists Committee For Film) were banned due to communist related issues. (Sen 1994, 55). In 1976, KFT became a means of state control since it was the only legal organization for filmmakers in all professions, except actors (Sen 1994, 55). Furthermore, the Government founded film organizations that became the only official groups in their respective fields of work: *Persatuan Artis Film Indonesia* (Indonesian Film Artists Union, PARFI), *Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia* (Indonesian Film Producers' Union, PPF²²), *Gabungan Perusahaan Bioskop Seluruh Indonesia* (All Indonesian Association of Movie Theater Companies, GPBSI), as well as small organizations such as *Gabungan Studio Film Indonesia* (Indonesian Association of Film Studios, GASFI) and *Gabungan Subtitling Indonesia* (Indonesian Association of Subtitlers, GASI). Their central function was "to aid in the execution of every policy formulated by the government for the development of cinema in Indonesia" (Sen 1994, 56). Hence, from 1976, in order to work in the film industry, it was compulsory to become a member of one of these organizations and then seek approval from them.

And finally, the government censorship board. Any movie produced in or imported into Indonesia should pass the *Badan Sensor Film* (The Board of Film Censorship, BSF) (Sen 1994, 67). The members always included representatives from ministries and other institutions, besides prominent intelligentsias and artists. For example, after 1973 the BSF was under the Director General of Radio, Television, and Film (Dirjen RTF), who was its ex-officio chairperson. The Executive Director was the officer from the Department of Information (Sen 1994, 68). In 1979, as Ali Murtopo, former Deputy Head of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Bakin), became Minister of Information, the intervention of the government towards the censorship board increased in numbers of members (37) and dominated two thirds of the BSF, including Bakin, the Attorney General's office, and the Police Department. (Sen 1994, 68-69).

²² The full number of the decree is *SK Menteri Penerangan RI No.1148/KEP/MENPEN/1976*, dated 24 August 1976. The title is *Pengukuhan Organisasi Perfilman Sebagai Organisasi Profesi* Or: "Inaugurations of Film Organizations as Professional Organization". See Indonesia 1976

Generally, most of the books related to Indonesian cinema during the New Order era, including Sen (1994) and Heider (1991), highlight the stringent censorship carried out by the government. Heider writes:

The government film censorship board must approve the script of a film before shooting, and it must advise again during the editing stage. News items frequently appear in the press announcing titles of films which have been released by the censorship board. This is a system of prior and early constraint—much different from the way the government controls printed books. (Heider 1991: 22)

But Heider also underlines that the BSF was always inconsistent and inefficient (Heider 1991, 22-23), which I will elaborate on in Chapter 1.

Film Nasional and Cultural Elites

As non-state agents,²³ cultural elites also played important roles in the cultural history of Indonesia, particularly in shaping and framing politics of taste toward the ideology of *film nasional* and became key persons within some film bodies such as the FFI and the National Film Council. Regarding this matter, Krishna Sen provides an overview of the history of Indonesian cinema in the New Order in one sentence: “The New Order inherited a cinema that expressed a highly individualist and elitist approach to society (Sen 1994, 94).

What I mean by the term “cultural elites” in this thesis is not a solid and formal organization, but more of a sense of what Arnold Toynbee calls a “Creative Minority” (Toynbee 1972). In the Indonesian context, cultural elites are a group of prominent figures who share the same ideology and mostly belong to nationalist wing who try to play a role as a “creative minority”. Sen describes them as “the tiny urban, educated, national political elites, which since independence had been bound by personal ties that bridged ‘conflict of interest’ and ideology (Sen 1994, 27). The phenomenon can be read in articles written by most prominent film critics, journalists, historians, and academia such as Asrul Sani (poet, cultural thinker, prominent writer, award-winning

²³ The term “non-state agents” is informed by a colleague, Aryo Danusiri, a PhD candidate from Harvard University.

scriptwriter, director), Rosihan Anwar (senior journalist), Sumardjono (filmmaker), Misbach Jusa Biran (film historian, founder of Sinematek Indonesia, filmmaker), and Salim Said (film scholar). In short, they want to frame Indonesian cinema to fit into the concept of *film nasional* (national film). The cultural elites, mostly nationalists, both left and right, concluded that the realism approach is the best approach to serve the concept of *film nasional* and, as a result, produce national culture (Barker 2011, 50, 60).²⁴

The cultural elites, then, through official bodies such as the National Film Council, dictated which films should be sent to International Film Festivals,²⁵ where most of them were realist films with the attempt to “search for Indonesian face on screen”. They, in many events, supported and endorsed political policies applied by the New Order Regime. They became juries in FFI, took part in some autonomous and official organizations to formulate several policies related to film funding, submission to international film festivals, and partly provided some guidance of censorship.

FFI events during the New Order era are a perfect example of collaboration of the legitimate culture agencies. As Sen highlighted, this particular festival is a “selective process determining who participates in Indonesian filmmaking” (Sen 1994, 54). Most of best films awarded by the

²⁴ Barker and Setijadi-Dunn & Barker underline that the attempt of *film nasional* as a frame has excluded pre-1950 films by Ethnic Chinese filmmakers (Barker 2011, 46; Setijadi-Dunn & Barker 2010, 41-42). In this context, the New Order exploitation films are considered as a continuation of pre-1950 films produced by Indonesian-Chinese, which were believed to be “...nothing more than escapist fantasy with little pretence to educate or enlighten the audience, let alone promote nationalism” (Barker 2011, 8). This kind of nationalism frame attempt rarely got critical responses. However, Barker reveals that an article at *Kompas* daily by FFI jury member D.A. Peransi who dissented from the majority opinion of the 1977 FFI jury: “The theme of searching for the Indonesian face in Indonesian films this year is the manifestation of a desire which is as vague as the film industry in this country trying to find and formulate its own identity. And the formulation of that face is as difficult as the formulation of a personality and identity of Indonesia”²⁴. Peransi also argues that most cultural elites did not get, or did not want to get, the point of the films that tried to picture of Indonesian society “wanting to be modern” (Barker 2011, 58)

²⁵ Film historian and then Director of Sinematek Indonesia SM Ardan writes a paper titled *Indonesian Participation in International Film Festivals*. The writing was originally published in the 1998 Indonesian Film Festival handbook. Most of the films sent to international film festivals are art-house cinema, drama, directed by auteur directors with a realism approach. For example: Teguh Karya’s *November 1828* (1988, historical drama), Asrul Sani’s *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan* (Pioneer of Freedom, Islamic-themed drama, 1977), Sjumandjaya’s *Kartini* (1982, about a national heroine), Teguh Karya’s *Ibunda* (Mother, 1985, drama) and Slamet Rahardjo’s *Kembang Kertas* (Paper Flowers, 1984). The films were sent as an official representative of Indonesia to film festivals in The United States, Canada, European countries, Australia (Melbourne), and Asia (Hong Kong, Tokyo,) (Jufri, 1992, 96-97). But none of the films produced during the New Order got officially selected by major film festivals such as Berlinale, Cannes, and Venesia. (Jufri, Baharuddin, Pasaribu: 1992, 96-97)

Citra Awards (Indonesia's Oscar) are appropriately termed *film nasional*,²⁶ therefore, through FFI, they played important roles in endorsing and filtering the concept of *film nasional* (Barker 2011, 32).

Discussion on Trashy Movies in Indonesian Cinema Scholarship

The discussion on popular films, particularly those with violence and sensual scenes, rarely occur in both popular and scholarly discourses in Indonesia, as well as abroad. If they do appear, most of the scholarly works on the films underline the bad impact of the films. Therefore, in this thesis, the discourse on Indonesian cult cinema can be considered as the challenge to the Indonesian traditional film history.

Salim Said, for example, regards national exploitation cinema as films that should be avoided and eliminated from Indonesian film scenes (Said 1991, 3-5). Said also wrote that the jury of 1977 came to the conclusion that most Indonesian films that are produced are mainly a “merchant of dreams”, in the negative way. And they “...fail to portray the realities of Indonesian life” and “...the beautiful dreams we see are from a world we do not always recognize” (Said: 1991). Salim Said also argues that the film producers follow the taste of the public to gain profits (Said 1991, p29), therefore they were market-oriented and quality was not their main concern.

Moreover, Said highlights that there are two patterns of filmmaking. The first one is idealism filmmaking where the attempt is “to present the actual Indonesian face on the screen” (Said 1991, 6). This group tries to seek “The Indonesian Face” on screen and was pioneered by Usmar Ismail in 1950 with *Darah dan Doa (The Long March)* (Said 1991 p6) and was claimed to be influenced by Italian Neorealism. The latter was celebrated and praised by film elites until recently, and the first shooting day of *Darah dan Doa*²⁷ became the Indonesian National Cinema Day. On the other hand, commercial filmmaking, whose main purpose is to gain commercial goals, are considered as “being dishonest” by “emphasizing excessive sex, unbridled violence, and opulent life styles amidst the reality of this country's poverty”, and many of them are just imitations of foreign films (Said 1991, 6, 8, 9). This group was mostly pioneered by Chinese-Indonesian people in the pre-1950 era (Said 1991, 5). The commercial ones are still condemned and criticized by local

²⁶ Popular films commonly only won sideline awards like the Bing Slamet Award (for best comedy film), the Antemas Award (for bestselling movies), or the S. Toetoe Award (for best poster).

²⁷ It literally means “Blood and Prayer”. Also known as *The Long March*.

mainstream journalists and critics, or are neglected, but at the same time were celebrated by lower class and working class audiences, especially through the *layar tancap* (traveling cinema).

These kind of films are also discussed by Krishna Sen with a more neutral outlook in *Indonesian Cinema, Framing the New Order* (Sen 1994), while discussing particular topics such as gender and social class, particularly in the chapters titled *The Beginning: Early 1900s-1956*, *Women's Pictures in Men's Fictions*, *Institutions of New Order Cinema* (on exploitation films, particularly related to sexploitation elements), and *The New 'Ordered' Cinema* (on censorship and other policies) which I already heavily quoted in the subchapter above.

A more positive opinion was written by Literature lecturer Jacob Sumardjo. He writes that those kinds of cinema were strongly criticized by the more educated segment of society but loved by the lower class viewers. Sumardjo writes: "the films mix reality with dreams, representation of marginal film culture, and too heavy an emphasis on the elements of sex and the outrageous in the majority of domestic films." (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 54-55, 57). In 1988, Soemardjo, undertook research on spectatorship by distributing questionnaires in Bandung. He concludes that the popularity and constant production of comedies and martial arts films taken from ancient legends indicate that those kinds of movies are the most favorite ones of local audiences, but at the same time "...it is these films that bear the brunt of attacks from the intellectuals" (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 52-53). But Sumardjo also balances his paper by saying that the "production of the more popular types of domestic films is also valid and required because certain cultural conditions require them. The marginal lower middle class require entertainment appropriate to its sense of cultural appreciation" (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 58).

Karl Heider is arguably the first author who studied Indonesian cinema with popular films as his main focus. For him, the films are the best examples if one wants to examine cultural aspects, or even the Indonesia-ness of the films (Heider 1991, 8). Contrary to the concept of *film nasional*, Heider underlines:

The most useful films for a cultural analysis are the genre films, while the "best" films from a cinematographic standpoint are the auteur films which have been deliberately distanced from their cultural roots. (Heider 1991, 8).

In his book, *Indonesian Cinema: Indonesian Culture on Screen* (1991), Heider maps out popular films and suggest various genres and types into which most Indonesian films will fit suitably (Heider 1991: 39-40). Here, I will elaborate upon Heider's subgenres that I argue have a direct relation to this research.

First, the Legend genre; this includes dramatizations of traditional legends or folktales, and are usually set in the Hindu-Buddhist or early Muslim period, circa A.D. 1000 to the seventeenth century A.D.. The main protagonists usually have supernatural powers used in fighting, transformations, and flying. This genre includes costume dramas, historical legends, or legendary history, telling stories which are familiar throughout Indonesia and rarely get much critical attention.

The *Kumpeni*²⁸ genre, Heider writes, deals with the Dutch colonial period in the archipelago, from the 17th century until the late 19th century. In other words: films with colonial period settings which tell stories of the conflict between the Dutch and the Indonesians. The prototypical plot pits the eponymous hero (Jaka Gledek, Jaka Sembung, Pak Sakerah) against the Dutch forces. The hero usually has supernatural powers (*ilmu*, or mystical knowledge) which have been given him by a Muslim teacher and which he uses to protect the villagers. Sadistic sexuality is common, such as Dutch soldiers raping village girls. The hero is often aided by a woman, either a villager or the daughter of a Dutch officer, these films end with some sort of dilemma. (Heider 1991, 40-41)

Another genre similar with the Legend genre is Horror. In this context, Indonesian horror movies deal with supernatural powers and supernatural monsters, and have a direct connection with traditional folklores. Heider underlines that this genre is “crudely sadistic sexuality more than Japanese Period films²⁹.” (Heider 1991, 43-44).

The above popular subgenres, I argue, can be defined as closer to the specificity of Indonesian subgenres. On the other hand, Heider's subgenres are more like Americanized subgenres.

The first one is the Japanese Period Genre which is set in the three year period of the Japanese occupation (1942-1945). Heider writes: “The standard plot involves an Indonesian woman who is

²⁸ *Kumpeni* or *Kompeni* is an Indonesian slang word for colonial Dutch soldier. It was derived from the Dutch word *Compagnie* (company), taken from *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), or the Dutch East India Company (1602-1799). For more information about the VOC occupation in Indonesia, please see Vickers 2005.

²⁹ For Japanese Period subgenres, see the following paragraph.

abducted and humiliated by the Japanese army. She winds up in a prison camp or as a concubine/servant of the Japanese. There is one honorable Japanese officer, however, and they fall in love, but at the end of the war he commits suicide” (Heider 1991, 23, 42). This genre has even more sadistic the Kumpeni Films, with lots of sexual brutality (rape and other abuse) as well as wome nudeness (Heider 1991, 42). I argue that this genre’s characteristics are very close to Western exploitation subgenres, namely womensploitation, and women in prison films.

Another genre mentioned by Heider is the *perjuangan* (struggle) period genre which runs from the end of the World War II, when the defeated Japanese forces withdrew from the archipelago until December 1949 when the Dutch gave up their claims to the islands (Heider 1991, 23, 42). These wars films are about Indonesian fighters, and are full of action, gun fights, car chases, and so forth.

Another Americanized genre worth mentioning is cannibalism. In Heider’s terms it is called Expedition Films, where modern people (anthropologists, development team) explore exotic places and meet its native inhabitants (Heider 1991, 45). Some scholars call it “Jungle films” (Tombs and Starke 2008, Sen: 1999, Tombs 1997). One of the popular examples is *Primitif*. Heider also underlines the struggle among the politics of taste towards these kind of films. He writes:

The forces of the marketplace have an effect on shaping films as well. But at least in the case of scenes of sexuality and violence, the audience’s demands pull filmmakers in the opposite direction from the censorship board. (Heider 1991, 22).

In addition, in relation to Appadurai’s Cultural Heterogenization vs. Cultural Homogenization, Karl Heider mentions the tension between “Americanisation” and “Indonesianisation” in the New Order’s the film industry. In some cases such as *Pengantin Pantai Biru (The Bride of the Blue Shore, 1983)*, the film basically imitates *Blue Lagoon* (1980) but somehow it is significantly different, particularly on the construction of “The (savage) Other”. In short, the film was undertaking the process of Indonesianization (Heider 1991, 112-113, 115). Regarding this matter, Heider writes :

But most significant is the way that the Indonesian film has managed to socialize the couple despite the entire logic of the plot. It has been profoundly Indonesianized. Viewed in these terms, also, we see Indonesian cinema becoming more Indonesian in the face of strong

foreign influence, especially from America. In some respects –the most obvious being sexuality—Indonesian cinema is indeed becoming more Americanized: Lip-to-lip kissing, palm-to-palm hand holding, and revealing clothing are, by the late 1980s, allowed in Indonesian films (Heider 1991, 128).

I argue that this case also applies to many of the New Order’s Indonesian exploitation movies. Certainly, some of the producers also do the modification or hybridization and naturally mix two or more subgenres above into one movie.

Nonetheless, I should underline that the works I mentioned above do not specifically use the term “exploitation” or “cult”, except for Said when he clearly pointed out these kind of films are “Trashy movie”, “slapdash movies”, and “poor quality movies” (Said 1991, 89). But Heider’s description of “The art of movie advertising” is quite similar with the tradition of exploitation films in the Western tradition. Heider writes:

The pictures in the ads relate vaguely to the story of the film but concentrate on the stars and eroticize the women—a favorite pose is the actress in semirecumbent position, up on one elbow, with legs slightly spread and breasts prominent. Such poses rarely appear in the movies themselves. Indeed, the publicly displayed ads are considerably more erotic than the movies shown inside the theaters. (Heider 1991, 24)

However, Rosihan Anwar once also used the term “sexploitation” in 1978, when he sent a protest letter to the Minister of Information in 1978 (Said 1991, 90)

The first book specifically dedicated to these films and considers them as cult and exploitation films is *Mondo Macabro, Weird and Wonderful Cinema around the World* by Pete Tombs in 1997 (Tombs 1997). Although it is not considered as a scholarly work, it is important to mention the book in this thesis, as it is the first book that discussed exploitation films, and to be written in English, and can be the gateway to understanding and acknowledging the significant figures, important issues, policies and political background, and other interesting trivia for global fans. This book is written by Tombs, the co-founder of Mondo Macabro, and he is also the man behind the redistribution of classic Indonesian exploitation movies. The book positions Indonesian cinema as equal to other global cult cinemas from Hong Kong, The Philippines, India, Turkey,

Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and Japan. There is a chapter dedicated to Indonesian exploitation cinema titled *Mystics from Bali: Indonesia*. Tombs also directed and produced a documentary for Channel 4 on the subject. He puts the short films (Tombs and Starke, 2008a) - background on Indonesian fantasy films, interviews with the actors and filmmakers, discussion on the art directing and special effect by El Badrun, and an essay on the history of magical swords, and so on - as extra-texts on the DVDs.

In domestic mass media, it was Joko Anwar,³⁰ then film reviewer for *The Jakarta Post*, who wrote an article titled *Bad RI films a big hit overseas*, 9 December 2001 (Anwar 2001), after he discovered the global rediscovery of the films. Anwar states that the films (he specifically mentioned *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters* (FFFF)³¹, *Lady Terminator*,³² and *The Warrior/Jaka Sembung* series) are "...still being talked about and looked for on videos by many bad-movie lovers worldwide" and are widely discussed in some midnight movies forums, and he even recommended some exploitation and cult film websites for more details and to do online shopping.³³ Anwar, then, becomes the unofficial spokesperson for these kinds of films. He admitted that those B movies from, and outside of, Indonesia are one of the reasons why he makes films. He repeatedly praised the films by comparing classical films with recent ones in *Horror flick 'The Black Magic' Casts Bad Spells* (Anwar 2003). He later, in 2005, uploaded the DVD covers of the transnational version of the movies on his Multiply blog, which caused many Indonesian fans to buy and want to know more about the exported films. Joko Anwar's activism

³⁰ Joko Anwar is one of the prominent directors and scriptwriters in Indonesia. He is one of the directors who made genre films that got selected for some international festivals, such as *South by Southwest* (for *Modus Anomali/Ritual*), and, the recent one, *A Copy of My Mind*, was premiered at the Venice Film Festival 2015. *Kala* (Deadtime) was picked by *Sight & Sound* as one of the year's best and also named Anwar as one of the smartest filmmakers in Asia. The film also won the first prize at the New York Asian Film Festival (2008). *Pintu Terlarang* (Forbidden Door) was chosen as the best picture at Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival (2009). Joko Anwar profiles can be found on IMDB ("Joko Anwar").

On the other hand, Anwar openly shows respect to B Movies, and, in a way, becomes the spokesperson for the New Order's Indonesian exploitation films. One of them was in an interview in *The Jakarta Post*, 23 May 2010 (Veal 2010). In June 2014, I co-organized a public engagement event at Kineforum, Jakarta with the topic "Rethinking of New Order's Exploitation Films", and I invited Joko Anwar to share his experience and thoughts on the films.

³¹ For more about this film, see Chapter 4.

³² I will analyze the film in Chapter 5.

³³ Namely vomitbagvideo.com, gravediggervideo.com, and a page titled "Indonesian Films" in witchinghourvideo.com. Please check "Vomit Bag Video", "Grave Digger Video", and "Indonesian Films", respectively.

is significant in engaging many post-New Order local fans with the “Crazy Indonesia” phenomenon, and also can be considered as the bridge for local film enthusiasts to recognize and, later, celebrate the films.

Inspired by Joko Anwar’s *Multiply* account and my discovery of *The Mystics in Bali* in Amsterdam in 2007, I started to undertake research on the topic. After presenting the idea at the *B for Bad Movies* conference in Monash University (Melbourne) in 2009, I finally published the paper called *The Other Side of Indonesia: New Order’s Indonesian Exploitation Cinema as Cult Films* in *Colloquy* journal. And, finally, I was invited to be the guest editor of *Plaridel: A Philippine Journal of Communication, Media, and Society* Special Issue, Vol 11, Issue No. 2, 2014. The topic of my special issue is “The Bad, The Worse, and The Worst: The Significance of Indonesian Cult, Exploitation, and B Movies” and published seven papers and three documents, all about Indonesian cult, exploitation, and B-Movies.³⁴

Key Concepts: Cult Movies, Exploitation Films, B-grade Cinemas

In this thesis, I will often use the term “cult cinema”, B-Movies, and exploitation films. I will use the three terms interchangeably, although there are some differences, emphasis, and characteristics.

There are many definitions and characteristics of cult cinema, which include underground/avant-garde, art-house, films directed by auteur directors, experimental, blockbusters, mainstream, independent, and genre films (Mathijs & Mendik 2008; Mathijs & Sexton 2011), as represented in *100 Cult Cinema* (Mathijs & Mendik, 2011). One of the most important characteristics is that the movies should have “an active and lively communal following” as defined by Mathijs and Mendik in *The Cult Film Readers*:

A film with an active and lively communal following. Highly committed and rebellious in its appreciation, its audience regularly finds itself at odds with the prevailing cultural mores, displaying a preference for strange topics and allegorical themes that rub against cultural sensitivities and resist dominant politics. (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 11)

³⁴ For more info about *Plaridel*’s special issue, please see “Volume 11 Issue 02”.

The cult followers are essential to making a movie achieve the cult status. The audiences must be loyalists to the films, for example by watching and celebrating it repeatedly, and commonly, the fans have “different tastes of cinema”. In many cases, people consider cult films as the ones that are commonly art-house movies, outside mainstream tastes and only appeal to specific audiences with a high culture perspective. (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 18). But, as compiled by Mathijs and Mendik in *Cult Cinema Reader* (2008), many scholars think that, considering the elements of cult followers and repeated viewings, the list of cult movies should also include films associated with low culture and film that are full of sex, namely exploitation movies. (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 18).

There is also a consideration of including mainstream films with devoted followers with repeated viewing practices, as cult movies. This list includes *Star Wars*, *the Sound of Music*, *The Lord of the Rings trilogy*, *E.T.* and *Casablanca*. The term of this phenomenon is “Mass Cult” (as coined by Barry Keith Grant) (Grant 1991, 123) and “Cult Blockbusters” (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 63-66), meaning that they are very popular and bestselling films and at the same time have cult followings.

Some of the characteristics of cult movies are “badness,” or poor cinematic achievement, either generic specificity or sometimes the mixing of genres, exposure of, or defiance of, a genre’s conventions, satiric, or hyperbolic exaggeration of generic codes, nostalgia, and gore (Mathijs and Mendik 2008). Strangeness, as highlighted by Mathijs and Mendik, is one of the elements that attract global cult fans. They write:

Some films may seem normal to their home cultures, but become objects of curiosity once they leave that context. The reception of a film outside its initial cultural surrounding may easily evoke celebration, devotion or even hostility of a cultist kind” (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 8-9).

In this research, I will also differentiate the term “cult cinema” from the term “exploitation cinema”. Exploitation movies do not automatically have cult status and cult films are not always exploitation cinema, as is suggested by Telotte with the terms *Midnight Movies* and *Classic Cult Cinema* (Telotte, 1991, 1).

On exploitation cinema, Mathijs and Sexton write: “The films often dealt with forbidden topics, such as sex, vice, drugs, nudity, and anything considered to be in “bad taste” and commonly low-

budget films” (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 147). Watson defines the films as “a film practice ‘in which the elements of plot and acting are subordinate to elements that can be promoted’”. (Watson 1997, 78). According to Eric Schaefer (Schaefer 1999), in short, exploitation cinema characteristics are “...ethically dubious, industrially marginal, and aesthetically bankrupt” (Schaefer 1999, 17).

Indeed, the content of film itself is not the only element that defines the term, but also deals with the marketing strategies, or by the means in which it is sold to its potential audience. In his book, Schaefer underscores the term exploitation as a mode of film promotion or advertising, particularly posters, trailers, and newspapers ads. Schaefer writes:

Exploitation producers conceded that because their films lacked identifiable stars or the recognition provided by conventional genres, they needed an extra edge to be “put over” with audiences.... During the 1960s and the 1970s, the term was modified to indicate the subject that was being exploited, such as for “sexploitation and “Blaxploitation” movies. (Schaefer 1999, 4).

Thomas Doherty, sharing similar arguments, underlines that the films are both “the object of exploitation” (advertised and marketed) and an active agent that “...caters to its target audience by serving up appetizing or exotic subject matter” (Doherty 1988, 3). In addition, as the result of low-budget production, the main purpose of exploitation cinema is to *exploit* “... its audience for economic purpose,” as stated by Watson (Watson 1997, 76).

In this research I use the term to refer to both the modes of production and the content contained therein, as well as modes of marketing and promotion, all of which are interchangeable systems of signification.

There are many derivations of exploitation cinema, such as sexploitation (exploiting sex themes),³⁵ blaxploitation (black people),³⁶ Canuxploitation (Canada), Eurotrash, Latploitation (Latin America), Nazisploitation (Nazi) (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 151). Other subgenres include Bruceploitation³⁷ (Bruce Lee), Jawsploitation, Women in Prison³⁸, and Nunsploitation³⁹. As I mentioned above there are categories based on nations such as Canada, Latin countries, Australia,

³⁵ Please see “Sexploitation” and “The Erotic World of Sexploitation”.

³⁶ For more details, please see “Blaxploitation”.

³⁷ Please see “Bruceploitation”

³⁸ For Women in Prison cinema, please see “W.I.P.”

³⁹ More information about Nunsploitation please read Fujiwara 1998.

and Mexico which already have established terms on the topic (namely Canuxploitation⁴⁰, Latsploitation (Victoria and Dolores Tierney 2011), Ozploitation⁴¹, and Mexploitation (Doyle 2005), respectively. But there is no single Indonesian film mentioned in the discussion of the above subgenres.

Other terms I will often use are Trash Films, B Movies, and Low Budget Cinema. In the introduction of *The Golden Age of "B" Movies*, actress Evelyn Ankers⁴² wrote about her acting experience in the B movies industry. Ankers defines B Movies as "...quickly made, cheaply produced but popular little films". The other terms are "quickies" or "cheapies" (McClelland : 1978, 1). In some cases, the scripts were often changed on daily basis (McClelland 1978, 3), and were produced in a short time, often between seven days to 3 weeks, including Saturdays (McClelland 1978, 6). In other words, Doug McClelland describes B Movies as "...inexpensively produced and usually unheralded—except by movie-goers, who often found more to enjoy in these bottom-rung quickies than in the Ballywooded epics their profits supported" (McClelland 1978, 14). The films are also ignored or sharply criticized by film critics (McClelland 1978, 14). Originally the term "B movies" referred to the second film shown during a double feature, or double bill of screenings, particularly during the Depression (McClelland 1978, 14-15; Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 145). And during the 1940s big studios also produced B movies in order to let their actors, directors, and scriptwriters practice and gain experience, so they would be well-trained and ready for A-class films (McClelland 1978, 14-15).

Last but not least, there is another term related to this kind of films; Paracinema, as suggested by Jeffrey Sconce, and is defined as follows:

The explicit manifesto of paracinematic culture is to valorize all forms of cinematic "trash", whether such films have been either explicitly rejected or simply ignored by legitimate film culture. (Sconce, 1995, 372)

In the Indonesian context, the terms exploitation films, B movies, or Cult cinema are not familiar among local film critics, scholars, and journalists. But, as I mentioned above, Salim Said wrote

⁴⁰For example, the term is used by a website focusing on Canadian B Movies. Please check "Canuxploitation: Your Complete Guide to Canadian B-Film"

⁴¹For this issue, Mark Hartley made a documentary titled *Not Quite Hollywood: The Wild, Untold Story of Ozploitation!* (Australia, 2008)

⁴² On the front cover, Ankers is introduced as "Queen of the "B"s."

some similar terms, namely “Trashy films”, “slapdash films”, and “poor quality films”. Based on the characteristics of the films, I argue that Said discussed a similar kind of films. The difference between the “Crazy Indonesia” films and the exploitation films from Western countries relies on the exoticism of the subgenres, as elaborated by Karl Heider above. Pete Tombs, the co-founder of Mondo Macabro, shares the same argument:

Again, to us in the West, the mythology they explored (South Sea Queen, *Sundel Bolong* etc.) was new and very “exotic”. There was also something interesting in seeing western exploitation staples, such as the women in prison movie or the monster movie, being filtered through Indonesian eyes. Finally, I suppose for us there was a feeling that things like supernatural horror and black magic were maybe taken a bit more seriously by audiences in Indonesia than they were in the West, for cultural/historical reasons, so the films weren’t so self-conscious or “camp” as UK or US productions” (Imanjaya 2009d, 148)

Cult Movies, Fan Culture, and Distribution Culture

Although a film can be marketed as cult, it does not mean that it can automatically achieve cult status, it needs to be evidenced that there are cult followers attached with it (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 393). In many cases, films failed in their original releases and 20 years later they were discovered by groups of fans and became cult. It is the fans who celebrate and watch the film repeatedly that determine the cult status of a film. (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 134)

Films with cult status have devoted followers who have commitment and an active celebration. Telotte highlights two important elements: “cult film experience” and “its nearly worshipful audience”. (Telotte: 1991, 5) In many cases the fans have a rebellious attitude against the taste of mainstream audiences and accepted canon lists, and some of them try to develop the new alternative canons (Mathijs & Mendik: 2008, 3-6).

In conjunction with this account, as strongly indicated by Jenkins (1988, 2006), Fiske (2008), and Hill (2002), the audience is always active and productive, since they always celebrate the films and produce texts. There are many reasons why fans celebrate certain films: looking for strangeness and otherness, nostalgia, looking for transgressions and a so-bad-it’s-good perspective (Mathijs and Mendik 2008, 2-3, 8-9, 77).

Fans also, as John Fiske puts it, “discriminate fiercely” (Fiske 2008, 446-448). They choose to celebrate particular tastes and exclude others, which I will elaborate upon more in the subchapter of politics of taste.

Generally, the cult followers watch the movies they admire in many ways: in movie theaters, such as art houses, grindhouses, drive-ins, (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 167) and particularly in circuits of midnight screenings in the 1970s. Other outlets are often campus societies, and home videos in the 1980s (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 14; Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 167).

In midnight screenings the fans celebrated the cult films and the phenomenon began with *El Topo*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *the Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Pink Flamingo*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *Eraserhead* (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 7, 168). They consider the movie theaters as “the temple” to maintain their subculture’s identity and sense of exclusivity and rarity (Jancovich 2002, 306, 309, 319). The element of inaccessibility also makes a film gain the cult status, such as the Video Nasties in the UK in the 1980s. (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 8).

Since the films I am focusing are those circulating globally in DVD circuits in the 2000s, I will mainly focus on DVDs, and in some cases I will discuss VHS and Betamax if the discussions focus on distribution in the 1980s and the 1990s. Home videos play an important role in the tradition of film consumption and distribution, particularly the capability of video players in the 1980s to do fast-forward, rewind, and freeze-framing (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 4, 15)--so the audience can repeatedly watch particular scenes-- likewise in early 2000s when DVD became more popular.

One of the important elements related to home videos in the 1980s and 1990s is the global film market in international film festivals such as Cannes and Berlinale (Barker 2014, Imanjaya 2009d). Here, transnational distributors bought films from all around the world either for theatrical releases or straight-to-video strategies (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 276, 279).

Related to cult films and promotion, often campaigns try to present a film as ‘cult’ before it has reached an audience —“packaging it to fit into a niche market, or using opportunist showmanship...” (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 7). In other words, the films were being deterritorialized to get new international targets. On the other hand, as underlined by Mathijs and Mendik, the other things that make or strengthen the cult status of films are “retrospectives, restorations, revivals, re-releases, and director’s cuts, spin-offs, rip-offs, and spoofs” (Mathijs &

Mendik 2008, 8). In many cases the distributors rely on extra-texts in order to make the DVDs more suitable for the fans. With regards to this, J.P. Telotte in *The Cult Film Experience* suggests:

How much the cult relies for its very existence on what we normally think of as extra-textual matters, in effect, how much the cult film's nature depends on both its own amorphous shape and a set of industrial practices divorced from a specific film's creation (Telotte, 1991, 8).

Hence, extra-textual or paratextual matters are important for the cult-ness of a text, specifically with an eye towards redubbing, adding special features, packaging as a double feature, and bootlegging.⁴³

Not only that, there are direct attempts from the film distributors or filmmakers to label their products as “cult” (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 235). Many transnational distributors market these films as “Cult Films,” a phenomenon described by Mathijs and Sexton as “Meta-Cult”. Intentionally, the DVD labels and DVD stores use the word “cult” as a tool to promote the films and fascinate the spectators with certain tastes (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 235, 238).⁴⁴

Therefore, the role of the distributor is very important, especially with regard to the dissemination of DVD formats for international circuits. The marketing and branding strategy of the distributors, particularly Straight-to-Video, is interrogated in *Shadow Economies of Cinema* by Ramon Lobato (2012). He writes that “...The act of distribution also materially shapes the text itself, adding another layer of meaning to the viewing experience” and at the same time “... shape public taste as well as reflect it, creating a feedback loop between distribution and demand” (Lobato 2012, 16-18) . It is the role of distributors to frame and at the same time feed fans' tastes through the reworking of filmic extra-texts through re-dubbing, re-titling, re-editing which not only act to contextualize these works, but also make them more suitable with global fans' needs and expectations. Hence, the role of the distributors in selecting and disseminating the films for global distribution is very important in facilitating the de-contextualization and subsequent

⁴³ McDonalds underlines that extra-textual matters are an added values to DVD, and although initially they are ancillary materials, but become the core of DVD values and provide significant differentiation with other home video formats (McDonald 2007 62, 64-65).

⁴⁴ The other important term is “self-conscious cultism” (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 235) which refers to filmmakers labelling themselves as filmmakers of cult films, such as Tim Burton, Joe Dante, and Quentin Tarantino. But the thesis does not explore this topic.

reconceptualization of the films (Lobato 2012, 197-199). This phenomenon, I argue, is part of the “deterritorialization” process, in Appadurai’s terms.

The other important issues are the role of the black market and piracy. According to McDonalds, home video, including DVD, can create new markets and profits, but, in the context of repurposing, the rights owners might lose their control over the films, and there are even bigger potentialities of copyrights violation (McDonalds 2007, 5-6, 209).

Until the 1980s, commercial bootlegging was a common form of cult cinema circulation, and illegal copying such as commercial bootlegging was often considered “in the margins of accepted practices” and “rarely criminalized or prosecuted” (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 34). Furthermore, according to Lobato, there is still a grey area with no clear distinction between illegality and legality within home video markets (Lobato 2012). In addition to all of the commercial bootlegging techniques recounted above, the boom of VHS/VCR technology beginning in late 1970s facilitated personal dubbing and dissemination of these films,⁴⁵ which formed yet another popular method of informal distribution. The acts highlight the importance of the black market or piracy within cult movie circulation (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 34).

Politics of Tastes and Legitimate Culture.

First, I should explain about the term “politics of taste” in the context of this thesis. If we mention the word “politics”, commonly people relate it with the attempts of a person, or an interested group of people, to obtain their goals and is closely related to diversity and conflicts, as well as cooperation and negotiation. Or, as Harold Lasswell puts it, *Who Gets What, When, How?* (Heywood 2013, 2, 8, 10). So, for the purpose of my research, politics of tastes is defined as any strategy or means run by group--including their efforts to influence, form coalitions, and negotiate with other parties-- who want to achieve their desired outcome related to their taste preference of particular cultural and commercial products. In the context of global flows, politics of taste can also be read as the dynamics tension between cultural homogenization (particularly Americanization) and indigenization, as indicated by Appadurai (Appadurai 1996, 32)

⁴⁵ Related to the VHS and VCR boom, please see: Wasser 2001. Also see: Greenberg 2008.

It is very clear that I am indebted to so many established theories on taste. The first I should mention is that I will apply and modify Pierre Bourdieu's definitions as laid out in *Distinctions* (Bourdieu 2010). For Bourdieu:

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which, their position in the objective classification is expressed or betrayed (Bourdieu 2010, xxix).

Tastes, for Bourdieu, are socially and culturally constructed (Bourdieu 2010, xxv) to “fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences” (Bourdieu 2010, xxx). Moreover, Bourdieu underlines that “... whereas the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education...” (Bourdieu 2010, xxiv). Bourdieu highlights that taste categorizes people and it makes people distinguish themselves by their distinctions (Bourdieu 2010, Xxx).

In this thesis, politics of taste have been undertaken by some agencies. Firstly, the government or policy makers as well as cultural elites, as indicated by Henry Jenkins:

The boundaries of “good taste,” then, must constantly be policed; proper tastes must be separated from improper tastes; those who possess the wrong tastes must be distinguished from those whose tastes conform more closely to our own expectations (Jenkins 1992, 16-17)

Secondly, the fans. As already mentioned briefly above, fans also have their own politics of taste. John Fiske in *Cultural Economy of Fandom* writes that fandom:

“...selects from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment, certain performers, narratives, or genres and takes them into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people” and “selects the materials through discrimination and distinction” (Fiske 2008, 448)

In other words, Fiske underlines that fans do the discrimination to make them distinct from others (Fiske 2008, 448). This account is in line with the notion of rarities and exclusivities being important elements to maintain the identity among fans (Jancovich 2002, 306, 309, 319).

However, distributors also have their own politics of taste. As highlighted by Ramon Lobato (2012), distributors repurpose the DVDs in order to make the films more suitable for the market by undertaking particular actions such as re-titling and redubbing. An example of this is Meta-cult, as suggested by Mathijs and Sexton (2011), and discussed earlier.

Related to the Indonesian context, as I already briefly discussed, the New Order along with cultural elites try to portray *film nasional* (national film) as a representation of the ‘true’ Indonesian cultures (Barker 2010), and films should be *Film Kultural Edukatif*, or have strong portrayal of the “Indonesian face on screen” (Sen 1994, Said 1991).

Thomas Barker highlights that the concept of *film nasional* can be considered as a form of legitimate culture. Barker writes: “*Film nasional* as a national cinema defined the parameters of nation and national culture and whose proponents established a group of auteur directors as exemplary artists whose works are canonized into film history” (Barker 2011, 73). Film scholar Jeffrey Sconce uses the term “politics of the canon” and underlines that this kind of debate happened for a long time (Sconce 1995, 378). For the Indonesian context, visual culture scholar Seno Gumira Ajidarma uses a different term, namely “politics of identity”. Related to the claim of National Film Day, Ajidarma writes:

The concept of politics of identity politics gives attention to the implementation and maintenance of cultural rights for the sake of identity claims in society and culture, in a coalition formation where values are lived together.⁴⁶

Methodology

My thesis critically argues against mainstream point-of-views which commonly devalue Indonesian trashy films. Firstly, I want to challenge the “official history” of Indonesian cinema through the framework of cultural traffic, by including and highlighting the significance of exploitation and B-films, and how the films need to form part of any serious discussion about Indonesian cinema. In this case, the history of Indonesian cinema written by cultural elites—although there is no official list of canonization being made—is important to critically question.

⁴⁶ Original text: “Konsep politik identitas memberi perhatian atas penyelenggaraan dan perawatan hak-hak budaya demi kepentingan klaim identitas dalam masyarakat dan kebudayaan, dalam suatu formasi koalisi tempat nilai-nilai dihayati bersama.” (Ajidarma 2014)

Secondly, I argue that, from the viewpoint of the global flows of the films, classic Indonesian exploitation films are both the effect and the cause of a conflict of interests of various politics of taste applied by several agencies: The State, cultural elites, local film producers, local film distributors and exhibitors, local audiences, transnational distributors, and global fans.

In this thesis I will argue that the New Order government and Indonesian cultural elites have tried to exclude local exploitation films from the discourses of the concept of a national cinema and national film cultures, but they have failed. On the other hand, the Indonesian government tried to negotiate with various kinds of politics of taste, and in consequence made paradoxical policies, which directly and indirectly endorsed the global dissemination of the films.

The struggles mentioned above became the causes and the effects of many significant things related to the films that reinforce my arguments about the importance of such films in the levels of both domestic and global film distribution/exhibition, and consumption/fandom.

In the bigger picture, my thesis will interrogate how global dynamics of political, economic, social, and cultural transformation have shaped and affected the atmosphere of national and global film cultures towards trashy films.

Below, I will explain my methods.

Research Questions and Methods

Within the context elaborated upon above, I want to investigate three main issues. First, I want to locate and address how film cultures and the filmic production, mediation, and reception that informed them were generated in the 1980s through the millennium both in Indonesia and abroad. Second, I will argue that the various establishments of politics of taste (undertaken by the New Order officials and cultural elites, transnational distributors, as well as local and foreign fans) interacted, contradicted, negotiated and influenced each other specifically in relation to classic Indonesian exploitation cinema.⁴⁷ Lastly, I want to interrogate to what extent we can consider the significance of classic exploitation Indonesian cinema within the both processes.

⁴⁷ I already co-organized an event in relation for public engagement purposes. I co-organized a 2-week event from 13-15 and 20-22 June 2014 at Kineforum (run by Jakarta Art Council) containing films screenings, public lectures and discussion with Joko Anwar and film enthusiasts, journalists, critics, and filmmakers. See: "Program Juni 2014: Menimbang Ulang Film-film Eksploitasi Orde Baru".

In addition, I also want to address my analysis and findings to current Indonesian policy makers and cultural elites (if any) as well as Indonesian cinema scholarship in general. First, I want to enhance scholarly and public understanding as well as rethink and reconsider the cultural significance of classic Indonesian cinema and position the films as cultural capital and cultural heritage and an official part of representations of Indonesia. Second, I want to balance and empower marginalized films and modes of moderation and audiences in Indonesia within the discourses of cultural studies, media studies, and communication studies both in Indonesia and beyond.

In order to fulfil the above, I will analyze three elements of classic Indonesian exploitation films, namely production, mediation, and consumption. I limit the research materials by only examining the films produced and exhibited in Indonesia between 1979 and 1995 and being exported worldwide both in the New Order era as well as in the 2000s and the 2010s. I will analyze other films if I need to make some points related to the targeted films above.

It is important to highlight that my research is line with “New Cinema History”, related to the spirit and methodology, which does not mainly focus on the films as intrinsic texts, but, as Maltby puts it, “to consider their circulation and consumption, and to examine the cinema as a site of social and cultural exchange” (Maltby, 2011, 1). According to James Chapman, Mark Glancy, and Sue Harper in *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches*, New Cinema History approaches undertake “empirical investigation and inquiry”, which is “analysis of primary sources relating to the production and reception of feature films” (Chapman, Glancy, Harper 2009, 1) . This kind of approach focuses more on “the cultural dynamics of film production and an awareness

Some media covered the event. For example, The Jakarta Post wrote “Sensational B-movies of the New Order back on screen” in 14 June 2014 (Tampubolon 2014). One of my students wrote an article in my home-university website, titled *Indonesian Cult Cinema Era Discussion at Kineforum* (Prasmadji 2014). Liputan6 News Agency wrote an article titled “Watching Jaka Sembung, Celebrating New Order’s B Movies” (Irwansyah 2014).

I also invited Pete Tombs to talk at a Workshop on Indonesian Cinema, at SOAS University of London, discussing his label, Mondo Macabro with film scholars, on 3 October 2014. I invited Pete Tombs again on 10 September 2016 for a Q&A in a double bill film screening that I co-organized with Toby Reynolds for Scalarama at The Cube Microplex, Bristol.

of the extent to which the style and content of the films are determined by the context of production” (Chapman, Glancy, Harper 2009, 1). It is different with the old film history which primarily relies on considering film as an art form or as the reflection of society (Chapman, Glancy, Harper 2009, 2). The film historians basically undertake historical investigation by analyzing primary sources, both filmic (the film itself), and nonfilmic (such as trade papers, publicity materials, reviews, fans texts, and other archives) (Chapman, Glancy, Harper 2007, 3). The keywords are “process” and “agency”. Chapman, Glancy, and Harper write:

Films are shaped and determined by a combination of historical process (including, but not limited to economic constraints, industrial practices, studio production strategies and relationship with external bodies such as official agencies, funding councils and censors) and individual agency (representing the creative and cultural competences of their art directors, composers, costume designers, directors, editors, producers, stars, writers, etc.). (Chapman, Glancy, Harper 2009, 2).

In relation to the methods of research, I learned a lot from Eric Schaefer, one of the leading scholars doing research on exploitation cinema through reading his seminal book, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True! A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959*. Quoting George Lipsitz, he writes:

How, then, does one construct a history of a subject when many of the traditional avenues open to the historian are closed or, at best, filled with holes and obstacles? George Lipsitz has noted that the dominant model of historical inquiry relies on a presumably “objectivist” relationship between the historian and a set of documents in which the scholar attempts to “find concrete evidence to support arguments”. He goes on to explain that this method “innately privileges the experiences of those able to leave some kind of printed documentary evidence over the experiences of those who are silenced, and it underestimates the degree to which facts are also interpretations in that they are aspects of reality singled out for notice because of some subjective judgement”. Instead of approaching exploitation films with an argument that demands support, I have come to them with a series of questions.....although some of the questions are obviously based on presuppositions, they can only be answered by examining existing evidence (Schaefer 1999, 12)

Schaefer names the term Empirical Imperative to show the interaction between the researcher and the archival documents (Schaefer 2015).

While scanning and analyzing the historical documents, I will also try to ask my research questions and get the answers from the archives.

Data Collection and Selection

In tune with the idea and approaches of New Cinema History above, I undertook similar steps. Archival research was undertaken in order to arrive at an understanding of the larger context of industrial practices, particularly those relating to classic exploitation films.

Basically, I was looking for documents in order to answer the main research questions in the Introduction section as well as in each chapter. Mainly, the archive selection was based on the key terms and topics of each chapter that I planned in my first two years of study. I limited the timeline from 1979 to 1995, the era where the films were booming in Indonesia and being circulated overseas.

It is worth mentioning that I have three types of archives, namely printed documents, online fan texts, and paratexts of the films.

For the first type, some original documents were examined, for instance magazines, newspapers, official documents (such as ministerial and presidential decrees, film censorship policies, and other film-related regulations), trade magazines (including in-house and internal magazines published by particular film organizations), and festival film catalogs and booklets (Festival Film Indonesia, FFI). I collected the data mostly from Sinematek Indonesia (Indonesia's film archive, SI) and Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia (National Library of Indonesia), both in Jakarta, from June to August 2014. In addition, I also bought some old articles from *Tempo* magazine from their official website.

I am searching any news and official documents related to particular and relevant keywords and topics, for example *layar tancap*, *Prokjabat Prosar (Kelompok Kerja Tetap Promosi dan Pemasaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri/ The Permanent Working Committee for the Promotion and Marketing of Indonesia Films Abroad)*, FFI, National Film Council, and the Censorship Board.

The second collection method related to the first type of archival research is to find news and other documents related to controversial issues (as is the nature of trashy films) as well as related topics such as: moral panics, *layar tancap*, and previous exported Indonesian films and co-production cases. The purpose of the attempt is to get the bigger picture and more understanding of the history of the topics being analysed. This includes the film-related policies, and similar topics in previous eras in order to highlight the historical background of particular research themes, as well as related policies such as censorship and export-import matters. For example, I sourced articles on censorship and moral panics surrounding the withdrawal of *Lady Terminator* (1988), as well as any other issues related to withdrawn and notorious films as well as other crucial film-related debates on media in the New Order era.

Thirdly, I selected data based on the titles of the films being analyzed, both the reviews and any discussions by both Indonesian film critics or more recent global bloggers, and other news related to the movies.

I exclude data that are not directly related or relevant to the research questions. Or, if it is related to the historical background, I only selected several documents to gain an understanding of the period.

As mentioned above, my main source of archive material is SI. There, they have a massive amount of film-related data and sources maintained chronologically (by the names of the media, years, and so on), including the policies and in-house magazines. Based on the previous scholarly books and papers as well as specific film-related events, I tried to source articles in particular magazines or newspapers. For example, for the case of *Prokjatap Prosar*, I tried to find data from media between 1981 and 1983, the years they were actively running as a formal organization, as well finding the original articles that have been cited by SM Ardan in *Indonesian Cinema Panorama* (Jufry Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992). If I found any article I needed, I scanned them with my portable scanner, or asked the librarian to photo-copy the articles.

It was beneficial for me that SI has skillful librarians and they have already sorted many news clippings based on particular topics. Therefore, it was easier for me to get bundles of news clippings related to, for example, *layar tancap*, FFI, and National Film Council. All I had to do is to sort the data based on the need of my research and ask the librarians to photo-copy them.

Perpustakaan Nasional as well as *Perpustakaan Umum Pemerintah Daerah Jakarta* (Public Library of Jakarta Province) are different stories. They are general libraries and their collection basically consists of general (monthly, bi-monthly, weekly, daily) magazines and newspapers from all over the different regions in Indonesia (local, national, and so forth) covering a long period (from the colonial era until recently) and various target markets and political/cultural affiliations. Thus, one must have the list of the articles one needs to search (containing the detailed information of dates, titles, name of media, and so on) in order to get the data. Basically, after I had finished visiting SI, I went to *Perpustakaan Nasional* with the list of articles that I had not found or articles from general magazines and newspapers, based on the citation of the relevant books or papers. Whilst it is a more complicated way to find data, I found it useful as I could find a lot of other information related to political, economical and social issues that happened during that era, so I could get the bigger picture of the *zeitgeist* from the written news.

Related to the second type of archive material, namely online fan texts, they are closely related to the recirculation of the films in the 2000s, particularly film consumption and reception. I gathered data of online fan texts through fans' blogs and online forums. As primary sources, I will look at fans texts in various blogs and e-fanzines, as well as online forums and other publications by fans (including screening event publications). For online fanzines, I will particularly look at *Cinema Strikes Back*, *Shocking Images*, *Mondo Digital*, *10K Bullets*, *Tales of a Bearded Movies Aficionado*, *Ninja Dixon*, *Critical Condition*, and *Eccentric 3 Cinema*. For blogs, some of them are: *enlejernordersertilbage.blogspot.co.uk*, *damnthatojeda.wordpress.com*, and *Backyard-Asia*. I collected the fan texts by searching their reviews of the films as well as their tags and keywords (such as "Crazy Indonesia", "Indonesia", "Indo Films", or other similar names) in their blogs and online fanzines. Again, while collecting and selecting the data, I always had the research questions in my mind and tried to find the articles that could answer the questions or support my hypothesis.

For online forums, I analyzed a specific thread at *AVManiacs* namely "Crazy Indonesia"⁴⁸ and also, to a lesser extent, other related and relevant threads from the same website or other online

⁴⁸ In *AVManiacs*, actually there are few other threads concerning the topic of "Crazy Indonesia", including Peter O'Brien's *Rambu in.... THE INTRUDER!* and *Filipino and Indonesia, Turkey Action: General Questions*. But they are not so active, and most of the active members are the same as the "Crazy Indonesia" one.

forums such as *Cinehound Forum* and *Shaolin Chamber* 36. Whereas other forums discussed Indonesian exploitation films as part of a greater discourse on world cult cinema, “Crazy Indonesia” is the only one specifically dedicated to classic Indonesian exploitation films; so I decided to focus on this community. The thread has 26 pages, which started on the 13th September 2007 by Jack J(ensen) and ended on the 15th March 2013, with 43 participants and 382 postings. Even though one should register in order to participate in the discussion, once a person clicks on the links free and open access to the whole discussion becomes available. Therefore, I consider the thread as open for the public. Similarly with blogs and E-Fanzines, one does not need to ask for members’ consent and approval. Additionally, I only collected the data from the threads’ archive by being a passive observer. No interview was undertaken during the non-participatory approach, so as not to influence the content therein. Therefore, although I already got ethical approval from UEA’s General Research Ethics Committee for interviews, actually I did not need to undergo the ethical process recommended by Robert Kozinets in *Netnography* (2010) and Christine Hine in *Visual Ethnography* (2000).⁴⁹

Again, while compiling the fan texts, I always tried to find answers for my research questions, as well as find the trends and patterns of the global fans’ politics of taste.

Finally, the third type of archive is paratexts from the film materials. In relation to transnational distribution, I consider DVD covers, and their distributors’ websites and online stores as my primary data, focusing on the advertisements and other textual promotional materials. For the samples of the films, I only gathered DVDs distributed by Mondo Macabro, Troma Team, VideoAsia and BCI Entertainment, since they are the main players in the recirculation of Indonesian exploitation films. In addition, I will pay particular attention to the first three distributors since they are the three main focuses of Section 2 as they are intensively being analysed in Chapters 4 and 5.

I also analyse the special features of the DVDs released by Mondo Macabro DVD such as short documentaries, interviews, short biodata of the casts and filmmakers, and introduction notes on specific topics.

⁴⁹ I did interview Pete Tombs via Facebook, and got Tombs’ written consent before the online interview. But it was in 2012, before I undertook the PhD research, and for other purposes (see Tombs 2012).

Furthermore, I will research industrial documents including online and print press releases, any post-production reworking enacted by producers and distributors including redubbing, retitling, reediting, and so forth. In this way I hope to understand the ways transnational distributors repurpose and rework the films and how those marketing and branding strategies have worked towards global fans.

There are about 46 titles in circulation, but since I focus on my research questions, I only mainly used releases from Mondo Macabro DVD (7 titles), Troma Team (4 titles), VideoAsia (3 titles). In addition, I also have some titles that are representative of other distributors (ZDD, Brentwood Home Video, Maia, Lokasari SDN BHD) as their films were discussed and reviewed by global fans in the 2000s.

In general, after gathering the evidence, I analyzed the documents and tried to find particular trends and patterns in order to answer the research questions or to support my hypothesis. Since there are 46 titles in total, I limited my examination to only several titles, selecting ones that provide good examples of the cases I am trying to build as well as a cross section of the distributors that play the main roles in the recirculation of Indonesian classic exploitation movies.

From the archive visits, I gathered approximately 1200 scanned files and 630 photo-copies. From online, I gathered around 40 articles from blogs and e-fanzines as well as promotional materials and other related materials from both transnational distributors and local film productions. In addition, I also compiled around 35 pages of online forum posts, mainly from the “Crazy Indonesia” thread.

In conducting this primary research, I hope to engage with the filmic output and reception at the time of its inception and dissemination and to locate the prevailing and predominant issues relating to the formation of Indonesian Exploitation Cinema as a localized cult practice.

I analyzed all of the archival documents above and tried to formulate the connections, patterns and trends, by considering the film traffic and historical contexts of Indonesia and beyond in both the New Order era and the 2000s.

Approaches and Position

As underlined by Mathijs and Mendik (2008, 15-16), there are two approaches related to cult movies, namely ontological and phenomenological approaches. Ontological approaches generally

apply essentialist theories which try to define and analyze the intrinsic elements of the films such as genre, style, and considering the repeated topics embodied in the usage of allegories, tropes, and intentions. Ontological approaches are objectivist, therefore formalism and semiotics are two common methods they use in order to produce meaning and prove their hypothesis with evidence (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 15). In short, it is the analysis of the text itself that matters the most. Another term for these kinds of approaches is Formalist approaches, which focus on formulating the ‘cultness’ within the films, such as “a generic trait, a style, and an aesthetic sensibility” (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 149).

On the other hand, phenomenological approaches are more concerned with extrinsic elements by looking at the presence of the production and perception of the films in the cultural contexts; particularly film reception and consumption, including moral panics, controversies, and other cultural and social disturbance. Phenomenological approaches are subjectivist. As Mathijs and Mendik put it: “They rely upon reception or audience research to generate evidence about how conditions outside the text regulate its meaning” (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 15-16). The alternative term is the sociological approach which focuses on the reception and spectatorship of cult cinema and deals with issues such as the social positioning of the films, hierarchies of taste, and network of access including distribution culture and fan culture (Mathijs & Mendik 2008, 149). In this research project I am more concerned with the phenomenological/sociological approaches.

I must disclose my position as an Aca-Fan. Naturally, as part of the 1980s and 1990s generation, I share the same experiences as many of the young movie-goers at the time for loving B-films starring Barry Prima, Eva Arnaz, and Suzanna van Osch (or, nationally known as “Suzanna”, without surname). Here, after discovering these films in 2007 and beyond, instead of having prejudice and negative thinking and criticism towards the films—as shown by many film scholars, journalists, critics, and policymakers—I have more positive thoughts about them and tried to unravel the paradoxical situation as mentioned in the preliminary questions above.

Being considered an Aca-fan is more common in the academic world in recent years. Henry Jenkins writes in his blog that an Aca-Fan is “a hybrid creature which is part fan and part academic”

(Jenkins: 2015)⁵⁰. In the introduction of his seminal book, *Textual Poachers*, Jenkins highlights the benefit of being an Aca-fan:

I have found approaching popular culture as a fan gives me new insights into the media by releasing me from the narrowly circumscribed categories and assumptions of academic criticism and allowing me to play with textual materials....When I write about fan culture, then, I write both as an academic (who has access to certain theories of popular culture, certain bodies of critical and ethnographic literature) and as a fan (who has access to the particular knowledge and traditions of that community). My account exists in a constant movement between these two levels of understanding which are not necessarily in conflict but are also not necessarily in perfect alignment. (Jenkins, 1992, 5)

In a talk at the Jakarta Art Institute, 5 August 2015, Jenkins elaborated his Aca-Fan perspective as follows:

1. Open about its standpoint.
2. Collaborative in tapping fan knowledge and expertise.
3. Critical and rigorous in engagement with particulars of popular texts.⁵¹

Matt Hills also has similar term, namely Academic-fan or 'scholar-fan' (Hills 2002, 3). Mark Jancovich also discusses this position:

Writing as a fan is frequently about writing as someone who knows the field and who is therefore more authoritative than the academic who merely talks about films and their fans from a position of distance and authoritative ignorance" (Jancovich 2002, 307)

Below, I want to elaborate the structure of the thesis.

⁵⁰ About the definition of "Aca/Fan", please see Jenkins' blog in the "About Section" (Jenkins: n.d) also see Thompson 2006.

⁵¹I co-organized and chaired the talk. I quoted this material from Jenkins's unpublished Power Point Presentation titled *Acafandom*. The talk was in the Jakarta Art Institute, 5 August 2015, 1-3pm (Jenkins 2015) .

Structure

The thesis will consist of three sections, respectively the origins of the films, film mediation, and film consumption/reception, all related to the contradictions in the New Order's policies and politics of taste as well as cultural traffic and global flows (in Appadurai's term).

Section One will discuss exploitation movies in relation to film production, mediation, and consumption both in Indonesia and overseas, during their original release period. Here, I will focus on the policies and other cultural movements undertaken by government and cultural elites to frame the film industry within their politics of taste. The idea is to get an understanding how and why such films were produced in the first place, and how they started to travel globally. I will underline the interplay among politics of taste, namely the government and cultural elites, *layar tancap* companies, local film producers, mainstream audiences, and also international distributors. It will have three chapters, respectively on their original production, the domestic distribution/exhibition, and exportation of the films.

Chapter 1 will discuss a series of contradictions in the Government policies which generated exploitation films. Although policies were often seen as opposed to exploitation films and promoted different kinds of films, I will demonstrate that these films emerged out of the contradictions among the policies. Here, I will elaborate the framework and policies undertaken by the New Order directed at exploitation films.

Chapter 2 will focus on the distribution and exhibition culture in relation to rural spectatorship in Indonesia's New Order, particularly *layar tancap*. Particularly, I will analyse how and why they became channels of alternative distribution and exhibition for marginalized films, and how they produced their own dynamics and characteristics, including addressing audience's tastes against government-approved films. By observing official documents, as well as general and trade magazines, I will investigate why and how they operated as channels of distribution and exhibition for exploitation movies.

Chapter 3 will deal with a similar argument in the area of film exportation. Between 1982 and 1983, the Government officially promoted some films to international film festivals, and apparently the B movies were more successful at penetrating the international market than the

“national films”. This chapter will answer how and why the government exported the films that they were actually trying to avoid and eliminate, and how this attempt became the gateway for the recirculation of the films in the 2000s. I will also investigate how various kinds of politics of taste shaped the production and global distribution of transnational exploitation films.

Chapter 3 will lead to Section Two, which is about the international mediation of Indonesian exploitation films in the 2000s. This part will focus on the circulation of the aforementioned films in the global cult circuits in the 2000s. Specifically, I will interrogate how transnational DVD labels rework the films and sell them as “cult films”. In this section, I will underline the interplay among politics of taste, namely within transnational distributors, local film producers, and global fans. This section will have two chapters.

Chapter 4 will interrogate the redubbing of *FFFF* by Troma Team. I look at one of the first repurposing of the films to explore how Troma reworked the film and made it into a “troma film” in order to be more suitable for their market. They detached the films from their original cultural context and celebrated the weird rather than trying to understand them. They called the process “Tromatized”, and the film has a totally new story. I will also elaborate upon the concept of “Tromatized” as a brand identity which has a great impact in selecting which films they want to distribute.

Chapter 5 will compare and contrast the reworks of two DVD labels, namely Mondo Macabro and VideoASia. The materials are contextualized and repurposed by them. In this chapter, I focus on the extra-texts, particularly the special features and covers of DVDs. While the illegal distribution (VideoAsia) still works around the sense of their foreignness without attempting to understand the culture that the films emerged from, I argue that the legal distribution (Mondo Macabro) goes beyond this and treats the films as gems. I will investigate how and why they do the reworking and compare both marketing strategies.

As the continuation of the Second Section, the Third Section considers the film consumption and reception of the films; particularly the reception of the films in local scenes in the 1980s and within global fan culture in the 2000s. There are two chapters in this section: on film reception in local scenes in 1988, and the phenomenon of online global fans in the 2000s and beyond.

Chapter 6 is an analysis of the withdrawal of *Lady Terminator* in 1989. I will investigate how mass media and cultural elites (in the name of “public”) attacked the film and, as a result, forced the withdrawal of the film due to concerns over its sexual and violent scenes; however, following this event, there were some attempts to illegally reproduce the video version and to export the uncensored version of the film to fulfill the demands of both the local and global audience. By looking at the media reception in 1989 and beyond, this chapter will investigate the bigger context of Indonesia’s political and social situation regarding the withdrawal of the film and social anxiety surrounding it. In particular, I want to interrogate how various politics of taste (government, cultural elites, society, and film producers) were contradicted and negotiated through this case.

Chapter 7 will discuss the global cult fans in the 2000s. Particularly how and why online global fan communities critically perceive, criticize, ridicule and, at the same time, celebrate the films and treat them as gems. I found out that the global cult fans are very, as Fiske puts it, “fiercely selective” (Fiske 2008), particularly in relation to their tastes of classic Indonesian films. By investigating the texts produced by fans (blogs, online forums), I will define and formulate what “Crazy Indonesia” is all about and why they love these kinds of films and at the same time rejecting other kinds of (Indonesian) films; also, finally, how they value the films. Here, I will also attest my preliminary theory stating that there are two basic genres, in Heider’s terms, namely “Indonesian genres” (*Kumpeni*, legend) and Americanized exploitation subgenres (womensploitation, mockbusters,⁵² cannibalism, and women in prison).

After reading all chapters, I hope that the readers will understand the complexity and the significance of the films, in relation to global flows, taste battles, and cultural traffic.

Conclusion

In this section I have already elaborated upon some key terms and core elements in order to give the context of the thesis. In line with the New Cinema History I hope I can put those classic

⁵² Mockbusters is a popular genre that deals with movies that are commonly low-budget productions and have a similar title to blockbuster films in order to benefit from them. For example, *Snakes on a Train* is a mockbuster of *Snake on a Plane*, and *Transmorphers* is a rip-off of *Transformers* (Murano 2016).

Another term for “Mockbusters” is “Remakesploitation” as suggested by Iain Robert Smith when he organized his 2016 book launch event with the title “REMAKESPLOITATION presents: Remake, Remix, Rip-Off with Q&A”, 28 November 2016.

exploitation films on the map and place them within discourses of Indonesian film history as well as world cult cinema.

Lastly, hopefully I can demonstrate that the transnational exploitation Indonesian films are important to study not only for cult cinema studies and Indonesian cinema studies, but also portray an insight into the dynamics of Indonesian culture in the 1980s and 1990s as well as global cinema in the new millennium in general.

Next, I will analysis the phenomenon in chapters and will put these marginalized films at the center of discourses on global flows, cultural traffic and taste battles among various politics of tastes.

Section One

Cultural Traffic and the Origin of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Cinema

Chapter 1:

New Order's Paradoxical Policies:

The Dynamics of Film Production and Politics of Tastes

in Indonesia's New Order Regime

As discussed in the Introduction section, the New Order's policies along with the cultural elites' politics of taste were often seen as opposed to domestic exploitation films and promoting different kind of films. The legitimate culture, as well as mainstream bodies of works on Indonesian cinema in the era, formulated the concept of national film (*film nasional*) with particular characteristics such as "the depiction of the faces of Indonesia", "representation of true Indonesian culture", *film kultural edukatif* (cultural and educational movies) and so on (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu: 1992, 57; Said 1991, 6; Barker 2010, 9). As a consequence, domestic exploitation films were shunned in Indonesian official film history and film studies in general.

Conversely, in this chapter I will demonstrate that local exploitation films, the kind of films that have been devalued and excluded from the concept of national cinema, emerged out of a series of contradictions among the policies issued by the New Order government.

This chapter will interrogate how a series of political policies shaped the production, (and, later, the consumption) of exploitation films, the kind of films that they were actually trying to avoid. I will look at how exploitation movies were understood and produced during the New Order era by investigating two aspects. First, politics of tastes of cultural elites and how they frame the concept of *film nasional* as the dominant culture, as well as their attempts to eradicate exploitation films,

as can be seen in their articles or statements in newspapers and magazines, as well as documents that highlights their involvement with many film organizations, festivals, and policies. Secondly, I will consider the political policies and other political control actions undertaken by the New Order's regime on media, and its impact upon the production of classic exploitation films. Both elements are interwoven. Cultural political movements by the New Order were endorsed and supported by cultural elites from nationalist wings who had a huge influence in the framing of the "official" culture.

By investigating both elements I will underline how the strict and strong political pressure on stability and national identity within political policies could contradictorily produce trashy movies. On the one hand, the New Order used censorship boards and film agencies to fit Indonesian media into its desired ideology. In addition to these institutions, cultural elites, in some ways, supported the policies; however, the New Order developed several policies to rehabilitate the development of the film industry and support imported foreign films. These policies, at times, contradicted the aforementioned policies of censorship.

Therefore, I will analyze the New Order's film-related policies (presidential, directorial, and, mostly, ministerial decrees) to highlight the paradoxes among them that directly interplayed with the production culture of exploitation films and, thus, try to reconstruct an alternative perspective of Indonesian cinema history.

Since I am focusing on policies relating to censorship, both undertaken by official organizations with policies and a wider type of any attempt of censorship, I will elaborate upon some of the theories on censorship that are to be applied in this chapter.

Theories on Film Censorship

Primarily I will apply Annette Kuhn's prohibition/institutions model. This theory considers censorship as "an act of prohibition, excision, or 'cutting out'" and also considers the censorship agents from the legitimate authority as a prohibitive and repressive power (Kuhn 1990, 2).

Censorship can be read as the bridge between "the text" and "the real" as a means of ensuring that films should (or should not) represent a certain reality as formulated by authoritative agents. From this perspective, the nature of censorship is deterministic as films are practically framed by these censorship boards (Kuhn 1990, 2, 4).

On the other hand, in particular conditions, the censorship activity can also be productive (Kuhn 1990 4, 7) and related to power relations and dealing with various kinds of interests. Censorship matters can struggle with the resistance of opposing groups and the coalitions of allies, therefore it can be considered as "an ongoing process embodying complex and often contradictory relations of power", and potentially face "unintended consequences" (Kuhn 1990, 11, 127).

In relation to cult movies, particularly the exploitation ones, most of the time censorship deals with the issues of appropriateness of the films and morality, tastes, as well as the "awkward cultural position of these films" towards legitimate culture; particularly those with sexual and sadistic scenes (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 46-47; Barber 2011, 1). In other words, in this context, censorship functions as a control and permission power to ensure that the films are normal and acceptable (Mathijs and Sexton 2011; Barber 2011, 1). It is worth mentioning that, as indicated by Mathijs and Sexton, censorship and controversial issues related to particular movies might arouse curiosity among the audience (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 49).

In conclusion, censorship can be prohibitive and repressive as well as productive, and within the process of struggling with various kinds of politics of taste, can lead to paradoxical connections of power.

Below, I will chronologically elaborate upon how the act of censorship, both embedded in official policies or other attempts of control by government and cultural elites, could produce a series of contradictions and "unintended consequences", including producing the "inappropriate films".

From “the Old Order” to the New Order

The period of 1965-1966 was a big transition for Indonesia. For around ten years (1956-1965),⁵³ there were ideological battles and political polarizations among many parties. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was very close to President Sukarno, who was considered the central figure and ultimate mediator for political ideology and foreign policy (Sen 1994, 29). The PKI attacked many organizations, including film producers, and accused them of “not supporting [the] revolution” (Said 1991, 59; Tjasmadi 2008, 78). The slogan *Politik adalah Panglima* (Politics is the Commander) commonly refers to this era (Said 1991, 59).⁵⁴ Prominent filmmaker Usmar Ismail writes that this is “...the dark history of Indonesian Cinema” (Ismail 1986, 91).⁵⁵ PKI also spread the spirit of anti-American film policy and forced a ban on AMPAI (American Motion Pictures Association in Indonesia), one of the most influential film business players in the country. Starting 1964, until 1966, AMPAI was embargoed (Sen 1994, 56-57), and American films were no longer available in Indonesia.

But on 1st October 1965, PKI was blamed for the killing of 6 high ranking military generals and they were accused of attempting to take over the government. Major General Suharto, the central figure for eradicating communism and its related institutions, overcame this situation and in 1966 he became president. Soon after assuming the presidency, he banned PKI and everything related to the party: Communism, Marxism, and Leninism. He and his apparatus, tried to prevent the

⁵³ One of scholars who discussed this particular era is Krishna Sen. For example, she wrote a chapter in her seminal book, entitled *Political Polarisation and Cinema: 1956-66* (Sen 1994). Also see: Sen 1985

For a more general discussion on the discourse of this particular political succession, please see Vatikiotis 1998. Also see Kingsbury 2005

⁵⁴ In film, the term “politics as a base for creativity” was officially acclaimed by LEKRA (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*, Institute of People’s Culture, the cultural wing of PKI) at the National Conference on Literature and Revolutionary Art in Jakarta, August 27 to September 2, 1964. (Said 1992, 59)

⁵⁵ Originally, the article was published in *Sinar Harapan*, 6 October 1970 under pseudo-name SM Ameh.

influence of communism returning to Indonesia by applying several policies, such as the obligatory *Pancasila* education within all levels of education and an individual inspections to determine whether one has been involved in, or is a sympathizer, of communism.⁵⁶ Later the purposes of Sukarno's policies were broadened to include alerts for communism and they manifested into a total state control of daily life, including media and film. Learning from the last years of the Old Order that was an era that was marked by economic and political instability, Suharto's New Order filtered and brought all aspects of life under control through military oppression and censorship (Paramaditha 2012, 70- 71).

Concurrently, Suharto tried to build the nation, economically, politically, and culturally. The film industry was one of the elements that the New Order tried to rebuild. Film scholar Krishna Sen writes:

For a while after 1966, the struggling film industry was exclusively preoccupied with the new fantasies of new-found access to foreign consumer goods denied to almost everyone

⁵⁶ *Pancasila* means "The Five Principles" and is considered as the National Principles since the independence of the nation in 1945. It consists of Belief in one and only God, Just and civilized humanity, the Unity of Indonesia, Democracy guided by inner wisdom in the unanimity arising from deliberations amongst representatives of the people, and Social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia.

In the New Order era, the government framed Pancasila into one interpretation only and disseminated these values to school children (from Elementary Schools to University Students) through education, the media. and an official national Five Year Plan (*Repelita IV, 1984-1988*) document says:

The mass media will be utilised to distribute information which promotes the political education of the people and the development of Indonesian identity based on Pancasila. This recognizes the geography of Indonesia which makes mass media essential for education and [the need to deliver] Pancasila education [P4] broadcasts using role play and other means which are appealing but effective primarily for school aged children and young people. (quoted in Kitley 1999, 30-31)

Every student in every school should undergo the upgrading Pancasila Education called *Penataran P4* or *Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* (Upgrading Course on the Directive for Realization and Implementation of Pancasila). This is an educational purpose for students of all levels to inculcate *Pancasila* according to the frame of the New Order (Kitley 1999, 130-131).

For more info about Pancasila and Media, particularly television, during the New Order era, see Kitley: 1999

during the economic downturn, and political rejection of the West in the last years of Guided Democracy”. (Sen 1994, 105)

As highlighted by Sen, this new kind of power tried to collaborate with Western countries, including their film industries, contrary to the position and actions of its predecessor in the last 10 years.

Below, I will highlight the paradoxical attempts of the New Order and their direct relationship with local exploitation films.

Early Years of the New Order: Resurrection Years

In 1966 the Department of Information had been empowered by Presidential Decree No.1/1964 (a regulation on Film Development) to monitor and supervise film-making activities and initiated its work afresh. (Said 1991, 79; Biro Hukum N.d, 81-90). In this context the term “film development” means “giving directives on film imports and exports, production, distribution, and supervision”. The decree requires filmmakers to ask for permission from the Ministry of Information to import, export, produce, and exhibit a film in Indonesia and forms the New Order’s attempt to state control in film industry.

In 1968 Minister of Information BM Diah established the National Film Production Board (DPFN, Dewan Produksi Film Nasional) on May 30 (Said 1991, 81-82).⁵⁷ Its major duties were

To determine policies concerning acceptance of film scripts, the selection of artists and technicians, production costs, and the selection or appointment of producers to whom will

⁵⁷ Ministerial Decree no 34/1968. The objective was to foster national film production and provide employment opportunities for actors and actresses in Indonesia; to Improve the quality of Indonesian film so as to seize the market at home and abroad; and to foster public trust and appreciation towards Indonesian films. (Biro Hukum: N.d, 135-138)

be assigned the task of producing a film and who will bear responsibility for production and completion of the films to which they have been assigned” (Said 1991, 82; Biro Hukum: N.d, 135-138).

A few months before, Sjumandjaya, a young filmmaker and the new Head of Directorate of Film, asked the Minister of Information BM Diah to protect the local film industry. As a result of this Diah issued Ministerial Decree no. 71/1967 (SK 71),⁵⁸ and it was applied until 1976. The decree mentioned that it was mandatory for film importers to pay a flat tariff of Rp 250.000 for each imported film. The fund was managed by an autonomous film foundation and supervised by the DPFN. Furthermore, this fund would be used for local film production where the funding import company was regarded as a co-producer (Sen 1994, 57; Kristanto 2004). As a result within three years, local film production developed quantitatively to 20 films; and rose to 50 films in 1971, whereas the number of imported films remained at around 750. (Sen 1994, 58). As Krishna Sen writes: “the rise in the number of films produced is perhaps best explained by the general expansion of the Indonesian economy in the early years of the New Order” (Sen 1994, 58).

In 1968 alone, almost 400 US films were imported into Indonesia. Hollywood cinema was once again dominating film distribution and exhibition, not only in the Indonesian film market, but also “...as the textual system on which the next generation of Indonesian film-making would be modeled” (Sen 1994, 49). In this context, the booming Hollywood films in this era would influence genres and styles of Indonesian movies, including exploitation ones.

⁵⁸ The title is *Pemanfaatan Film Impor untuk Peningkatan Produksi dan Rehabilitasi Perfilman Nasional* (Benefits from Imports for Interest of increasing production and rehabilitation of National Film Industry). (Biro Hukum N.d , 6)

In this era the DPFN funded four films: *Djampang Mentjari Naga Hitam* (*Djampang's Search for the Black Dragon*, a martial arts film directed by Lilik Soejio, 1968), *Matt Dower* (a political black comedy by Nyak Abbas Akub, 1969), *Apa yang Kau Tjari Palupi* (*What are You Looking for, Palupi*, a family drama by Asrul Sani, 1969), and *Nyi Ronggeng* (*the Ronggeng Dancer*, about a traditional dancer by Alam Surawidjadja, 1969). (Said 82-83; Sen 1994, 52). The films commercially failed and on December 19, 1969, the DPFN was dismissed because of an “excess of funds” (Said 1991, 82-83),--a euphemism for “corruption” (Barker 2012, 55).

Furthermore, commenting on the project, Director General for Film, H. Djohardin later said:

Let us not ignore the taste of the millions of people just to please those pseudointellectuals who give high honors to such (commercial) failures like *What Are You Looking For, Palupi*? In my opinion, the national film industry has made great strides forward: our actors are living better; so too the technical personnel, something never before seen in the last twenty years” (quoted in Barker 2012, 55)

I argue that Djohardin's statement above is an indication how the policy makers were not unified and even contradicted each other, particularly in the context of the quality/commercial approaches of the films.

In 29 July 1969, with ministerial decree no 59/1969, the new Ministry of Information Marshal (Ret) Boediardjo founded the National Film Council (DFN) which acted as an “advisory Board of the Minister of Information, and escort the minister of information in the field of development of cinema in the broadest sense.” (Biro Hukum N.d, 129-132). Meaning that they had power to “...formulate the general policy of the film formation, planning and programming; accommodate and respond to public opinion; formulating and overseeing the implementation of the norms of

Ethical Policy in the field of cinema”. This authority covered most of the aspects in filmmaking: “capital affairs, film making, censorship of movies, distribution of movies, performances and movie-theatres, import-export of films, supply and procurement of raw materials/spare parts, the employment, other matters relating to the development of cinema.” (Biro Hukum N.d, 129-132).

Although there were many policies and control, nonetheless the production of B-movies still occurred. In 1968, almost the same year of the founding of DFN, Turino Junaedi directed *Jakarta-Hongkong-Macao*, which pioneered kissing scenes and James Bond-like action scenes set in the three cities, and this was soon followed by other “daring movies” such as *Orang-Orang Liar (Wild People, 1969)*, *Hidup, Cinta, dan Air Mata (Life, Love, and Tears, 1970)* (said, 1991, 81), and *Bernafas dalam Lumpur (Breathing in Mud, 1970)*.

The latter is considered as the first film to accentuate sex, rape, and dirty dialogue (Franto 2009; also see Yngvesson 2014, 71). The film received an award as a “box office film” (*Hadiah Kehormatan Piala Box Office*) at the 1975 FFI (Kristanto, 2004, 172). In addition, this film, along with *Noda Tak Berampun (Unforgivable Stain)* (Turino Djunaidi, 1970), ignited a trend of “prostitute genre films”, which “directly use the female body to sell the product (the film) while at the same time condemning that body” (Sen 1994, 144-145).

In conclusion, there are two poles of policies from the very beginning of the New Order regime. The first pole tried to frame and control film through “film development” decrees and one of the milestones was the establishment of DPFN with its plan to make four funded national films. The other pole is the need to increase the production of local film, particularly with the Ministerial Decree no 71/1967 which paved the way for exploitation film directly (by increasing numbers of film production) and indirectly (by increasing the number of Hollywood films that later on would influence the styles and genres of many Indonesian films).

The 1970s: “The Rise of Trashy Movies”

In 1970, more foreign films, particularly sex-themed movies, entered Indonesia, which can be read as a representation of the taste of mainstream audiences. On 23 January 1970, to stem the strong flow of imported “sex education” movies, Director of Film Directorate Sjuman Djaya issued the decree no 45/1970, which stated that the national film industry needed to vary the films from various genres and topics, therefore they decided to include sex-themed imported films (Biro Hukum N.d, 227)

In 1973 the Minister of Information Budiardjo revised the “quantity approach” decree, namely ministerial decree 71/1967, with Decree no. 74/1973. This new policy was a reaction to the commercial failure of funded films produced by the National Film Council, known as the “Quantity Approach”. The main idea of this policy was to “let the quantity of films grow first, therefore the quality will automatically follow” (Kristanto 2004, 424). Another term for this regulation was the “audience approach” (Said 1991, 84).⁵⁹ As a result, quantitatively speaking, the numbers of local films increased drastically, from 10 films in 1969 to 134 feature films in 1977 (Tombs 1997, 66). Said also noted the increase, reporting that there were 21 titles in 1970 and 52 in 1971 (Said 1991, 84).

As a consequence of this new decree, the government started to loosen censorship in order to reach audience’s tastes by importing more foreign films and, in results, earn tax revenues from imported films. Apparently local films also got loosen their censorship. As a result of this is the release of *Bumi Makin Panas (The Earth is Getting Hotter, Ali Shahab 1973)*⁶⁰, which was later

⁵⁹ Funds were still collected from film importers. As a result, new importers borrowed funds and started to make movies, but most of them could not return these funds (Kristanto 2004, 427).

⁶⁰ For more analysis about this film, please see Yngvesson 2014.

banned in Cianjur (West Java) and Malaysia (“Bumi Makin Panas”; Yngvesson 2014, 54). Along with *Bernafas dalam Lumpur*, this film is important to note because they were among the first to depict more vulgar sexual discourses in a public sphere and place prostitutes as the main protagonists, with some daring sensual scenes according to the *zeitgeist* at that time.

In 1975, with ministerial decree no 55b/1975, the Minister of Information inaugurated the new Directorate General of Radio, TV, and Film (henceforth, Dirjen RTF). (Biro Hukum N.d, 104). The main jobs were “to formulate technical and operational policies and provide guidance and supervision and administration in accordance with the licensing policies”. They controlled all aspects of the film industry, including film production, the actors, technical personnel, business equipment in the technical means of production / studio / laboratory work, film circulation, raw material / supporting materials, subtitling, film exhibition, film festivals and film week, film exhibition, film import and exportation (Biro Hukum N.d, 104-117).

In addition, for provincial regulation, there was *Badan Pembinaan Perfilman Daerah* (Regional Film Development Body, Bapfida) which started in 1975. The members of this institution were appointed by the governor, headed by the regional chief of the Department of Indonesia, and made up entirely of government department representatives in order to make sure that Indonesian films secured a fair share of the market in the province. But, later in 1977, with ministerial decree no 32/1977, this organization had lesser and limited powers for censorship. While they did not have the powers to cut material, they could ban a film in their provinces (Sen 1994, 66-67), to make sure that “...the films can fulfil their function as a means of entertainment, information, and education”. (Biro Hukum N.d 155-160).

Besides censorship boards, state control also dominated film organizations. After the New Order was established, the only professional organization left after 1965 was the KFT for Film and

Television employees, because the PKI-related institutions such as SARBUFIS, *Lembaga Film Indonesia*, and *Panitia Seniman Untuk Film* were banned due to communist related issues (Sen 1994, 55). In 1976, the application of the Ministerial Decree No.114A/1976 and 114B/1976 (24 August 1976) came into effect and KFT became a means of state control since it was the only legal organization for filmmakers in all professions except acting (Sen 1994, 55; Biro hukum N.d, 119-123,119-123). If anyone wanted to work in the film industry, it was mandatory for them to join KFT. Furthermore, the Government founded film organizations that became the only official groups in their respective fields of work: PARFI for actors, PPF⁶¹ for film producers, and GPBSI for movie-theatres owners, as well as small organizations such as GASFI for film studio owners and GASI for subtitlers. All of the film organizations mentioned above needed to get approval from the Directorate of Film Development, and those who did not get approval were considered as illegal (Biro Hukum N.d 119-123). Their central function was, as mentioned in the Ministerial Decrees no. 114A and 114B in 1976, “to aid in the execution of every policy formulated by the government for the development of cinema in Indonesia’ (Biro Hukum N.d 119-123, 198, Sen 1994, 56). Hence, starting in 1976, in order to work in the film industry, it was necessary to become a member of one of these organizations and then seek approval from them. This meant that, for example, if one wants to make a production permit to the Ministry of Information, he or she should become a member of PPF and should bring a letter of recommendation from them.

But these kinds of state control could not stop the surplus of exploitation film production. The main reason for this is that the Minister of Information Mashuri Saleh issued the Ministerial Decree no. 47/1976 which states that film exporters are obligated to produce five films (later, reduced to

⁶¹ See “Tentang Kami” for PPF profile.

three) for the right to import films (Said 1991, 88). This quickie quota policy⁶² was in response to the decline of film production in 1977 (from 77 in the year before to 41) (Said 1991, 88).⁶³ As a result the quantity of films increased significantly. For example, the 1978 Indonesian Film Festival received the largest number of entries in the New Order era. On the other hand, many of these films are criticized for not having good quality. Salim Said underlines that the films are “not just slapdash films but films with an overemphasis on elements such as sex and violence”, and this phenomenon led to “the rise of trashy movies” (Said 1991, 89-90).

On 6 January 1977, Censorship Guidelines (*Pedoman Sensor*) were issued by ministerial decree (Biro Hukum N.d 433-439),⁶⁴ they clearly stated that films should not encourage the audience to develop particular attitudes and the first emphasis was on sexual and violence-focused films, films that “tends to steer the sympathy of the audience to misconduct and amoral acts”, and “films that can stimulate the emergence of social tensions”. Those kinds of films would get banned or physically censored. (Sen 1994, 69).⁶⁵

Furthermore, to ensure the application of the policy, more control was applied to film production.

Sen writes:

The scenario of a film requires approval from the Directorate of Film of the Department of Information before shooting can start. At the completion of the shooting, the rush copy

⁶² According to the Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies, the term “Quickie Quota” refers to “...films that were often made very quickly with relatively low-budget, seemingly more in order to satisfy the quota than with any expectation of artistic, or even commercial success”. The purpose was to ensure the survival of the film industry” (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, 341).

⁶³ For a comparison, see the quickie quota policy in the UK in Chibnall 2007.

⁶⁴ Detail full title: SK Menpen 03A/1977 *tentang prinsip umum, pedoman dan tata kerja Badan Sensor Film* (on Basic principles, guidelines, and Procedures of Board of Censorship). (Biro Hukum N.d 433-439)

⁶⁵ In 1980, a similar statement also occurred in the BSF Ethical Code (Kode Etik Badan Sensor Film, issued by BSF) (Sen 1994, 69), and later became *Kode Etik Produksi Film Nasional* (Ethical Code of National Film Production).

(unedited prints) need to be submitted to the same authorities for guidance about what may need to be edited out “(Sen 1994, 66).

Moreover, a month later, on 10 February 1977, Minister Mashuri issued a new decree (31/1977) related to a think-tank organization called *Lembaga Pengembangan Perfilman Nasional* (Lepfinas, National Film Development Institute) (Biro Hukum N.d, 143-147). This institution deals with most of the elements within the film industry, from the production to exportation. In *Angkatan Bersenjata* Daily, on 27 April 1977, the chairperson of Lepfinas and a prominent cultural thinker, Asrul Sani stated that filmmakers should shift away from the old-pattern of filmmaking, which underlined the 20% power of the capital owners to imitate the stories that proved marketable, to a new form which guaranteed the freedom of the artist to manifest their visions as proven in Usmar Ismail films under his film company Perfini. Sani also highlighted the importance of creating the tastes of the audience and controlling the market. However, Lepfinas only lasted for one year.

In the 1977 Indonesian Film Festival, cultural elites debated the issue of trashy movies. Salim Said wrote that the jury of 1977 came to the conclusion that most Indonesian films produced are mainly the merchant of dreams which “...fail to portray the realities of Indonesian life” and “...the beautiful dreams we see are from a world we do not always recognize” (said 1991, 3). Once again, they tried to exclude exploitation films and endorsed their own concept of *film nasional*.

In the same year, on 9 September 1977, Minister Mashuri issued an important regulation. It was the ministerial decree no 193/1977 on the imported film quota, or the Indonesian version of Quickie Quota. It was stated that “The importer must first produce local film in order to be able to

import 3 titles of the films through their respective Imported Film Consortium⁶⁶ (Biro Hukum N.d 319-326).⁶⁷ This decree led to a surge in domestic film production, and indirectly endorsed the production of “slapdash films” (Said 1991, 89-90).

In 1978 a new cabinet was formed. The coordinating Minister of Policies and Securities gave the Minister of Information the responsibility to oversee films (Sen 1994, 50) and that year, Indonesia’s quickie quota policy got challenged by the cultural elites. Shortly after the new cabinet of the government was formed, senior journalist and one of the cultural elites’ important figures, Rosihan Anwar sent a plea to the new Minister of Education and Culture, Daoed Joesoef. He wrote:

For three consecutive years I have been a member of the jury for the Indonesian Film Festival and, thus, have witnessed growth in the elements (of sex and violence in Indonesian film). I have never hidden my disgust at the way sex scenes are presented in Indonesian movies...In my opinion Indonesian producers and directors are using scenes of sex, bedroom scenes, and even the way people undress for purely exploitative purposes... It is time that we reduce, if not completely eradicate, the phenomenon of “sexploitation” in Indonesian films” (quoted in Said 1991, 90).

Similar with statements below, two days after the formation of the new cabinet, new Minister of Information Lieutenant General Ali Murtopo states:

⁶⁶ The consortium consists of 4 regions, namely Mandarin, Europe-American 1, European-American 2, and Non-Mandarin Asia, as validated by a decree issued by the Directorate General of Radio, TV, and Film no 26/1977, 30 November 1977 (Biro Hukum: N.d)

⁶⁷ Those who do not produce their own films should buy 3 certificates of film production (Rp 3 million each) in order to import one film (Biro Hukum). In addition, a company that already imported 6 titles is obliged to export one Indonesian film to the countries which belong to their respective imported film consortium (Biro Hukum: N.d).

I don't like the way things are at present. The emphasis now is only on the economic aspects (of films) for the benefit of producers. The end result, however, will be an even greater loss because the films will have no value even as entertainment. Thus, will not the emphasis on this aspect obstruct cultural development? I will not adhere to a production or quantity approach if this means harm to society" (quoted in Said 1991, 90-91).

Both statements paid more attention to, and even attacked, the phenomenon of local exploitation movies, and the new cabinet was a good starting point for the evaluation of the films and start new attempts at preventing these kinds of films.

Not only that, once again, this issue was brought up at the 1978 Indonesian Film Festival (FFI) where they discussed the phenomenon of local exploitation films. The jury concluded that, although sexual content decreased, other elements, namely violence and sadism, increased (Said 1991, 90); meaning that exploitation movies were still being produced and distributed nationally. With regards with this issue, the new minister of Education, Daoed Joesoef, used his opening speech at the event to condemn the sexploitation genre which "incites people to behave more like animals rather than human beings in their erotic activities" (Said 1991, 90-91). Also, in this event, the Director General of Radio, Television, and Film, Soemardi, declared an issue to reconsider Mashuri's decree (Said 1991, 91). Being massively produced and publicly criticized by new ministers, exploitation movies, once again, got more attention from the government and cultural elites. And, once again, they tried to evaluate the films and the film-related policies.

As a result the new minister of Information, Ali Murtopo, issued decree no. 224/1978 (Kristanto 004, 427), that attempted to combine a quality approach (as applied in the BM Diah era) and the quantity approach (as undertaken by Mashuri) (Kristanto 2004, 423). On one hand, the industry would grow with commercial films as a result, and at the same time *film kultural edukatif* would

be produced by private sectors for DFN. The funding would be used as a subsidy to produce cultural educational films by chosen producers who meet the Film Council's requirements, as well as the other three loan categories.⁶⁸ Additionally, in the distribution sector, in order to avoid chaos due to a surplus of film production, the National Film Council appointed PT Perfin (*Perseroan Terbatas Peredaran Film Indonesia* or Incorporated Company for Circulation of Indonesian Films) as the centre of logistics in order to coordinate all the resulting films. PT Perfin was responsible for returning the loans to finance the film council's production (Kristanto 2004, 427).

69

In 1979, Soemardjono (a senior filmmaker and member of the Jakarta Arts Council and National Film Council) suggested a definition of *film nasional* in his paper at *Lokakarya Perfilman Nasional* (National Film Workshop, 3-4 March 1979). He wrote that national film must:

1. Be a product of the culture of the Indonesian Nation.
2. Replace the domination of foreign films, just as the Indonesian People were victorious in destroying colonial domination.
3. Serve the Indonesian People and Nation in developing the Character and Nation Building.⁷⁰

I argue that this statement indicates the strong effort from cultural elites to endorse the *film nasional* concept as a legitimate culture. In this context, exploitation films are not considered as part of the culture of Indonesia, as discussed in Introduction. In consequence, the purposes of the

⁶⁸ The loans were aimed at developing film productions. The other loans are full loan (*kredit penuh*), balanced investment loan (*kredit investasi berimbang*), and accomplishment loan (*kredit prestasi*) for ready-to-distribute films (Kristanto 2004, 427)

⁶⁹ On PT Perfin, please see Kristanto 2004, 427.

⁷⁰ Originally, the paper's title was *Perfilman Indonesia Masa Kini dan Nanti* (Indonesian cinema, The Present and The Future), presented at *Lokakarya Perfilman Nasional* (National Film Workshop), 3-4 March 1979, Jakarta. Quoted in Barker 2012, 36-37.

films are not considered as in line with the idea of developing the true character and nation building. In addition, exploitation films, in most cases, imitate Hollywood action and horror films. Salim Said concludes that the 1970s period was a “trial and error” phase (Said 1991, 93). And since businessmen had main roles within the film industry, Said argues that the films were treated as “...merchandise manufactured for the purpose of earning as much profit as possible” (Said 1991, 93). I argue that the main element for this era is a series of political contradictions which became stronger and more complicated compared to the early years of the New Order. I have clearly highlighted that some institutions and policies (decrees, Indonesian film festivals,⁷¹ and censorship boards) have worked as a state control on the film industry, whilst some other ministerial decrees were issued in order to fulfil economic needs. As a result, this era generated some exploitation films--or as Said puts it: “the rise of trashy movies”--including three of the earliest titles exported and re-circulated overseas, namely *Primitif (Primitives, 1979)*, *Ratu Ilmu Hitam (Queen of Black Magic, 1979)*, and *Serbuan Halilintar (Special Silencers, 1979)*.

The 1980s: The Golden Era of Classic Exploitation Cinema

In the early 1980s (1981-1982), the National Film Board produced and financed five films: *Sorta* (1982), *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh (The Passage, 1982)*, *Halimun (Mist, 1982)*, *Lima Sahabat (Five Comrades, 1981)*, and the unfinished *Peristiwa Don Muang (Woyla) (The Evet of Don Muana (Woyla)* (Said 1991, 124). The four completed films generated little profit due to

⁷¹As I discussed in the Introduction, FFI is the official film festival and functioned as a means of politics of taste of both the New Order and the cultural elites. In addition, the juries and committee were appointed or approved by the Minister of Information by the official Ministerial Decree, most of them were cultural elites. Another example is how they chose the winners of the Citra awards. Mostly, the winners are those films with strong statements on “searching for the real faces of Indonesia”, *film kultural edukatif*, realist-drama approaches, or auteurs/art house films. (“Pengaruh FFI untuk Film Bioskop Terbaik”).

exaggerated production costs and poor distribution. As a result of this, the DFN was terminated by the Minister of Information, Harmoko, in 1983. (Said 1991, 124)

In 1983, another infamous sexploitation film was produced, namely *Bumi Bulat Bundar* (*The World is Round*, Pitrajaya Burnama, 1983). A year later, 45 out of 76 films that participated at the 1984 FFI were sexploitation or “sadistic” films (Kristanto 2004, 452). This genre grew rapidly and reached its golden era in this period (in term of quantity). And starting in 1986 until 1994, some producers hired foreign actors to act in their films, including Peter O’Brian in *Pembalasan Rambu* (globally known as *The Intruder*, 1986) and *Segitiga Emas* (known as *Stabilizer*, 1986).⁷²

Related to censorship and state control in 1980, *Badan Sensor Film* (BSF, film censorship board) issued the Ethical Code (*Kode Etik Badan Sensor Film*), which had the same spirit as the Censorship Guidelines issued by Ministry of Information in 1977 (Sen 1994, 69). Also in 1980, the Department of Information published “Basic Guidelines for the Promotion and Development of National Film”, and it supported the mission of the cultural elites on the *film nasional* concept to emphasize the “Indonesian face in screen”. It says:

In the short term (five years) the basis must be laid for both growth and structural reform in the film industry so as to ensure that Indonesian-made films are able to become *truly “national” in character...*and are of a standard commensurate with national goal.... (In the longer term it is hoped that national film will experience self propelling growth. Support for the development of national film must be on going and continual” (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 15-16, my emphasis).

⁷² I will discuss this phenomenon in relation to transnational distribution in the next chapter.

Once again, based on the characteristics and definition above, the policy directly excluded exploitation films.

However, the production of trashy films still continued, and at the same time, the government tried to control them. During the 1980s, whilst the production of exploitation movies was still ongoing, there were some censorship attempts on several titles that contained erotic and violent scenes. *Ketika Musim Semi Tiba* (*When the Spring Comes*, Bobby Sandy 1986, drama film), *Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan* (PRLS, globally known as *Lady Terminator*, Tjut Jalil, 1988, exploitation legend-action, mockbuster of James Cameron's *Terminator*), *Akibat Terlalu Genit* (ATG, *the Result of Too Flirtatious*, Hadi Poernono, 1988; an erotic-comedy film) all got withdrawn from the cinema due to erotic scenes, (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992: 1).

Lady Terminator is a popular example used when film critics and scholars discuss the topic of censorship related to exploitation films. Kristanto states that after nine days on theatrical release in Jakarta, *Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan* was eventually withdrawn by the BSF (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 1, 8). This film also received strong criticism in the general media, and this will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Although the National Film Council funded more films, again they failed to earn money because production costs were greater than planned. This failure led to the dismissal of the council.

The 1980 Basic Guidelines for the Promotion and Development of National Film also failed to make an impact, considering that more films with violence and sensual scenes still continued to be produced, distributed, and exhibited. I also conclude that, in this era, some films were forcefully withdrawn from the movie theater due to mass protests, meaning that the films were passed by the censorship board but later the board revised their own decisions. And starting in 1982 more

exploitation films were produced and even exported to international film markets, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

The 1990s: The Fall of Classic Exploitation Cinema

Commonly, the 1990s is called the Torpidity of Indonesian cinema. This era is marked with some important elements. First, the new regulation the Film Law no. 8/1992 was applied.⁷³ Second, in May 1992, the US trade representative extracted concessions on the entry of more American films into Indonesia in return for an extension of the Indonesian textile exports to the US (Sen 1994, 157);⁷⁴ therefore more Hollywood films entered Indonesia and had an impact on local censorship, styles of filmmaking and tastes. Third, the rise of private TV stations and, at the same time, financial crises in the region, which shifted the mode of production of exploitation films; either they switched to TV production, or they tried to make low-budget simple sexploitation. Below I will elaborate upon each of these trends.

First, the Film Law no. 8/1992. One of the verses mentions the purposes of filmmaking, including “preserving and developing of national cultural values”, “constructing the nation's character and personality as well as improving human dignity”, “maintaining public order and a sense of decency” and “presenting wholesome entertainment in accordance with the norms of life”.⁷⁵ The purpose of the policy is a means of filtering both national and imported films (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1991, 72).

⁷³ The complete Indonesian version of the regulation can be accessed and downloaded at the *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (Indonesian Broadcasting Commission) official website. (Indonesia 1992).

⁷⁴ That is also the result of why Indonesia has no box office, since importers do not have obligation to report their activities. See Kristanto 2011.

⁷⁵ My translation. For the original Film Law No. 8/1992 in Indonesian, please see Indonesia 1992.

In line with the new censorship law as well as the spirit of *film nasional*, in 1992 Narto Erawan, as Director for Guidance in Film and Video Recording of the Department of Information and Secretary General of the National Film Board, writes:

It is to be hoped that every national film production is able to paint a true picture of the society and culture of its people by presenting beauty of esthetics which are brought together by and originate in the values of the social ethic of the people and their environment....It is hoped that every film is not only created and treated as a commercial commodity, and it is suggested that, at least, it should contain socio-cultural values which reflect the personality and the character of nation making it. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the artistic values illustrated in Indonesian films present the image and the culture of the Indonesian people or at the very least, that they will not conflict with cultural values and the policies of the Government in the development of a national culture (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 71-72).

Erawan also emphasizes that the essence of the new censorship law is to make sure that films should "...describe the attitudes of Indonesians who are capable of self-restrain to avoid disturbing the balance, harmony, and continuity in social, public, and national life" (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 76). Once again, the government highlights the importance of the "true picture of the society and culture of its people", "socio-cultural values", and "reflection of personality and character of the nation", which are rarely seen in the trashy films.

Second, the Film/Textile exchange policy also encouraged the blooming of exploitation. Basically, this policy was the root of the birth of 21 Cineplex, the biggest cinema chain in Indonesia, which dominated the scenes of film exhibition in Indonesia (Tjasmadi 2007, 92. Kristanto 2011). It also had a direct relationship to the threat of the US Trade Department and

MPA (Motion Pictures Association), as representative of US big studios, to boycott Indonesian textiles in order to open an MPA branch office in Jakarta and distribute the films by themselves, just like in the 1950s AMPAI era. The plan was against Indonesian regulations since foreign films should only enter Indonesia through Indonesian importing companies. After negotiations, all parties agreed one thing: the MPA could open a representative office in Jakarta and carry out direct distribution but it had to be managed by local importers which were part of the same company as the new Cineplex cinema chain (Kristanto 2011). Related to exploitation films, this regulation generated increasing numbers of Hollywood films, and once again censorship loosened for both Hollywood and local films. In addition, indirectly, Hollywood films influenced the tastes of the audiences and the style of filmmaking, including exploitation films.

Therefore, these policies paradoxically contradicted other policies such as censorship and the 1992 Film Laws, inducing a lesser representation of “national culture”. The other element is the financial crises, which made the government focus on other sectors. Related to state control on the film industry, they focused more on political content, as clearly seen in the films they banned during the era.⁷⁶

I have to highlight that it seems that the 1980’s “Basic Guidelines for the Promotion and Development of National Film” as well as the new censorship regulations and new Film Law (1992) had no impact on the production of exploitation films. Rosihan Anwar admits that since

⁷⁶ *Max Havelaar* (Fons Rademaker 1975) was held for 10 years by the Censor board. *Krisis X* (Crisis X, Turino Djunaidy, 1975), was threatened with a ban by the censor because it portrayed excessive moral degradation, but was passed after a major revision of the story. *Yang Muda yang Bercinta* (The Youngster in Love, Sjumandjaja, 1977), starred a rebel poet WS Rendra and contained some critical thought and poems by Rendra, was banned and got screened 16 years later, in September 1993. *Bung Kecil* (Little Brother, Sophan Sophian, 1978), a sharp social critique of feudalism and the loss of idealism in those who fought for the country’s Independence, was on the censorship boards’ table for five years before being passed by the censor in 1983. Another Sophan Sophian film, *Suami* (Husband, 1988) had to change the title of his film five times. (Imanjaya 2007).

the eight years of publishing the 1980 Basic Guidelines, "...little has been done in the way of achieving the goals mentioned there in, especially as regards to structural reform" (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 16). Although these policies had affected few films, the production of sexploitation and other exploitation films persisted.

In addition to the weakening of the power of Suharto in the 1990s, economic crisis and political pressures were two main issues that made low-budget sex films bloom because they generated revenues. While many film companies were in trouble financially, as indicated by only 20 films being released between early 1990 and June 1992 (Sen 1994, 157), some exploitation film producers made sexploitation films with a very low budget. Among them, *Misteri Permainan Terlarang* (*Mystery of The Forbidden Game*, Atok Soeharto, 1993) and *Ranjang Pemikat* (*Bed of Charmer*, Pitrajaya Burnama, 1993). *Gairah Malam* (*Night Passion*, SA Karim, 1993), *Kenikmatan Tabu* (*Taboo Pleasure*, Ackyl Anwari 1994), *Nafsu Liar* (*Wild Lust*, Steady Rimba, 1996), and *Bergairah di Puncak* (*Passion in Puncak*, Steady Rimba, 1996). These films are different to those in Heider's terms of popular genres, such as Legend or Japanese Period Films, because they simply exploit sex and female bodies with bad scripts and bad acting. In addition, there is no single sexploitation film from this era that has been exported overseas and became internationally cult.

The domination of sexploitation genre remained strong from 1993 until 1997 (Kristanto 2007: xxii, 376-402), and most of the films were screened in suburban movie theatres (tjasmadi, 2008, 92). But, none of the films mentioned above re-circulated in global DVD circuits. Moreover, film companies which usually made and exported exploitation movies, stopped their film productions.

In 1994, Parkit Films stopped producing feature films,⁷⁷ transformed into Multivision Plus and concentrated more on the TV industry. In 1996 Rapi Film stopped making film and focused only on soap operas for a newly private TV station which they already started in 1995.⁷⁸

In the last years of the New Order's power, in the middle of a lethargic period for Indonesian movies, there is one last effort from the government to boost the quantity of "films with quality".

In 1994, the renewed DFN produced *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang* (*And The Moon Dances*, Garin Nugroho, 1994) and *Cemeng 2005* (*The Last Primadona*, Nano Riantiarno, 1995). One of the purposes of the production was to make films to participate in the 1995 Asia Pacific Film Festival.⁷⁹

In 1989, there was a new trend. Private TV stations emerged, financial crises began to affect the region, and the film industry was in a bad condition (Kitley 1999, Hendriyani et al 2011). Thus, a new kind of Politics of Tastes occurred. Raam Punjabi, the co-founder of Parkit Film, founded Multivision Plus which specialized in *sinetron* (*sinema elektronik*, electronic cinema, a term for Indonesia's soap opera).⁸⁰ Later, in the early 1990s, many film producers, including Parkit Film (in 1994) and Rapi Film (in 1996), stopped making films and focused on TV production.

Conclusion

As underlined by Marseli and Achnas (2002), Sen (1994), and Heider (1991), the policies of the New Order supported strict state control, particularly within KFT and other film unions, FFI, and censorship boards. Alongside cultural elites, the government also framed the idea of national film

⁷⁷ See "PT Parkit Film". Also check Tombs 1997.

⁷⁸ See "About Us". Rapi Film begins to produce films again in 2006 with *Inikah Rasanya* (Is It the Feeling?) and *Lentera Merah* (Red Lantern)

⁷⁹ See "And the Moon Dances".

⁸⁰ See "Multivision Plus".

as a legitimate culture. Therefore, they encouraged films with particular tendencies, such as the spirit of “searching for Indonesian face”, art-house films, or films directed by several auteur directors; realism approaches, and produced/directed by indigenous people. The National Film Council even had projects to fund these kinds of national films and sent them to international film festivals as representations of Indonesian culture.

Conversely, the Government also tried to restart, develop and establish the film industry and national economy in general, after the chaotic turbulence of ideology in 1965. Therefore, the government issued some regulations that paved the way for the production of “trashy films”. Above, I already demonstrated the series of political contradictions towards Indonesian cinema, considering the interests of many politics of taste, in direct relation to the rise and fall of exploitation cinema.

These kinds of taste battles among various interest groups and series’ of contradictions, I argue, is the consequences of the tug of war between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization within the global media flows, as the responses to both national and international cultural and political situations.

In conclusion, I have argued that the New Order agents (both the government and the cultural elites) are the “good practice” of Kuhn’s prohibition/institution model, where they undertake censorship as a means of prohibiting and repressing the film industry in order to filter and frame the filmmakers to follow their concept of “*Film Nasional*”, “*Film Kultural Edukatif*”, or “to search the real faces of Indonesia”. However, as underlined by Kuhn, the censorship attempts ignited unintended consequences and produced a series of contradictions which led to the blossoming of exploitation films, opposite the taste of the New Order.

Chapter 2:

The Subculture of *Layar Tancap*: Exploitation movies, Traveling Cinema, and Rural Audiences in Indonesia

This chapter will focus on how and why domestic exploitation films became pivotal elements in the middle of a tastes battle between *layar tancap* (traveling cinema) companies, their rural spectators, and the New Order government. I will demonstrate that, despite the attempts to regulate the exhibition and distribution of local exploitation films internally within Indonesia, these exploitation movies became particularly important to *layar tancap* who found that rural audiences tended to reject state-approved products in favor of these modest reputable forms.

Most of the scholarly discourses on Indonesia's *layar tancap* in the New Order era suggested that these kinds of touring film companies, and their spectators, were overlooked and marginalized and, particularly after the establishment of their official union in 1993, controlled by the New Order government (Van Heeren 2012, 33-34; Sen 1994, 72). On the contrary, by analyzing the archive (consisting of newspapers, magazines, trade papers, policies, as well as other related documents), I will argue that this kind of distribution and exhibition culture, including their audience and the films they showed, were considered as important to the regime. This culture became an arena of the politics of taste and subcultures against the legitimate culture from the early years of the regime were formed.

In this chapter, despite the state-control and security approach of the New Order, I will demonstrate that *layar tancap* and their rural audiences are signs of a counterculture which challenged legitimate culture. By observing the New Order's film policies as well as general newspapers and trade magazines, I will investigate why and how these kinds of "movie-theaters" operated as displays of classic Indonesian B-films, and how they generated a unique subculture of rural spectatorship. Here, I also want to highlight how various kinds of politics of taste—from the

government, to the rural spectators, to *layar tancap* entrepreneurs –negotiated with each other, in relation to local exploitation films, its rural audiences, and its culture of exhibition.

In short, I want to evince the taste battles between the New Order government and the cultural elites on the one side and three important elements, all officially being marginalized, (namely exploitation movies, rural spectatorship and *layar tancap* companies) on the other side. To do this, firstly I will elaborate upon the introductory notes of *layar tancap* and rural audiences to put Indonesia in the New Order period (this will include their spectators - namely the villagers) into context. Secondly I will discuss how and why the government tried to regulate and control *layar tancap* shows. And finally I will demonstrate how and why the policies partly failed with exploitation movies and the subculture of rural audiences playing central roles in this process.

Before I analyse the New Order's *layar tancap*, I will highlight some key concepts and theories in order to answer the research questions. First, I will briefly discuss the discourses on rural cinema and non-urban exhibition culture. Second, since I want to observe the all-nighter *layar tancap* tradition and its spectatorship, I will elaborate upon the scholarly discussion of the subculture of the Western tradition of Midnight Movies in order to investigate to what extent we can consider *layar tancap* shows as the Indonesian equivalent of the Midnight Movie culture recognized in the Western world.

Theories on Rural Cinema and Traveling Cinema

The *layar tancap* culture has a close relationship with the concept of rural cinema, traveling cinema, and non-urban exhibition culture. The discourses on these topics, particularly the cases of Indonesia and the Southeast Asia region,⁸¹ are still developing and not many scholars have written about this topic.

⁸¹ In the South Asia region, both Shakuntala Banaji and Rashmi Sawhney discuss the exhibition culture and its connection with diaspora communities; they also deal with important topics such as gender and women issues, representations of marginalized societies and violence. Shakuntala Banaji's works often focus on the Indian child and youth spectators in both South Asia (India) or diasporic communities in relation to their viewing experiences, particularly regarding values, global skills, and ethnic identity, as well as in relation to women issues, minorities, and human rights (caste, class, language, religion). (Banaji 2006, Banaji 2007, Banaji 2010, Banaji 2012, Banaji 2014). Sawhney's works cover the marginalized cinema and its community as well as womens cinema and the

The other important term, similar to the concepts above, is “non-theatrical cinema” (Goode 2011; Maltby, Stokes, Allen 2007, 219, 273, 275; Aveyard & Moran 2013, 266-267). This term describes the phenomenon of film screenings (mostly non-35mm) outside of permanent building movie-theaters (such as YMCA halls, church halls, department stores, union halls, schools, and private houses) which screen various kinds of movies including non-commercial ones such as educational (related to literacy and health issues), religious and cultural films as well as pornographic films, and some commercial films (Hollywood films, short commercials) (Maltby, Stokes, Allen 2007, 219, 275, 276; Aveyard & Moran 2013, 266-267).

Regarding the cases of Europe and Australia, in particular, papers and books have discussed the touring film companies and rural cinema by focusing on the historical aspect and have revealed significant patterns. Based on the regulations on rural movie exhibition in Europe and Australia, many touring companies screened in 16mm film (Goode 2011). And according to Thunnis van Oot, based on his research on Ambulant Film Exhibition in the Netherlands in the 1940s he noted that there were some restrictions that were applied to traveling cinemas, such as screenings should be away from permanent movie-theaters to reduce competitiveness (Thissen and Zimmermann 2016, 149, 153-154). And, in some cases, Film Guilds were established to frame the screenings with several civic goals, as Ian Goode has highlighted was the case with the rural cinemas in Scotland’s Highlands and Islands post-World War II (Aveyard and Moran, 2013, 267).

Rural cinema also functions as a social gathering beyond just the movies; often they can encourage a “positive sense of social belonging” where... “friendships and family connections are consolidated and extended, where romances blossom (or fail) or where special occasions are celebrated or remembered” (Aveyard 2011). Rural cinemas have also developed intimate spaces where people know each other, and, in the case of West Germany between the 1960s and 1980s, even became alternative entertainment for younger generations who considered that it developed their own public spaces and belonged to a wider cultural and political agenda. (Aveyard 2017, 181; Aveyard and Moran, 2013, 265)

relationship between spectatorship, popular movies and modernity (Sawney 2007, Banaji 2010, Banaji 2012). However, both scholars discuss the spectatorship and exhibition tradition in South Asian films in general and their research do not focus on traveling cinemas or on the cases within the Southeast Asian region, let alone Indonesia.

Thissen considers rural spectators to be part of a non-urban film culture and usually have characteristics such as a lack of education and lack of modernity (Thissen & Zimmermann 2016). It is also important to note that Ian Goode finds some cases of rebellious acts from within the rural cinema audience, particularly when the spectators were displeased with the condition of the place, content of the film, and screening quality (Aveyard & Moran 2013, 272, 275).

Related to the sponsors or financial sources of this kind of cinema, sometimes the road shows along with their “equipped vans” were sponsored by big companies for marketing purposes, such as Maggi Food Corporation in Switzerland in the late 1920s, and Geigy Corporation’s pest control products in the 1950s (Thissen and Zimmermann 2016, 134, 139). In the late 1930s the term *Kulturfilme* (cultural films) occurred where the sponsor inserted their marketing messages through entertaining-yet-informative films (Thissen and Zimmermann 2016, 137). But, in other cases, the screenings were also targeted for social purposes such as the works of FilmAid International for refugees in Aghanistan (Maltby, Stokes, Allen 2007, 275)

In some cases, as Zimmermann demonstrated, these kinds of corporate road shows were “... far from marginal and deeply affected the activities of the Schweizer Schul-und Volkskino – a fact that speaks of the dimension of ambulant corporate film shows and their economic impact in non-theatrical film culture in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.” (Thissen and Zimmermann, 2016, 146)

Regarding the discussion on rural cinema and exhibition culture in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, particularly *layar tancap* shows, Nadi Tofighian and Dafna Ruppin undertook research on the emergence of touring film companies starting from their early start back in 1896 across Southeast Asia including the colonial Indonesia. Ruppin writes that in Java and Sumatera, the earliest screening was on 11 October 1896, and she highlights “the introduction of new technology by independent touring exhibitors” by Batavia (the old name of Jakarta)-based French photographer Louis Talbot and his company named Scenimatograph (Ruppin 2015, 2, 32). Quoting Tofighian, Ruppin underlines that the same company continued to travel across Southeast Asia, including screenings in Manila (January 1897), Singapore (May), Bangkok (June) and Taiping (December) (Tofighian quoted in Ruppin 2015, 32). Talbot’s success led to the birth of other traveling cinemas from differing nationalities and origins from 1896 to 1898 and combined the film screenings with various other forms of entertainment including circus, magic, or Parsi theater shows (Ruppin 2015, 33).

Layar tancap in New Order Indonesia has been discussed by Krishna Sen and Katinka van Heeren. Below, I will highlight their arguments whilst I undertake my own research and question whether their claims are in line with my investigation and findings. In addition, I will also analyse whether the patterns and characteristics shown above within the Western scholarships can be applied to the case of *layar tancap* in Indonesia's New Order.

***Layar Tancap* shows as Non-Theatrical cinema**

In the Indonesian context *layar tancap* and *bioskop keliling* are two popular terms for “traveling cinema”, or touring film companies, that are used in Indonesia to refer to entertainment for villagers and suburb audiences. *Layar tancap* literally means “screens stuck on the ground”, whereas *bioskop keliling* can be translated as “mobile cinema”. Commonly, the traveling cinema consists of a screen (*layar*), a projector and a few films (in 16mm), brought by a vehicle, similar to the term “equipped vans” (Thissen and Zimmermann 2016, 134, 139), to villages and remote areas to show films.

During the dictatorship of the New Order regime (1966-1998), both *layar tancap* and its spectators were considered as marginalized by legitimate culture. These kinds of distribution and exhibition cultures were framed to only operate in rural and suburb areas and policed with several strict policies, which I will elaborate upon below.

At the same time, its spectators were considered as second class citizens who consequently got “second class” entertainment. They did not enjoy new films in a decent permanent movie theater, or immediately after the films were released. Instead, they watched movies in *Layar Tancap* two years after the films' theatrical releases and, officially, were limited to Indonesian films only.

As mentioned above, *layar tancap* shows commonly operated in rural and suburban areas and the audience came from lower-classes. Krishna Sen writes:

At the bottom margin of this audience are large sections of the urban poor, the unskilled industrial workers, pedicab drivers, footpath traders, domestic servants, and so forth. Efforts to reach this group are seen in the film versions of the cheap, roughly produced comic serials like *Si Buta* and *Tuan Tanah Kedaung*. These films generally play at kampong theaters, where tickets are under Rp. 1000,-. These, unlike the pop novel films, do not get into the more middle class theaters like Megaria (Sen 1994, 75)

In this context, Sen not only underline characteristics of the audiences, but also the price and typical (marginalized) films they screened. *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu* (literally, *The Blindman from the Ghost Cave*) is globally known as *The Blind Warrior*, whereas *Tuan Tanah Kedaung* (*Landlord of Kedaung*) is a B-grade drama film, both were adapted from very popular comic books.

Film journalist JB Kristanto writes that these kinds of traveling cinemas played low quality sex films because of the spectators' demand (Jauhari: 1992, 164). It has been reported by many newspapers and magazines that *layar tancap* shows—both the film touring companies and the audiences--developed their own dynamics: screening of uncensored films and exhibiting “immoral” behavior such as gang fights, and other activities of decadence. On the other hand, the government also used *layar tancap* as means of propaganda. The New Order also termed this unique distribution as part of *pagar budaya* (a cultural fence) to protect the villagers from the dangerous ideas within global movies, which I elaborate upon later.

Based on the details above, I can conclude that there are some similar characteristics between the global cases of rural cinema and the non-theatrical cinema of *layar tancap*. For example, the restrictions and other regulations (16mm film and away from permanent movie-theaters), the rural audience, equipped vans, and, in many cases, the screenings of exploitation movies. Other characteristics such as the events functioning as social gatherings and the particular “rebellious” attitude of some audiences will be discussed in the following subsections.

The Subculture of Western Midnight Movies.

I argue that, generally, the all-night-long *Layar Tancap* shows have some similar and some different characteristics and definitions to the Western tradition of Midnight Movies. In order to understand the subculture of the *Layar Tancap* audience and compare it with Midnight Movies, one should have an understanding about this kind of Western cult exhibition.

Midnight Movies culture, particularly in the USA, have specific elements, and the most important one is a dynamic and, in many cases, rebellious attitude within the audience who have developed their own kind of “counterculture” exhibition and fan culture rituals, whereby they can access and celebrate their favorite films repeatedly. Commonly they share the same politics of taste towards particular peculiar and explicit texts such as exploitation films with lots of violence and sensual scenes (Matjhis and Sexton 2011, 13, 15). Some scholars have concluded that the tradition of

Midnight screenings began in the late 1960s starting in New York City, and from the early 1970s they showed “exploitation films with kaleidoscopic and apocalyptic motives, revivals of previously banned films, new and explicit horror, films pushing the boundaries of sexual permissiveness, and exotic and surreal foreign films” (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 13).

One of the most phenomenal midnight movies regarding the subculture of fan culture is the case of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* where devoted fans repeatedly watch the film and actively create their own rituals such as interaction with on-screen characters, dressing-up like the characters, enlivening the atmosphere by throwing some props, and dancing (Weinstock 2007, 9, 32-34).

I will return to these discourses focusing specifically on the *Layar Tancap*'s audiences in the subsection titled “*Layar Tancap* as Counterculture?”

Below, I will start the analysis of *Layar Tancap* and I will begin with a deeper explanation of *Layar Tancap*'s history and politics.

The Politics and History of *Layar Tancap*

In Indonesia, as briefly discussed earlier (Ruppin 2015), *layar tancap* is considered older than indoor and permanent-building movie theaters. When, for the first time, a film was screened in a fixed building at Tanahabang, Kebonjae, Batavia (old name for Jakarta) on 5th December 1900, people were excited and compared it with the *Layar tancap* cinema named Talbot (after the owner, Lois Talbot),⁸² in Gambir Market Field, in front of Kota Station, and Lokasari (Manggabesar) (Jauhari: 1992, 2, 5).

“The difference is, Mr. Schwarz provided the show in a house in Tanahabang, Kebondjae—later became The Rojal Bioscope—while Mr. Talbot and his friends always had a show in an open field, and the locations were always moving from a field to another”. (Jauhari: 1992, 8, my translation)

⁸²The film was a documentary about The Netherland's Queen and King Hertog Hendrik entering The Hague. In relation to Talbot and the history of early distribution and exhibition culture in the region, please see Ruppin 2015.

However, the first *layar tancap* organization was established in April 1978 by the owners of *bioskop keliling*.⁸³ The first institution was called Perbiki or *Persatuan Pengusaha Bioskop Keliling* (Union of Operators of Mobile Movie Theatres). One of their missions was to distribute domestic films throughout Indonesia, specifically the remote areas (“Pengusaha Bioskop Keliling Bentuk Organisasi”) or blank spots (“Menu tambahan untuk bioskop lapangan”), where there was no access to television channels (except in the district offices), regular cinemas or print media (“Menu tambahan untuk bioskop lapangan”). Chairperson Acup Zainal underlined that one of the purposes of the body was to develop appreciation of domestic films within rural village communities (Humas Perfiki 1993, 11).

In order to gain official acknowledgement, Perbiki changed its name, since the word “*bioskop*” (cinema) in “*bioskop Keliling*” referred to one specific style of cinema, and there was already an organization that dealt with “*bioskop*”, namely GPBSI. Therefore, on the 2nd of October 1991 they changed the name to Perfiki (*Persatuan Perusahaan Pertunjukan Film Keliling Indonesia*, Association of Indonesian Mobile Cinema Screening). (Humas Perfiki 1993, 35-36).⁸⁴ And, finally, the Minister of Education issued a ministerial decree no. 130/1993 to legitimize Perfiki, as one of the film bodies enabling it to enjoy equality with other existing film organizations (“Program Perfiki Tinggal Kenangan”).

The official recognition of the institution is significant. Katinka van Heeren underlines that, since that time, the New Order started to control *layar tancap*. She writes:

The original mobile cinema organization was founded in 1974 (*sich!*) and before 1993, when it was granted official recognition as one of the New Order professional film

⁸³ There is confusing information from various sources related to the birth of both Perfiki and Perbiki. *Tempo* Magazine wrote that, in 1986, the name of the institution was still PERBIKI, not Perfiki. *Harian Neraca* also used Perbiki in 1989 (“Perbiki Kesulitan Cari Film Bekas”). On the other hand, *Suara Karya* daily wrote that Perfiki was founded on 15 February 1978 (“Rencana Mukernas Perfiki Disambut Dingin Anggotanya”), and *Harian Ekonomi Neraca* reported that Perfiki’s first congress was in Pandaan (East Java) in 1983 (“PERFIKI dan Segmentasi Pasar Film”). In addition, according to van Heeren, the first mobile cinema (Perbiki) was founded in 1974 (van Heeren 2012, 33) whereas in *Tempo* it is stated that the year was 1979. In addition, *Pos Sore* (30 July 1977) even wrote that in July 1977, some mobile cinema entrepreneurs founded Perbiki. In this thesis, I took the information from the official sources. Perbiki was founded in 1978, with the notarial deed M.R. Makahanap no. 15 (23 February 1978) and confirmed by Central Jakarta District Court no. 70 (6 March 1978), whereas Perfiki was founded in 1991 but officially got a ministerial decree in 1993, namely no. 130/1993, according to their trade magazine published by Perfiki’s Public Relations (Humas Perfiki 1993, 35-36)

⁸⁴ Perfiki consists of four categories, namely commercial mobile cinema shows, promotional purposes, for-hire/ceremonial purposes, and social and information purposes (Humas Perfiki 1993, 35-36)

organizations, *it was mostly disregarded by the state....* The fact that mobile cinema was seen as *lower-class and rural entertainment* may be one of the reasons why it had been mostly disregarded by the New Order state. Before 1993, there had been *no specific government policy* for mobile cinema, nor was it ever included in the National Film Development Programme. (Van Heeren 2012, 33-34, my emphasis).

According to van Heeren, the attempts to control *layar tancap* only happened after the official recognition from the Government in 1993, because the New Order thought that rural people were not significant enough to be considered in their policies. In addition, Van Heeren and Krishna Sen argue that, although its spectatorship is important to note, no specific official policies were applied; and no data was collected by The Indonesian Statistical Bureau (PBS, *Pusat Biro Statistik*), for this open air cinema (Sen 1994). PBS only compiled numbers from ordinary cinemas in the big cities (Sen 1994, 72).

Below, particularly in a subsection titled “Framing *Layar Tancap*”, I will argue the opposite by suggesting that Suharto’s government tried to frame these kinds of distribution and exhibition cultures since early 1970s, the early years of New Order, long before the establishment of Perfiki in 1991. The New Order was involved with some cultural and even political movements precisely because the villagers represented an important asset considering the fact that combined they comprised the majority of the total Indonesian population. And, during these dynamic processes of New Order’s politics of culture, exploitation movies take the central parts.

As I mentioned earlier, *layar tancap* shows commonly operated in rural and suburban areas, but why were such films restricted to only rural areas? The answer becomes clear in Perbiki’s first congress in 1983, where an agreement between Perbiki and GBPSI, called *Radius Aksi* (action radius), regulated the distribution of these films (“Perfiki dan Segmentasi Pasar Film”). At that time traveling cinema companies were accused of stealing regular cinemas’ audiences and disturbing the distribution and exhibition circulation by screening new movies. In order to avoid this kind of “cannibalism”, there were some decisions made by and for Perfiki, including *radius aksi*. It was agreed that mobile cinema shows should be 5 km away from the nearest movie theaters. This meant Perbiki was now forced to run their business in the countryside or, at least, the suburbs. Perbiki members, as represented in mass media, were fine with this decision since they were more

focused on the villagers and low class society, thus statistically would have an 80% market share since the majority of citizens, at that time, still lived in the villages.

A year after the official acknowledgement of Perfiki, in 1994, Soesilo Soedarman as *Coordinating Minister* for Legal, Political and Security Affairs stated that “The business of *Layar Tancap* has a strategic significance in the national film marketing, as well as developing a multi-functional film as a medium of information for national development” (“Menkopolkam: Film Nasional Harus Bangkit Pada PJP II”). The Minister underlined the importance of mobile cinemas because, in 1994, they had 2000 entrepreneurs in Perfiki’s, membership, and could reach thousands of countrysides in around 17,508 islands. (“Menkopolkam: Film Nasional Harus Bangkit Pada PJP II”).

The attempts above are only a few examples of the New Order’s politics of taste towards *layar tancap*. To establish my arguments, I will analyze relevant New Order’s framings of *layar tancap* in the subchapters below.

On Rural Audiences in Indonesia’s New Order era

As discussed by Sen (1994), *Layar Tancap*’s spectators mostly came from lower or working class people in rural and suburban areas. The shows were generally free, with the host incurring the costs, but sometimes the audience would contribute. Usually the shows started in the evening and would continue until dawn.⁸⁵ It was estimated that around 80% of *kampongs* (villages) were visited by *Layar Tancap* shows in the late 1970s (Sen 1994:72). Commonly, the villagers invited the *Layar Tancap* companies for weddings, circumcisions, or any event that garnered familial pride, for which the host would pay all the expenses and to which the whole village would be invited (“Persaingan Layar tancap Makin Tak Sehat”), and as a result the *layar tancap* business grew rapidly. For the sake of prestige a villager might need to sell a goat or cow to rent a mobile cinema show if he came from a low-income family (Humas Perfiki 1993, 35).

⁸⁵ In the early 1990s, some *layar tancap* shows only ran for few hours, from 8 to 10pm, in order not to disturb the rural community such as during children’s study time and religious learning periods (Humas Perfiki 1993, 18).

In some cases, the shows were accused of being bad influences for the villagers: encouraging and eliciting immoral behaviors and inter-village fighting. Not only this but the screenings also created noise pollution. (“Menanggap Layar Tancap Murah Meriah”)

Related to the viewing experience, prominent director and Perfiki’s Vice Chairperson Slamet Djarot wrote of people coming in droves to watch *layar tancap* because of the instinct of togetherness or communality (*dorongan naluri kebersamaan*) whereby the meaning of *Layar tancap* gets extended to become a "joint ritual" (*upacara bersama*) (Humas Perfiki 1993, 13). This argument is arguably similar to Mark Jancovich and Bruce Kawin’s concepts of cult followings in “temples” or “spaces of rituals” for celebration (Jancovich 2002, Kawin 1991).

Framing *Layar tancap*

From the early years of the New Order, *Layar Tancap* was directed, in many ways, as a political and economic means of regulating the mode of exhibition, and thus many rules such as three-layer censors and 16mm policies were forced upon these works.

First, *bioskop keliling* shows became one of the political means of circulating the New Order programs to remote places; for example, campaign programs by BKKBN (*Badan Kordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional*, National Family Planning Coordinating Board) starting in the 1970s (“BKKBN Tingkatkan Pengadaan Film2 Penerangan KB”) by screening BKKBN’s informative films and political campaigns of the ruling political party, namely *Golongan Karya* (Golkar, The Functional Group) during general elections.

In fact, since the first year of Perbiki, it was Vice President Adam Malik who gave the green light to the “Cinemas goes to the Villages” plan. At this time, the government asked *layar tancap* shows to collaborate with the Department of Education and Culture as well as the Department of Agriculture in order to disseminate propaganda films related to educational issues and agricultural extensions. These short films related to development issues such as birth control, transmigration, cooperatives, public health, and the spirits of Pelita I and II (*Pembangunan Lima Tahun* or Five-Year Development Program). (“Wakil Presiden Sambut Program Film Nasional Masuk Desa”; “Film Masuk Desa Direstui Wakil Presiden Adam Malik”).

In 1976, *Team Hiburan Maoreess* (“Maoreess”Entertainment Team) and *Gelanggang Kesenian Beringin Jaya* (“The Victorious *Beringin*” Art Forum⁸⁶), as part of the Golkar campaign program, ran *Layar Tancap* shows in remote places around Southern Sulawesi and inserted some governmental messages encouraging the people to participate the development in their own village (“Film Masuk Desa di Sulsel”).

As political vehicles, in 1982, it is reported that for the second time, Perbiki officially supported Golkar, Suharto’s ruling political vehicle to keep him in power, and became the medium of the campaign in remote places. (Humas Perfiki 1993, 40) That is to say that Perbiki had already become a means of disseminating Suharto’s politics since the previous general election in 1977 and that the rural audience, as representing the majority of Indonesian citizens, were also part of the political targets for the New Order in the general election.⁸⁷

In December 1983, in their first national congress, again Perbiki determined to make themselves the channel of the New Order’s propaganda films (“Menu tambahan untuk bioskop lapangan”). Since then Perbiki’s members were prohibited to screen foreign movies, and were required to only present films suitable for audiences 12 years and younger. If there was an unsuitable film presented, it would be re-censored. (“Menu tambahan untuk bioskop lapangan”). In this event, as mentioned earlier, there was a commitment between Perbiki and GBPSI related to market share called *Radius Aksi* (action radius) (“PERFIKI dan Segmentasi Pasar Film”). The second important decision from the first Perbiki Congress was to make sure that mobile cinema shows only exhibited and distributed Indonesian films (“Perfiki dan Segmentasi Pasar Film”; van Heeren 2012, 34).

Another big collaboration between Perbiki and the government happened in March 1986, when the Department of Information, particularly the Directorate of Film and Video Recordings (Direktorat Bina Film dan Rekaman Video), gave *layar tancap* entrepreneurs eleven

⁸⁶ *Beringin* or Banyan Tree is the symbol of Golkar, the ruling party of the New Order.

⁸⁷ There is another example - Major General (Retired) Acup Zainal (known as “the father of *Layar Tancap*” who served as chairperson during three periods from 1983 to 1996), was a former commander of the military district command and Governor of Irian Jaya, both in Papua, and he organized some events with Puspen ABRI (*Pusat Penerangan Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, Information Center of Indonesia’s Armed Forces), for (among others) the *Operasi Teritorial* (Territorial Military Operation) in East Timor in 1990 and 1992. The events were intended to entertain the military base and the victims of the earthquake and tsunami in Flores (East Nusa Tenggara) for 2 weeks in early 1993 (“*Layar Tancap* Gelar Di Flores”; “Rencana Mukernas Perfiki Disambut Dingin anggotanya”).

documentaries with 400 similar films promised to come in the next two years, produced by The Department of Transmigration, The Department of Agriculture, and The Department of Health. It is reported that at the inauguration day of cooperation between the Department of Information and Perfiki there were a series of screenings, and *Membangun Hari Esok* (To Build Tomorrow, a transmigration-themed short movie) was screened as the opening film before cult icon Rhoma Irama's *Satria Bergitar* (Guitar Warrior) at Pasekan District, Pacet, West Java. The 2,500 spectators responded positively (“Menu tambahan untuk *bioskop* lapangan”).

Indeed, one of the most assertive pre-Perfiki policies on *Layar Tancap* is the ministerial decree no. 120/1989 issued by the Minister of Information. The regulation firmly stated that, for the purpose of mobile cinema screenings, all films should be re-censored at three levels: the film should not be screened until two years after the first time they passed the censorship for theatrical release; the films must be thematically suitable for the villagers; and finally, the films should obtain the *Surat Tanda Lulus Sensor* (Sensor Graduate Certificate, STLS) from the Censorship Board--meaning it should be re-censored for *layar tancap* purposes. This very policy was specifically in relation to the rural audiences. The government needed to not only police the villagers, indoctrinating them into the national culture, but also filter their tastes away from the bad influence of foreign movies. As a consequence, *layar tancap* only screened outdated movies. For example, in 1993, *layar tancap* shows were officially obliged by Ministerial Decree to screen Indonesian movies only in 16mm format. By doing so, they were only allowed to show Indonesian films suitable for all-ages—and at the same time avoid screening ‘fast-track film’ (*film Pelarian*) (van Heeren 2012, 37; “Program Perfiki Tinggal Kenangan”).

Zainal was displeased with the regulations and made a strong statement: “Why do you consider the villagers as second class citizens?” (Humas Kongres III Perfiki 1993, 65). Zainal interpreted the policy as an injustice because it discriminated against rural audiences, considering them to be ignorant and uneducated (Humas Kongres III Perfiki, 1993).

In February 1993, a few months before their official acknowledgement, the New Order regime formulated a concept called “Cultural Fence” (*Pagar Budaya*), based on the new film law, UU no. 8/1992 (“Perfiki Harus Jadi Pagar Budaya”). Katinka van Heeren states that the purpose of the “cultural fence” concept is aims to “diminish the danger of contagion by the spread of information

technologies caused by globalization”. The New Order government believed that the villagers were not strong enough to filter any bad influence of foreign cultures represented on the screen; therefore the purpose of this concept was to protect the villagers from foreign values and behaviors embedded in global movies (Van Heeren 2012, 35). This policy is in line with the concept of *film nasional* where Indonesian films should represent “the real of Indonesian culture” and *kultural edukatif*. By applying the *Cultural Fence* concept, *layar tancap* shows were expected to become the “spearhead of national cinema” (*ujung tombak film nasional*) by way of taking the distribution and exhibition network of domestic films to the sub-districts (*kecamatan*) level, particularly to the blank spots. In addition, by paving the way for domestic movies, it was hoped that *layar tancap* would strengthen national film audiences which would generate conditions for the emergence of 500 permanent cinema halls in small areas specializing in Indonesian films (“Perfiki Harus Jadi Pagar Budaya”).⁸⁸

I argue that the New Order’s attempts as I explained above—namely in becoming a means of political propaganda, and censorship; Indonesian state films only policy, and *radius aksi*—show that the New Order considered *layar tancap* significant for their political purposes and therefore should be policed and framed. All cases above happened before the establishment of Perfiki in 1991 and the official recognition of the New Order in 1993.

Layar Tancap as Counterculture?

However, the official attempts to police *layar tancap*, before and after Perfiki, partially failed. *Layar tancap* generated its own sub-culture among the rural spectatorship, and exploitation movies were a significant part of it.

First, paradoxically, instead of screening Indonesian films that upheld national culture in accordance with the “cultural fence” concept, the movies they showed were mostly exploitation ones, some of which imitated the Western style (such as Mockbusters and womensploitation).

Secondly, the mobile companies screened uncensored versions of the films to audiences of all ages (Humas Kongres III Perfiki, 1993). And in many cases, they also were reported to screen new local

⁸⁸ The first step of the plan was to screen domestic films from mobile cinemas, and later semi-permanent cinemas, and finally converted into permanent movie theaters in remote areas (“Perfiki Harus Jadi Pagar Budaya”; van Heeren 2012, 35).

and global films instead of becoming bull-work of the national distribution network by screening outdated films (Humas Kongres III Perfiki, 1993).

Thirdly, many of the *layar tancap* owners, both members and non-members of Perfiki, still screened the 35mm format instead of 16mm. In this context, some *layar tancap* companies argued that it was more expensive to make 16mm copies rather than 35mm ones (“Perfiki, Hidup Enggan Mati Tak Mau”). Their ultimate aim being to discount 16mm versions which, having been heavily censored for all-age audiences, had only a few sexual and sadistic scenes.

This kind of situation disadvantaged the *layar tancap* owners because it is reported that many spectators protested at the shows and even uprooted the screen (“Menanggapi Layar Tancap Murah Meriah”; “Persaingan Layar Tancap Makin Tak Sehat”). One example of such an upheaval occurred in 1982, when some *layar tancap* companies wrote fake letters in order to show Rated 17 films (Humas III Perfiki 1993, 41). For example, as reported in *Batara Weekly* in 1989, some illegal *layar tancap* shows screened European, Mandarin, and Indian films freely, including *Iron Eagle II* starring Tom Cruise, in the villages of Gandul, Sawangan (Bogor) to Krukut and Limo of West Java.⁸⁹ They also screened new films that were still playing at regular movie theaters such as *Tarzan Raja Rimba* (*Tarzan the Jungle King*) and *Si Gobang Misteri Manusia Bertopeng* (*Gobang, The Mystery of A Masked Man*) (“*Layar Tancap Merusak Penedaran Film Bioskop*”). No action was taken by the security officers, police, prosecutor, or the village officials for violation of the rules, nor by TP2FV (*Tim Pengawas Peredaran Film Video*, or Supervisory Team of Film Distribution and Video) which was established by the regents. (“*Layar Tancap Merusak Penedaran Film Bioskop*”).

Fourthly, and finally, instead of becoming the “cultural fence”, the shows were considered to be bringing bad influences to the surrounding environment which resulted in an increasing amount of crime and lower moral behavior by the audience. In the 1970s and the 1980s, some newspapers reported cases of drunkenness, gambling, fights between villages, sexual misconduct and excessive noise (“*Bioskop Keliling di Jabar Merusak*”; “*Bioskop Keliling untuk Menjangkau Pedesaan*”). For example, in early 1977, a local media reported that *layar tancap* shows in the

⁸⁹ Issues about illegal mobile cinema are crucial because, from Perbiki’s perspective, they would give Perbiki a bad name. Perbiki cannot regulate their members because they can simply cease to be members without any sanction. Therefore, in August 1980, the Perbiki official Yung Indrajaya met Jakarta’s Commander of the Military Region, Major General Norman Sasono, in order to ask him personally to police illegal mobile cinema. (Humas III Perfiki 1993, 37)

Asahan Districts (North Sumatera) appeared to have significantly increased the number of inter-village gang fights and moral decadence among youngsters, as well as instances of disturbing the peace since the screenings were held in the middle of the night in the center of the district where the houses of worship and public housing were located. (“Pengaruh Bioskop Keliling thd Generasi Muda Asahan”).

***Layar Tancap* Audience and Their Politics of Tastes**

All the four elements that I discussed above have a direct relationship with the rural audience’s politics of taste. In order to survive, *layar tancap* owners needed to feed the rural audiences’ demands and wants. In order to attract the villagers, it is reported that the shows screened low taste films such as films with sexuality, violence, suspense, and “rough romance” even though there were underage students among the spectators (“Pengaruh Bioskop Keliling thd Generasi Muda Asahan”). As part of the rural audience, parliament member Djati Kusumo wrote that the spectators do not need big-budget and complicated films. They just need to be entertained with simple and easy-to-digest films (Humas Perfiki 1993, 19). It is also reported that, even though they did try to screen dramas or films full of propaganda, many of the films were exploitation movies, the favorite ones being the action films starring cult icons Barry Prima and Advent Bangun (Humas III Perfiki 1993, 56). The inhabitants also loved “comedy, Rhoma Irama’s *dangdut*⁹⁰ musicals, and mystical horrors” (“Menertibkan dan Mendayagunakan Bioskop Layar Tancap”), the latter commonly associated with B movies. *Barata* weekly, in the same year, underlined that illegal mobile cinemas screened “uneducated films” such as *Rimba Panas* (globally known as *Jungle Heat*, RatnoTimoer, 1988), *Harga Sebuah Kejujuran* (*Forceful Impact*, Ackyl Anwari, 1987), and *Jaringan Terlarang* (*Java Burn*, 1987, Ackyl Anwari) in some places “...in which the villagers are not ready to accept such kind of films” (“Layar tancap Merusak Penedaran Film *Bioskop*”).⁹¹

Indeed, *Pelita* daily reported that the *layar tancap* companies screened films of low quality and there was no attempt from the officials to control the quality of the films because they only needed local permits from local districts, and in many cases, the owners deceived the officials and society, stating that the films were for all-ages (as required by the law), but in reality were local semi-porn,

⁹⁰ *Dangdut* is a very populist music genre in Indonesia, particularly among the lower class and working class. And Rhoma Irama is considered as The King of *Dangdut*. For more info about *dangdut*, please see Weintraub: 2010.

⁹¹ See also Endah: 1995

sadistic films, including murder-themed movies, and even imported films. (“Bioskop Keliling di Jabar Merusak”).

I thus conclude that these violations of the law were enacted in order to feed the rural audience’s tastes and needs. The villagers had their own attitudes due to the format changing and re-censoring process. As I mentioned earlier, in some cases, related to the villagers’ tastes of exploitation films as well as the needs for watching new films, many spectators asked for 35mm. However, at that time, it was more expensive and rare to find 35mm copies which were still screened in regular cinemas. On the other hand, even if the *layar tancap* screened 35mm, yet the films did not meet the spectators’ requirements (low, sexual and sadistic scenes), they would run amok, uproot the poles and pelt stones at the projectors (“Menanggapi Layar Tancap Murah Meriah”).

Layar Tancap Owners’ Misconduct

Despite the strict regulations, why did some *layar tancap* still display films with violence and sensual scenes? Beside the arguments I discussed above, there are also reasons related to the owner of traveling cinema companies. First, the official Perfiki claimed that the phenomenon was caused by non-members or, in other words, illegal practices run by independent entrepreneurs who were not part of the Perfiki regulations. Additionally, in many cases, the owners of illegal *layar tancap* used another person’s name (e.g., wife, children, and brothers) in order to avoid problems in the field. (“Persaingan Layar Tancap Makin Tak Sehat”).

Second, some media outlets suggested that there were some irresponsible bureaucrats (*oknum*) from the Department of Information who had access to 35mm projectors and indulged in a side business as 35mm projector sellers (“Persaingan Layar Tancap Makin Tak Sehat”).⁹² As mentioned above, the 35mm units are significant for *layar tancap* because they contain new imported films that were still playing in the regular cinemas, and were mostly rating 17 with sexual and sadistic scenes in them; (“Persaingan *Layar tancap* Makin Tak Sehat”), the kind of films that were suitable for the tastes of the rural audiences.

⁹²An article reported two units in Bekasi and 1 unit in Karawang (“Persaingan Layar Tancap Makin Tak Sehat”).

Conclusion

There are four main points that I highlighted in this chapter. First, contrary to Van Heeren's claim, I argue that the New Order government tried to police and regulate *Layar Tancap* shows from its early years, starting from the 1970s. Therefore the regime did not disregard traveling cinema and the villagers/low class community as their audience, and on the contrary they considered *layar tancap* shows as important for their political and cultural interests and purposes. Second, ironically, the "cultural fence" vehicles, which have been policed in many layers by the New Order's agencies, turned into outlets of exploitation films, due to the tastes of the owner. Third, the audience, who had a taste for exploitation films, developed into a particular subculture of spectatorship. Fourth, the factor of *Layar Tancap* owners who broke the rules in order to feed the audience's taste.

Regarding the first point, since the majority of Indonesian people live in the countryside, country dwellers were very important for the government on many levels. First, as the vote-getters for Golkar, to keep President Suharto in power using *layar tancap* as political vehicles. Second, the New Order Regime had many agendas relating to their short-term and long-term five-year development program for the villagers, such as issues on public health, birth control, and transmigration, and *layar tancap* was the only medium that could reach remote areas and the village people. Third, after 1993 the idea of "cultural fence" was meant to police and encourage the villagers to behave according to "national culture" and at the same time shield them from the bad influence of foreign movies. Therefore, they considered the villagers and *layar tancap* as important elements.

In relation to this issue some attempts were applied, from obliging the *layar tancap* companies to screen domestic films only, re-censoring the films, and changing the format from 35mm into 16mm.

Regarding *layar tancap* as outlets of exploitation movie screenings, it is important to note that the owners often tried to grab rural communities' attention by screening the movies they love to celebrate: from action movies to horror-mystic films. This act was against its initial main objective which was to gather the spectators for propaganda goals and this act was ironic and paradoxical, since the "cultural fence" concept (as part of the official concept of "national cinema") and "exploitation films" are mutually opposed. Instead of becoming the spearhead of national cinema,

as framed by New Order's politics of culture, *layar tancap* shows often screened exploitation films, the kind that cultural elites and Governments tried to eradicate.

Regarding the rural audiences, I detailed that the spectators uprooted the poles of the mobile cinemas when they found out that the films were not as they expected due to the format changing and re-censoring process. In some cases, related to their tastes of exploitation films as well as the desire of watching new films, many spectators asked for 35mm print to be screened, but at that time it was more expensive and rare to find 35mm copies and the films were still being screened in regular cinemas. On the other hand, even if the *layar tancap* screened 35mm, yet the films did not meet the spectators' requirements (low quality, less sexual and sadistic scenes), they would run amok, uprooting the poles and throwing stones at the projectors ("Menanggap Layar Tancap Murah Meriah").

The impact of these actions and behaviors helped to shape the subculture of rural and suburb spectatorships. In addition, the nature of *layar tancap* as a social gathering evoked the specific kind of rebellious attitudes within its spectators.

Regarding this topic, I have argued that there are some similarities between *Layar Tancap shows* and both the concept of the Midnight Movies tradition and non-theatrical cinema.. First, *Layar Tancap* also encountered particular restrictions such as those related to 16mm policy, old Indonesian films only policy, *radius aksi* policy.

Second, regarding rural spectatorship, the rural audiences considered the events as social gatherings and even "joint-rituals", and they had a particular taste for specific movies, namely exploitation ones, and developed their own subculture and rebellious attitude. They developed the spirit of communalities. In some cases, they also showed a rebellious attitude if something shown on screen displeased them.

However, they cannot choose to watch the films repeatedly and only enjoyed (or did not enjoy - and that would led to protests) the films displayed by the touring companies, unless they were the host who hired the traveling cinema. Therefore, the villagers also did not develop any particular rituals related to particular movies, as there is no evidence that supports this matter.

And finally, I should highlight the owners' misconduct. I argue that the tastes of rural audience also influence the decision of mobile cinema owners, including conducting unlawful acts regarding

feeding costumers' desire for exploitation films. Therefore, there were both legal and illegal *layar tancap* shows showing uncensored 35mm films, including new domestic and foreign films.

In conclusion, although the New Order regime surrounded the *layar tancap* with many regulations so as to become the “cultural fence” of Indonesia, represented by the policy of “Only Indonesian cinema for all-ages audiences”, but in many cases, the attempts failed. The traveling cinema companies, both the legal and illegal ones, often violated the rules. And the main reason is the politics of taste of the rural audiences towards their desired movies. Therefore, in many cases, *layar tancap* shows still screen local exploitation films as well as new imported films with loads of sexual and sadistic scenes.

The phenomenon of the “Cultural Fence” concept and other policies related to traveling cinema shows is, I argue, the response of the government toward the global flows of foreign values and cultures embedded in the imported international exploitation movies circulated in the country, as the New Order were worried that those films would affect the rural audiences.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the exportation of local trashy films, how they initially, globally and officially traveled and what kinds of impact occurred related to the 2000s rediscovery of classic Indonesian exploitation movies.

Chapter 3:

Prokjatap Prosar and Other Film Exportations:

On Global Distribution of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Movies

As discussed in Chapter 1, the New Order officially, and contradictorily, produced policies that paved the way for domestic exploitation films; the kind of films that they were essentially trying to eradicate. In this chapter, I will continue to discuss the New Order's paradoxical policies and their impact on domestic exploitation films through different aspects, particularly global distribution. Specifically, I will discuss film exportation department run by the New Order's official organization, *Kelompok Kerja Tetap Promosi dan Pemasaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri*, (henceforth Prokjatap Prosar) or The Permanent Working Committee for the Promotion and Marketing of Indonesia Films Abroad. Prokjatap Prosar was founded in 1981 by the DFN (Dewan Film Nasional, or National Film Council) under the supervision of the Department of Information, and disbanded in 1983.

This official body had succeeded in selling exploitation films at some film festivals such as Cannes and Berlinale (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 98-99; Barker 2014). Starting in 1982, the New Order Government, through Prokjatap Prosar, officially promoted some films, both those suitable with their politics of tastes as well as exploitation films, to international film festivals as well as film markets (Barker 2014, 12). As I will elaborate upon shortly, often it was found that the B-grade movies were more successful at penetrating the international markets than other films.

I will analyze how and why the New Order, through Prokjatap Prosar, not only promoted but directly marketed exploitation films, which were judged as notorious and not commonly considered as the official version of *film nasional* (as discussed in Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu: 1992, 57; Said 1991, 6; Barker 2010, 9. Also see Introduction and Chapter One); I will also argue that this institution started and inspired the circulation of Indonesian transnational exploitation films both in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.

This chapter will also investigate how and why the government and cultural elites paradoxically exported exploitation films, and how this attempt became the gateway for the recirculation of the films in the 2000s and beyond. I also want to interrogate the significance of Prokjatap Prosar related to the post-1983 exportation of exploitation films abroad as well as redistribution of the classic exploitation films in the 2000s.

In order to answer these questions, I will discuss the attempts and practices of film exportation before Prokjatap Prosar. In doing so, I can compare and contrast the actions of Prokjatap Prosar with the practices of other forms of film exportation and will highlight the importance of this official body and at the same time underline the contradictions of the New Order's policies as well as the cultural elites' politics of taste towards film exportation. In the last subchapter, I will analyze the impact of this official body towards other attempts of film exportation, particularly during the 1990s.

It is important to note that I have not found any scholarly articles discussing the subject, except for a few descriptive paragraphs in "Exploiting Indonesia: From *Primitives* to *Outraged Fugitives*" (Barker 2014, 12). However, a member of the Prokjatap Prosar delegate, and important figure in the DFN, Rosihan Anwar, wrote a few long articles about this organization, which I have quoted

from extensively in this chapter (Anwar 1989; Anwar 1994). Additionally, there is a journalistic article by the film historian and Director of Sinematek Indonesia SM Ardan which originally was published in the 1998 Indonesian Film Festival handbook. (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu: 1992, 96-97). In conclusion, the discussion is quite new in the discourses of Indonesian cinema studies and this chapter is one of the first scholarly attempts to discuss it.

To support my argument, besides using the aforementioned articles, I will also analyze the coverage provided by national newspapers and magazines, as well as trade papers, and how they included strong criticism of the institution. In addition, some of the exportation-related decrees will be analyzed.

Pre-1982 Film Exportation

Before further discussion on the practices of film exportation before 1982, I need to elaborate upon the policies of the New Order regarding this matter. By doing so, the important roles of Prokjetap Prosar will be clearly explained.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the New Order controlled all aspects of filmmaking in Indonesia. This included film exportation and public film screenings overseas.⁹³ For a more

⁹³ I will exclude the cases of public screenings abroad since they were not directly related to film exportation and exploitation movies. But it is worth highlighting that the New Order also controlled any kind of public film screenings overseas. This kind of exhibition was organized through Indonesian Embassies (and the Head of Information Services of the Embassy acted as a coordinator and supervisor of the event) and other Indonesian representatives abroad; this applied to film festivals, film weeks, Cineclubs or any educational institutions. (“Peredaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri Tanpa Seizin Deppen”; Anwar 1989, 34). Some policies were also issued on this matter. For example, in relation to a series of Film Week organized by representatives of diplomatic, consular and trade, the Department of Foreign Affairs issued a circular letter dated 27 February 1967, stating that the committee should send a 2-week notice letter to the Department of Foreign Affairs (Biro Hukum n.D 415). In relation to the participation of Indonesian films in international film festivals and film weeks, the Department of Information issued a ministerial decree no. 12A/1973, underlining that the films should be selected by an assessor committee appointed by the Department of Information and the films should get a permission/approval letter from the Department of Information by sending an official letter to the Ministry through the *Pengurus Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia* (committee of Association for Indonesian Film Companies, PPFi) (Biro Hukum N.d , 409).

general exportation, the Minister of Trade, Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, issued decree no. 46/1968 on *Angka Pengenal Ekspor* (Export Identification Number, APE), stating that:

Prospective export companies must apply to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade c.q. Export Directorate, through the representative of the Trade Department or one of the Directorate of Export's Branches and must be recommended by the Indonesian Association of Export Company (*Gabungan Perusahaan Ekspor Indonesia*, GPEI), and later on the Directorate of Export can grant or deny the request. (Biro Hukum n.D, 206, my translation)

Related to film exportation, the Ministerial Decree no. 47 from 1974 was issued by the Department of Trade and the Department of Information, and clearly stated that “every national-produced film that will be exported overseas must be acknowledged and recommended by the department of information”, and the companies “should be a national incorporated companies that meet the provisions for dealing in export issued respectively by the Department of Trade and Department of Information”. (Biro Hukum: n.D, 264). Additionally, the Ministry of Information in 1979 issued a ministerial decree no. 189 A, stating that the films shown both in domestic and international screenings should be in accordance with the *Pancasila* philosophy, government policies, and the values of national identity (“*tata nilai kepribadian bangsa*”), and that the Government has the right to disapprove the films to be exported. (Indonesia, 1979).

With the aforementioned policies applied, film companies and representatives of the Indonesian government overseas ran some of the state-controlled film exportations.

Related to film exportation during this era, the practices were mostly undertaken by non-governmental bodies. In order to export films, commonly, the producers dealt directly with their business partners and colleagues. As noted by Rosihan Anwar, in the mid-1970s, many Indonesian

films were screened in Malaysia and Singapore due to the cognate language.⁹⁴ During this period, the Indonesian film producers dealt directly with Malaysian and Singaporean distributors (Anwar 1989, 33); thus, “it is difficult to learn the actual number of films that have been marketed abroad [and] what kind of films are favored”. (Anwar 1989, 33).

In the 1970s, for instance, there were some foreign parties involved in financing the films in order to get the rights to distribute and exhibit at the Galaxy Theater, Singapore. In 1972 the distributors came to Indonesia and watched many films and decided to buy some of them. And in the same year some local producers decided to make joint productions, since the Indonesian movie stars were not popular abroad, and it was easier and more marketable to distribute the films with foreign business partners in their respective home countries. (“Benarkah Joint Bisa Menembus Pasaran Film Nasional di Luar Negeri?”). In 1972, as reported by *Kompas Daily* (4 August 1972), an Indonesian movie, *Pengantin Remadja* (*Teen Bride*, Wim Umboh 1971) was screened at Chalerm Thai in Bangkok.

In the same year, some local producers decided to enter into joint productions with transnational film companies. Confirming this trend, the Director of Film Directorate Djohardin said, in 1972, that joint-production is merely tactic, because Indonesian movie stars were not recognized globally. And since, eventually, the films would be distributed in the foreign partners’ respective countries. But Djohardin also highlights the fact that there were some cultural sacrifices

⁹⁴In the 1970s, there were some Indonesian films being exported to Singapore that were banned by the Singaporean censorship board, due to the content of the films being deemed “too pornographic, uneducative, and sadistic” (“MMPI Perkuat Usul DFN pada MPR 1983-1988”: “Sangat Mendesak, UU Film Berazaskan Kultural Edukatif”) In 1972, it was reported that a movie *Jang Djatuh Di Tangan Lelaki* (*Falling at Men’s Feet*) was heavily censored because it was “too lesbian, sadistic, and nasty” (“Film “Jang Djatuh Di Tangan Lelaki” disensor di Singapura karena terlalu “Lesbian,sadis, tjabul”).

(“*pengorbanan kulturil*”), because foreign parties would try to insert their own cultures and values in these films. (“Benarkah Joint Bisa Menembus Pasaran Film Nasional di Luar Negeri?”)

The case of *Primitif* (*Primitive*, Sisworo Gautama, 1978) in 1979 is considered as the first and best example of the exported exploitation film from Indonesia, and the only film ever sold in the European and American film market before 1982 (“Next: Manila: Does It Fare Well?”). The film was sold in the 1979 Cannes Film Festival through an Italian distributor, SBO. The distributor seemed to hide the fact that *Primitif* was an Indonesian film, which was the main reason why *Primitif* was bought, otherwise, if the film was promoted as an Indonesian film, nobody would buy it (Tryanto, 1982b; “Pemasaran Film Indonesia di Eropa”).⁹⁵

Despite the attempts of pre-Prokjatap Prosar film exportation, I will argue that above sporadic movements did not have significant impact, in comparison to the works of Prokjatap Prosar. However, the case of *Primitif* is exceptional, since it was the first successful story of film exporting exploitation movies. In addition to the importance of the film organization, Prokjatap Prosar also had a direct impact and influence on film exportation in the late 1980s and during the 1990s, which I will discuss at the end of this chapter.

Below, I will provide an overview and analyze the significance of the organization in regards to the transnationalization of classic exploitation Indonesian films. I will also demonstrate that Djohardin’s pragmatic statement (above) was also carried out formally by a state institution, with some “cultural sacrifices” as a consequence.

⁹⁵ *Primitif* was also screened in a West German TV station in during 1979 and 1980. (“Pemasaran Film Indonesia di Eropa”).

The Significance of Prokjatap Prosar

On 5 December 1981, Prokjatap Prosar was founded and consisted of film producers, cultural elites, and officials from the Ministry of Information (Anwar 1984, 128), And was chaired by H Baginda Siregar⁹⁶, a member of the DFN, with Rosihan Anwar as the vice chairperson.⁹⁷ In total, this official body got 125 transactions or US\$ 737,800 within one and a half years. (Anwar 1989, 41; Anwar 1984, 128.). Anwar wrote that “the time has come for the marketing and promotion of Indonesian film abroad through both film fairs and international film festivals”, and that Prokjatap Prosar was “the sole entity for the marketing and promotion of Indonesian films worldwide” (Anwar 1989, 34).⁹⁸

Prokjatap Prosar’s first attempt of film marketing was at the Manila International Film Festival, 1982. Among them there were some producers, such as Rapi Film’s Gope Samtani who was also a member of Prokjatap Prosar, and Parkit Films’ Raam Punjabi (“Bursa Film Pada Festival Manila Mulai Lesu”) (“Dalam Festival Manila: Film Indonesia Berhasil Merebut Simpati”).

They brought five films for the exhibition section and seven films to the film trade section selected by a curatorial team appointed by the Ministry of Information. (“Sepuluh Film ke Manila”).⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Baginda Siregar was also the chairperson of subtitlers’ union (GASI) from it’s creation (1971) until he passed away in 1996. See “Baginda Siregar”.

⁹⁷ Other members included producer L.J.N Hoffman as the secretary, and Djohardin, Narto Erawan, Gope Samtani as members. (Anwar 1989, 34)

⁹⁸ This excluded Malaysian and Singaporean distribution which were still under the jurisdiction of PT Perfin.(Anwar 1989, 34; Anwar 1984, 128).

⁹⁹ The list was announced by Ibnu R Sawarna from the Film and Theater section of *Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia* (PWI, Indonesian Journalists' Association). (“10 Judul Film Akan Ikut ke Festival Manila”).

In the exhibition section, the titles included drama films directed by award-winning directors such as *Usia 18 (18 Years Old)*, Teguh Karya, 1980,), *Perempuan dalam Pasungan (Woman in Stocks)*, Soebardjo, 1980), *Seputih Hatinya Semerah Bibirnya (As Red of Lips as the Heart is White)*, Slamet Djarot, 1980,), and *Bukan Sandiwara (Not an Act)*, Sjumandjaya, 1980,). (Anwar 1989, 34).

In the film trade marketing section, they also sent similar drama films, including a war film *Janur Kuning (Yellow Coconut or the Battle of the Freedom of Yogyakarta)*, Surawidjaya, 1979), *Nila di Gaun Putih (Stain on a White Gown)*, Sandi Suwardi Hassan 1981), *Lembah Duka (Valley of Grief)*, Jopi Burnama, 1981), *Jangan Ambil Nyawaku (Don't Take My Life)*, Sophan Sophian, 1981), and *Bercanda dalam Duka (Jovial in Sadness)*, Ismail Soebardjo, 1981). Some of the films were locally popular mockbuster films, namely *Ira Maya Putri Cinderella (Ira Maya is Princess Cinderella)*, Willy Wilianto, 1980) and *Manusia Enam Juta Dollar (Indonesia's comedy version of The Six Million Dollar Man)*, Ali Shahab, 1981). They also brought exploitation films, such as *Pengabdil Setan (Satan's Slave)*, Sisworo Gautama, 1980), *Srigala (Jackal or Hyena)*, Sisworo Gautama, 1981), *Aladin dan Lampu Wasiat (Aladin and the Magic Lamp)*, Sisworo Gautama, 1980), and *Primitif*. (“10 Judul Film Akan Ikut ke Festival Manila”; Anwar 1989, 34).

The exercise resulted in only four films being sold or rented, namely *The Queen of Black Magic*, *Lima Cewek Jagoan (Five Deadly Angels)*, Danu Umbara, 1980), *Primitif*, and *The Battle of the Freedom of Yogyakarta*. Except for the last title, all were exploitation films (See Table 1). Anwar highlights:

“Films (that had been) at the high demand at the trade section were dominated by the elements of fantasy, adventure, action, and violence. The films with more dramatic themes were not well received, even those of high quality”. (Anwar 1989, 34)

Some of the films were dubbed into English, the title changed into English and attached with English promotional materials. The buyers bought the films because mystics and Asian horror films were considered as new themes. (“Tiga Film Indonesia Terjual di Pasaran MIFF 82 Philiphina”)

**Table 1: Works of *Prokjatap Prosar* at
Manila International Film Festival, January 1982**

No.	Title	Area of distribution	Transaction
1	<i>The Queen of Black Magic</i>	Worldwide distribution rights to Spectaculler (Rome) for 7 years	US\$ 27,000
2	<i>Five Deadly Angels</i>	German distribution rights for 7 years	DM 41,000
3	<i>Primitive</i>	Taiwan distribution rights for 7 years	US\$ 5,000
4	<i>Janur Kuning (The Battle of the Freedom of Yogyakarta)</i> , Philippine distribution rights for 7 years,	Philippine distribution rights for 7 years	US\$5,000

(Source: Anwar 1989)

The second effort was made at the 32nd Berlin International Film Festival in February 1982. Here, the Indonesian government rented a space to promote and sell films. Learning from the first attempt, they organized to have a press conference chaired by Eichenberger, a Swiss reporter, with Rosihan Anwar, actress Christine Hakim, director Slamet Djarot and Edward Pesta Sirait, and Djohardin from the Ministry of Information. There, Anwar declared an important statement: “We have come to Berlin International Film Festival to put Indonesia on the international cinema map”.

(Anwar 1989, 36). There were 26 people in the delegate headed by the DFN's Chief Executive Asrul Sani ("Indon Delegation to Berlin Film Fest").¹⁰⁰

At the Berlin International Film Festival they brought 10 films for the information section (*Info-Schau*); such as *Lewat Jam Malam (After the Curfew)*, Usmar Ismail, 1954), *Matjan Kemajoran (The Tiger of Kemajoran)*, Wim Umboh, 1965), *Yuyun Pasien Rumah Sakit Jiwa (Yuyun, a Mental Hospital Patient)*, Arifin C Noer, 1979), *Anak-Anak Buangan (Outcasted Children)*, Ismail Soebardjo, 1979), *November 1828* (Teguh Karya, 1978), and *As White as Her Heart*. ("Indonesia dalam FI Berlin"). They also submitted three films for the competition section (*Konkurrenz*)-- namely *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan (The Independence Pioneers)*, Asrul Sani, 1977), *Year 18*, and *Woman in Stock*-- which failed to pass the selection process (Anwar 1989, 35). In the marketing section, once again, they tried to sell drama films or films directed by national award-winning directors such as *Buah Hati Mama (A Mother's Baby)*, Sophan Sophian, 1980), *Ranjang Pengantin (Bridegroom's Bed)*, Teguh Karya, 1974), *Di sini Cinta Pertama Kali Bersemi (Here is Where Love Blossoms for the First Time)*, Wim Umboh, 1980), *Rembulan dan Matahari (The Moon and The Sun)*, Slamet Djarot, 1979), *Dr. Karmila* (Nico Pelamonia, 1981), *Kabut Sutra Ungu (The Mist of Purple Silk)*, Syumandjaya, 1979), and *Karmila* (Ami Prijono, 1974). They also marketed children's films such as *Chicha* (Eduard P Sirait, 1976). Additionally they brought exploitation movies, such as *Mistik (Punahnya Rahasia Ilmu Iblis Leak)* (globally known as *Mystics in Bali*, Tjut Djalil, 1981), *Queen of Black Magic*, and *Penangkal Ilmu Teluh (Antidote for Witchcrafts)*, SA Karim, 1979). ("Indonesia dalam FI Berlin").

¹⁰⁰ The report also states that, at the same festival a year before, Indonesia took part in the information section ("Indon Delegation to Berlin Film Fest")

Overall, they gained seven transactions for six feature films (Anwar 1989, 3-4), namely, *Primitive*, *Five Deadline Angels*, *Lima Cewek Jagoan Beraksi Kembali* (*Five Deadly Angels Strike Back*, *Danu Umbara*, 1981), *Hyena*, *The Battle for the Freedom of Jogjakarta*, *As White as Her Heart*, and *Woman in Stocks*. (“Indonesia dalam FFI di Berlin”; Anwar 1989, 34, also see Table 2 below). The first four titles were exploitation movies. Anwar claims that, according to the *INP* (West Germany news agency) and *The Indonesian Observer* (2 April 1982), the exhibition of the "Indonesian Film Panorama" was one of the major highlights of the Berlinale that year. (Anwar 1989, 36).

**Table 2: The Works of Prokjetap Prosar at
32nd Berlin International Film Festival, February 1982**

No.	Title	Area of distribution	Transaction
1	<i>Primitives</i>	bought by Nederlandse Krijgsmacht (Army) for Holland distribution,	US\$5,000
2	<i>Five Deadly Angels</i>	Holland dan Belgium distribution,	US\$5,000
3	<i>Five Deadly Angels Strike Back</i> ,	German-speaking region	US\$5,000
4	<i>Serigala</i> (Hyena/Jackal)	German-speaking region	US\$5,000
5	<i>The Battle for the Freedom of Yogyakarta</i> ,	German-speaking region	DM 30,000
6	<i>Seputih Hatinya, Semerah Bibirnya</i> (As white as her heart, as red as her lips)	sold for Manfred Durniok, for German-speaking region	DM 25,000
7	<i>Perempuan dalam Pasungan</i> ¹⁰¹ (<i>Woman in Stocks</i>)	sold for Manfred Durniok, for German-speaking region	n/a

¹⁰¹ This film and *18 Years Old* were later broadcasted on West Germany television (Anwar 1989).

(Source: Anwar 1989)¹⁰²

The third plan was to go to the Cannes Film Festival in May 1982. There, the numbers of sales increased. All nine films were exploitation films, namely *Jaka Sembung* (globally known as the *Warrior*, Sisworo Gautama, 1981), *Five Deadly Angels*, *Satan's Slave*, *Hyena*, *Membakar Matahari (To Burn the Sun)* Gundala Putra Petir (*Gundala the Son of Lighting*, Lilik Sudjio, 1981), *Si Bongkok (the Hunchback)*, Liliek Sudjio 1972), and *Five Deadly Angels Strike Back* (See Table 3).

Table 3:
Works of Prokjatap Prosar at Cannes Film Festival, May 1982

No.	Title	Area of distribution
1	<i>The Warrior</i>	West Indies, Pakistan, Belgium, West Germany, Mexico, Holland, Spain
2	<i>To Burn the Sun</i>	West Indies, Pakistan, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy, Kuwait
3	<i>Five Deadly Angels</i>	West Indies, Pakistan, Mexico, Spain, Italy, Kuwait.
4	<i>Satan's Slave</i>	Spain
5	<i>Hyena/Jackal</i>	Spain
6	<i>Aladdin</i>	Spain
7	<i>Si Bongkok (the Hunchback)</i>	Spain

¹⁰² The last four films are not exploitation movies.

8	<i>Gundala Putra Petir</i> (<i>Gundala the Son of Lighting</i>)	Pakistan
9	<i>Five Deadly Angels Strike Back</i>	Italy

(Source: Anwar 1989, 36)

The next film festival and market was the MIFED (Mercato Internazionale Del Film Del TV & Del Documentario) in Milan in October 1982. Here, they successfully managed 31 transactions for 13 films, mostly “action and “mystic” films”, including *Perhitungan Terakhir* (globally known as *Final Score*, Danu Umbara, 1982), *Pasukan Berani Mati* (globally known as *Hell Raiders*, Imam Tantowi, 1982), *Primitive*, *Five Deadly Angels*, *Five Deadly Angels Strike Back*, *Membakar Matahari* (*To Burn the Sun*, also known as *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighter 2*, Arizal, 1981), *Perempuan Bergairah* (globally known as *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighter*, Jopi Burnama, 1982), *Jaka Sembung*, *Ratu Laut Selatan* (*Queen of the South Sea*), and *Nyi Blorong* (*Snake Queen*, Sisworo Gautama, 1982) (See Table 3 below). In total, *Prosar* earned US\$185,650 from their transactions (Anwar 1989, 38).

Table 4:
MIFED (Mercato Internazionale Del Film Del TV Del Documentario)
in Milan, October 1982

No.	Title	Area of distribution
1	<i>Final Score</i>	West Indies, West Germany, France, the Middle-East, Yugoslavia, Columbia, Malta
2	<i>Hell Raiders</i>	West Indies, West Germany, France, Belgium, Middle-East, The Philippines, Columbia,
3	<i>Nyi Blorong</i> (Snake Queen),	n/a

4	<i>Primitive,</i>	n/a
5	<i>Five Deadly Angels</i>	n/a
6	<i>Five Deadly Angels Strike Back</i>	n/a
7	<i>Ferocious Female Freedom Fighter</i>	n/a
8	<i>To Burn the Sun</i>	n/a
9	<i>The Warrior</i>	n/a
10	<i>Ratu Laut Selatan (Queen of the South Sea)</i>	n/a

(Source: Anwar 1989)¹⁰³

To summarise, in 1982 alone, *Prokjatap Prosar* made 31 transactions in MIFED, 27 in Cannes, nine in Berlin, and seven in Manila (Anwar 1989, 39). After that, the delegate went to African countries to seek opportunities, but the opportunities were very limited due to the tastes of African countries which were Western-Europe oriented (Anwar 1989, 39).¹⁰⁴

In 1983, their first destination was the 32nd Berlinale International Film Festival. Indonesia, once again, failed to qualify for the competition section;¹⁰⁵ however, they did manage to obtain 16 contracts, which meant they doubled last year's figures. Most of them were, again, action,

¹⁰³ The table only consists of exploitation films. Other films sold in this event include *Dr. Siti Pertiwi Kembali ke Desa* (*Doctor Siti Pertiwi Returns to the Village*, Ami Priyono, 1979), *Jovial in Tears* and *Aladin*.

¹⁰⁴ But it is noted that in the 1970s there were a successful Indonesian films circulated within African countries due to its magical/mystical elements. According to the Indonesian Embassy in Lagos (Nigeria), the film was *Pendekar Tujuh Sumur* (*Warrior of the Seven Wells*), dubbed into English and exported from Hong Kong. However, I did not find enough information and data about this matter.

¹⁰⁵ The films were Sjumana Djaya's *RA Kartini* and Arifin C Noer's *the Dawn/Serangan Fajar*. Regarding this matter, Moritz de Holden (the Film Festival Director) stated: "Kartini is a good film were it not for the fact that it is too long, it could have been entered into competition. So that the film may be seen by the people here, it has been moved to the information section" (Anwar 1989, 39).

adventure, and legend films and this time, they got new buyers from West Africa (Namibia), Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Australia.

When the Prosar delegate went to Cannes in May 1983, again, an Indonesian film was rejected by the selection committee.¹⁰⁶ But they did succeed in making 31 transactions in the film market.

And, again, mostly they were action, horror, and mystic films. Anwar testifies:

Evident from the list of the films sold is that most of transactions were for action or “mystic” films. Apparently, foreign purchasers did not appreciate Indonesia’s more dramatic films. Nevertheless, customers did say that Indonesia had tremendous progress in its films, especially in the use of special effect, and that Indonesian films were now much closer to international taste (Anwar 1989, 37).

After the 1983 Cannes Film Festival, the Minister of Information, Ali Murtopo, was replaced by Harmoko. The new minister initiated some changes in some policies, including disbanding the *Prokjabat Prosar*. The institution only ran for one and a half years out of the 3 years of its original assigned duty period. (Anwar 1989, 41).

Sharp Criticism and Official Justification

There were varied reactions to *Prokjabat Prosar* ‘success story’. Here, I want to highlight some of the sharp criticisms made in this regard and Prokjabat Prosar’s responses to them. Firstly, concerning the changing of original titles, as well as names of actors and directors into more

¹⁰⁶ Teguh Karya’s *Di Balik Kelambu (Behind the Mosquito’s Net)* (Anwar 1989, 40).

“foreign” or “western” sounding names, such as using Sam Gardner for director Sisworo Gautama Putra, W.D. Manner for W.D. Mochtar, and Dick Alexander for Dicky Zulkarnaen, and Donna Christine for Dana Christina. (Barker 2014, 14; “Di Balik Sukses di Cannes”). For this matter, Anwar argues that “...this was merely a marketing technique to attract potential customers and that in the credits and titles of the films the Indonesian names were retained”. (Anwar 1989, 37).

Another concern was the reworking of the films, particularly the dubbing, in relation to the “Indonesia-ness”. Tony Tryanto, a film journalist, evaluating the works of Prokjatap Prosar in Manila, shares the same argument:

Should we dub the films in order to get wider potential buyers? If so, there is a tendency that Indonesian films will be considered as movies from other Southeast Asian countries. But for this early stage, it does not matter. In time, if the identity of Indonesian films are strong and more popular, nobody will be mistaking Indonesian films with other countries. As long as the dubbing is appropriate and sticks to the stories, it does not matter. (Tryanto, 1982a, 7, my translation).

Other criticism concern the fact that the films sold by Prokjatap Prosar were not considered as representative of Indonesian cultures (Anwar 1984, 128), they were merely B-movies with “themes of violence, action, and sex which degraded Indonesia’s images abroad” (Anwar 1989 37). Some film journalists wrote that “selling such films abroad was sure to be detrimental to Indonesia’s image”. Anwar agreed by saying that this matter was “not arguable”. Actually, the films sold internationally by Prokjatap Prosar were simply the opposite of the cultural elites’ concept of *film nasional*, *film kultural edukatif*, with their attempt to search for the faces of

Indonesia, as discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1. And, Rosihan Anwar, as one of the cultural elites, was one of the pivotal figures behind this organization.

Rosihan Anwar's arguments were similar to Djohardin's pragmatism in the 1970s. Anwar underlines that:

..Of first importance was to make Indonesia's name known as a film producer, much in the way that Hong Kong found a place for itself on the international film map through a promotion of its kung fu films. Later, after Indonesia had acquired a name, it would be in much better position to market higher quality films. (Anwar 1989, 37)

On the other hand, considering the various types of films that Prokjabat Prosar had offered, I can argue that the government had failed to promote films with *kultural edukatif* elements and the "face of Indonesian culture", both in the competition section and marketing sections of the international film festivals. In response to this issue, Anwar still thinks that these kinds of films should be marketed more. He writes:

What the critics did not offer, however, was an answer to whether Indonesian film makers were capable of producing marketable high-quality films. One suspects that the answer is that such capability remains limited (Anwar 1989, 37)

In conclusion, these kinds of pragmatic acts failed to promote "ideal Indonesian films", since no single film was selected in the competition section and only a few were sold in the film market. On the other hand, this official organization successfully sold domestic exploitation films to some foreign buyers in the international film market, and directly induced the transnational dissemination of the films in the 1980s, and also indirectly in the 1990s and 2000s.

The Global Influence of Prokjatap Prosar

Although Prokjatap Prosar only ran for one and a half years, it influenced other attempts of film exportation particularly in the late 1980s and during the 1990s. Rosihan Anwar claimed that:

One thing that cannot be argued, however, is the importance of the business and contracts that were made. These contracts form the basis for further growth in film marketing opportunities in the future (Anwar 1989, 39)

I argue that this statement is an official statement confirming that the phenomena of film exportation in the near future began with Prokjatap Prosar. A journalistic report confirms this statement, (“Peredaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri Tanpa Seizin Deppen”): in that through *Prokjatap Prosar* some producers, who came along with the committee, such as Raam Punjabi dan Gope Samtani (“Bursa Film Pada Festival Manila Mulai Lesu”), learned how to deal with film markets, to understand the global demands and tastes, and how to sell their own films to potential buyers. And starting in 1985, both Parkit Films and Rapi Films producers went to international film markets (“Bintang Asing Jago Kungfu”), including Milan, Cannes, Berlinale, and Los Angeles (Endah 2005, 174; Anwar 1989, 40).

For example, Gope Samtani told *Sinar Harapan* daily (30/1 1982) that he learned so much, and evaluated that: “No synopsis in English, no trailers, no material publication in video cassette. No wonder nobody came to the Indonesian stand.” (“Dalam Festival Manila: Film Indonesia Berhasil Merebut Simpati”, my translation). A report described that the producers acted “...like [they were] hawking merchandise on the sidewalk while inviting people to buy” (“Tiga Film Indonesia Terjual di Pasaran MIFF 82 Philipina”).

Additionally, Samtani also highlighted that Indonesian producers should adjust the films to international film markets, which favored were horror, action, and adventure films (“Dalam Festival Manila: Film Indonesia Berhasil Merebut”). In one of their first experiences, both Samtani and Punjabi, along with producer L.J.N Hoffman and actress Debby Cynthia Dewi (who was dressed in traditional Balinese clothing) took turns working at the desk and talking to prospective buyers in Berlinale 1982 (Anwar, 1989, 35-36).

For Raam Punjabi, this kind of journey was necessary to gain access to a wider global market and adjust his film production to be more suitable with international audiences (including using the Caucasian actors). And one of Punjabi’s attempts was a co-production: starting with Troma Entertainment in 1987,¹⁰⁷ he co-produced *Peluru dan Wanita* (globally known as *Jakarta (Triangle Invasion)*) directed by Charles Kauffman (the brother of Lloyd Kauffman), starring Chris North (later to become the star of the TV series *Law And Order: Criminal Intent* and *Sex and the City*) and Sue Frances Pai or Suzee Pai (who later starred in *Big Trouble in Little China*) (Endah 2005; Barker 2014, 18-19)

As mentioned above, right after the organization was dismissed, the producers tried to find ways to individually target international markets by both promoting the films in film markets and through other efforts. Based on their experiences of gaining an understanding of the global tastes they tried to make the films more suitable for global film market. Therefore, the producers decided to use three tactics: the daring attempts of the producers to export their own films without any official censorship process,¹⁰⁸ entering into joint-productions as they had done in the 1970s, and the using foreign actors.

¹⁰⁷ I will discuss Troma Entertainment in Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁸ The regions include USA, India, and Japan (“Peredaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri Tanpa Seizin Deppen”).

Related to the first tactic, *Berita Buana* Daily, on 8 August 1989, stated that the films exported abroad, particularly PRLS (*Lady Terminator*)¹⁰⁹ and other joint-production films, did not get the certification of *Surat Tanda Lulus Sensor* (certificate of Censorship) and the *Surat Izin Ekspor* (Export License). As a result, there were some uncensored Indonesian films circulating abroad, including in film markets. *Berita Buana* daily wrote that the “sanctions are not clear and firm”. And that the “Government cannot totally supervise the film production if all of the film productions are not fully made and held in Indonesia” (Martha, 1989). In a similar tone, *Barata* weekly underlined that more Indonesian films got circulated abroad, particularly in Japan, US, and India, but without any export licenses from the Ministry of Information. *Berita Buana* stated that the main reason for the phenomenon was “the lack of policies related to joint-production, print and copies from the Ministry of Information” (Jauhari, 1989). I argue that the producers followed in the footsteps of the 1970s by directly dealing with exportation with more knowledge of global tastes and demand.

For Salim Said (the Social Culture Department’s secretary of DFN, and the chairperson of the Foreign Affairs section at FFI’s Permanent Committee), this kind of slackness in the films policies was misused by the producers by making films that were damaging the reputation of the nation abroad. Said, quoted by Rosihan Anwar, stated that since 1988 the film council was investigating the phenomenon of “The practices of making indecent films and distributing them to overseas indecently” (Jauhari 1989, my translation). Salim, in the same article, stated that:

¹⁰⁹For the case of *Lady Terminator*, as well as *Intruder*, the producers had two versions: the one for international release (usually with the foreign actors), and the other one was for domestic releases. (Barker 2014, 15-16). I will discuss *Lady Terminator* in Chapter 6.

I do not understand and do not consider funny: why a film that has been withdrawn can be circulated in the market. I should have asked: what's behind all this? Why is the film that should not be circulated get out? Cheesy films have mushroomed and caused mental damage. To reduce it, the government should widen the social-problems-related film production licenses. (Jauhari 1989,my translation).

Said proposed two solutions: to encourage producers to make more *film kultural edukatif*, as mentioned above, and to build film labs that allow all the processes to be done in Indonesia so that the Government can control the whole process (Jauhari 1989; “Sensor Film Baru Membingungkan”). A news report also stated that the discourses on the importance of domestic film labs had been discussed since 1978 (“Sensor Film Baru Membingungkan”).

Additionally, unlike Prokjatap Prosar, in the post-Pro Prosar era, the producers went to film markets with their own determination and agenda without any intervention from the Government or the cultural elites. Therefore it was not impossible for them to export uncensored versions of the films.

As mentioned above, the government could not totally control the process of production because the films were joint-productions and some of the processes were done in their partners’ countries. Some such films included: *Dangerous Seductress (Bercinta dengan Maut*, Tjut Djalil, 1992) and *Bidadari Berambut Emas (Lady Dragon 2*, Ackyl Anwari, 1992) (“Film Bidadari Berambut Emas terobos Pasaran Internasional”). Other titles included exploitation films such as *Harga Sebuah Kejujuran* (globally known as *Java Burn/Diamond Run*, Deddy Arman & Robert Chapell, 1988), *Dendam Membara (Final Score*, Arizal 1986), and *Jaringan Terlarang (Forceful Impact*, Ackyl Anwari 1988). (Barker 2014, 8-9)

Another reason for endorsing the emerging attempts at joint-productions was because of the Ministerial Decree 151/Menpen/1988, which highlighted that any joint-production film can compete at FFI (Gintini 1993, 75).

Lastly, in order to appeal to international tastes, they used foreign actors (such as Billy Draco, Cindy¹¹⁰ Rothrock¹¹¹) and directors (such as Guy Norris) in these films (“Film Bidadari Berambut emas terobos Pasaran Internasional”; “Bintang Asing Jago Kungfu dalam “Pertempuran Segitiga””; Gintini 1993, 75-76).¹¹² Many of the foreign actors hired for the leading roles were Caucasian non-actors, in some cases they were just tourists such as Ilona Agathe Bastian and Peter O’Brian (Barker 2014, 15; Endah 2005, 175). In other cases Indonesian producers recruited Western actors who were filming in the Hong Kong film industry, such as Mike Abbott and Cynthia Rothrock (Barker 2014, 16).¹¹³

In short, co-production and hiring foreign actors were ways to penetrate the international film market and were utilized both before and after *Prokjatap Prosar* (“Bintang Asing Jago Kungfu dalam “Pertempuran Segitiga””). Additionally, the producers acted very boldly by exporting the films without any official censorship process. I argue that all these actions were learned by the producers from “the apprenticeship process” and the transferring of knowledge about film markets through *Prokjatap Prosar*.

¹¹⁰ Cynthia Rothrock was very famous in Indonesia at that time, particularly because of the film *Black Protector*. There are variations of the name she used: sometimes Cindy or Cynthia, as well as Rothrock or Rotherock.

¹¹¹ Rothrock’s third film after *Pertempuran Segitiga (Angel of Fury/Triple Cross, 1990)* and *Tiada Titik Balik (Lady Dragon, 1992)*, (“Film Bidadari Berambut emas terobos Pasaran Internasional”).

¹¹² Film scholar Thomas Barker even argues that these kinds of processes had paved the way for foreign actors, such as Christopher North (who played Detective Mike Logan in *Law & Order: Criminal Intent (2005-2008)* and Mr Big in *Sex and the City In (1998-2004)*), and Chris Mitchum to develop their career (Barker 2014, 19).

¹¹³ Please see the list of foreign actors in Indonesian exploitation cinema in this thesis.

There was another decree related to film export introduced in the late 1980s and through this Ministerial Decree no 120/1989, the New Order reinforced the previous policies on censorship. The Decree included similar statements with Ministerial Decree 151/1988, but with more details on Censorship Guidelines and Procedures of the Film Censorship Board and contained a regulation to explicitly exclude “excessive sadistic scenes, scenes focusing solely sex, kissing scenes either homosexual or heterosexual, sex scenes (sight, sound, motion), and movements of masturbation, lesbian, gay, oral sex, and the impression of disgust, slovenly, and unethical”. Additionally, particularly for the films being exported overseas, there were some other rules, including the prohibition to counterfeit STLS authorization, reconnect the censored tapes and increase/decrease/change the titles that are already listed in STLS, and installing promotions that do not comply with the BSF.

But it seems like the unlawful practices still occurred, and *Neraca* published an article titled “New Censorship Law is disconcerting” (Indonesia: 1989; “Sensor Film Baru Membingungkan”)

Conclusion

Apparently, exploitation movies were the ones that fitted in with the politics of taste of international distributors (Tombs 1997). Pete Tombs summarizes:

“Doing the rounds in the festivals in 1982, they found out that what foreign buyers wanted were the sexy, violent exploiters that were being so strongly criticized back home. While the serious art films that were also part of the package may have been politely received, no one wanted to buy them” (Tombs 1997, 68).

Although the New Order and its cultural elites had their own ideology and politics of taste towards the concept of national cinema, they could not compete with the politics of taste of the global

buyers. Therefore, during the process, they made pragmatic adjustments in their vision and mission. In consequence, the government, through *Prokjabatap Prosar*, not only endorsed, but also became the official agent of the films that they were actually trying to police, avoid and eliminate.

I can conclude that, compared to the sporadic attempts undertaken by private and individual producers and distributors before 1982, and the limited number of the films they dealt with, *Prokjabatap Prosar*'s work was significant in disseminating a sizable quantity of B movies to the transnational film market circuits. The main reason is that both the Government and the cultural elites were behind this official body. This phenomenon is highlighted by Salim Said, who named this era as the "Trial and Error" period. (Said 1991, 93)

Additionally, although this official organization only lasted for one and a half years, I have identified that its works influenced the characteristics of film exportation in the early 1980s and the late 1990s. Firstly, it paved the way for the producers, who were included in the delegate, to understand the nature of international film markets and gave them experience of dealing with film markets and transnational film buyers. Secondly, the producers learned and understood the tastes and demands of global distributors and global fans, so they formulated new strategies of exploitation film production that interplayed with one to another: co-production with international film companies, exporting uncensored versions, and the use of foreign actors. With the lack of policies as well as no film body related to the matter in the 1990s, the producers were successful to exporting uncensored films.

Those films, both exported by *Prokjabatap Prosar* and beyond, would, in time, provide the introduction for global fans and bootleggers alike to recognize the materials and, therefore, these videos became the roots of the millennial global cult fandom and transnational distribution phenomenon.

Additionally, especially during the 2000s, transnational distributors such as Mondo Macabro, the Troma Team, and VideoAsia's "Tales of Voodoo" began to recirculate the films and rework the films by re-titling, re-dubbing, contextualizing the films through DVD's special features, and so forth, thus making them more appealing and more easily consumed by these foreign audiences. Both the classic VHS and the recent DVD markets have allowed the films to be appreciated and glorified by global fans.¹¹⁴

This chapter clearly highlights the initial efforts in deterritorializing the films in order to reach new kinds of markets by changing the titles and the names of the filmmakers and actors. In the next section I will demonstrate the similar attempts of reworking and repurposing, but instead of being controlled by the Indonesian government, these are carried out by transnational distributors.

¹¹⁴ I will discuss how the distributors in the 2000s reworked the films in the next section. I will also discuss fandom and spectatorship, particularly how global fans', as well as local spectators and media, absorbed the films, in the last section.

Section Two

**Cultural Traffic and International Film Mediation of
Indonesian Exploitation Films in the 2000s.**

Chapter 4

Tromatized: The Political Economy of Redubbing in Troma Team's Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters

See it two ways with:

- a) Tromatized, (intentionally) hilarious rewritten and rerecorded dialog
- b) Original (unintentionally) hilarious recorded dialog

DVD features the hilarious Tromatized post-synchronization by Charles “Mother’s Day” Kaufman (DVD front cover and back cover of *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters*, Troma Team, 2003)

While these classic Indonesian exploitation films found audiences overseas in the 1980s and early 1990s, and whereas current cult movies criticism particularly presented them as a positive process (Mendik & Sexton 2011; Mathijs & Mendik 2008; Mathijs & Mendik 2011), in this chapter I examine one of the first act of repurposing of the films by Troma Entertainment; in particular the redubbing of *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters* (*FFFF*, Jopi Burnama, 1982).¹¹⁵ I will explore how Troma Team detached the films from their original cultural context and celebrated their weirdness to make it more suitable for their cult followers, rather than to attempting to understand the films in their original context.

¹¹⁵ Original title: *Perempuan Bergairah* (*Passionate Woman*)

Previously, in the first three chapters, I have already discussed the origins of Indonesian transnational exploitation films in relation to original production, distribution, exportation, and exhibition. I have also briefly discussed the impact of Prokjatap Prosar in the early 1980s to the recirculation of the films in the 2000s, including producer Raam Punjabi's attempts to market his films and his dealings with Troma Entertainment.

As discussed in previous chapters, apparently, local exploitation movies produced from 1979 to 1995 were the films that fitted with the politics of taste and the demands of international distributors as well as the needs of global fans (Tombs 1997: 66). During the 2000s, transnational distributors such as Mondo Macabro, and VideoAsia's "Tales of Voodoo," began to re-circulate and rework the films by re-titling, redubbing and contextualizing the films through the special features that DVD technology offers. These reworks made these films more appealing and more easily consumed by foreign audiences. Both classic VHS and the more recent DVD markets are appreciated and glorified by global fans. This chapter will focus on Troma Entertainment and their reworking of *FFFF* in 1997, which I argue is the first attempt to market these kinds of films as cult movies.

This section, consisting of two chapters, will focus on film mediation, particularly on how transnational film distributors reworked the films. As John Fiske has argued, related to fandom and fans as a niche market, fandom "...selects from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives, or genres and takes them into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people" and selects the materials through discrimination and distinction. (Fiske 2008, 446-448) I argue that it is the economical politics of international distributors that do the selections, discriminations, and distinctions first before the fans perform those processes. Hence, international distributors do both feed, frame and position the global cult fans' tastes. This includes the effort of the DVD distributors to frame and label the films as "cult movies" or "Troma(tized) films".

Fiske also states that within the "repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives, or genres are "...reworked into an intensely pleasurable, intense signifying popular culture that is both similar to, yet significantly different from, the culture of more "normal' popular audiences" (Fiske 2008, 446-448, my emphasis). Fiske further underlines that fans *discriminate* and make *social distinctions* fiercely to frame and differentiate their own

tastes from others (ibid, my emphasis). The words “reworked”, “discriminate” and “social distinctions”, can be applied to analyse the marketing and branding strategy undertaken by international DVD distributors, as they aim both to feed and frame fans’ tastes (since most global fans only consume Indonesian films that are available on the circuits).

In addition, related to the repurpose of the DVD labels, Ramon Lobato states that “...The act of distribution also materially shapes the text itself, adding another layer of meaning to the viewing experience” and at the same time “... shape public taste as well as reflect it, creating a feedback loop between distribution and demand” (Lobato 2012: 16, 18). Both Fiske and Lobato confirm that it is the distributors that select and rework the materials of the films in order to make it more suitable with their market. Moreover, J.P. Telotte suggests:

How much the cult relies for its very existence on what we normally think of as extra-textual matters, in effect, how much the cult film’s nature depends on both its own amorphous shape and a set of industrial practices divorced from a specific film’s creation (Telotte 1997: 95)

Hence, extra-textual matters are important for the cult-ness of a text. In this research, extra-texts are the main sources that I will investigate, as I want to interrogate how the distributors market and brand DVDs; specifically focusing on redubbing, the addition of special features, the packaging and promotion as a double feature, and bootlegging.

In this chapter, I will look at one film, FFFF and analyse how Troma Team reworked the film by redubbing the films. Unlike other titles produced and distributed by Troma Team, this label decided to rework the original film by rewriting and rerecording the dialog in order to make it into a “Troma film”. They call this reworking process “Tromatized”. As a result, influenced by Woody Allen’s *What’s Up Tiger Lily* (1966), the film has totally different story and flavour.

I want to investigate how and why they did the redubbing, as well as analyse the term “Tromatized”. I want to investigate how and why Troma Team repurposed FFFF, particularly the redubbing elements, in order to make the film more of a Troma film and more suitable for their target market. How and why did Troma Team “tromatize” FFF by redubbing it? Hence, two main questions will be answered in this chapter: first, to what extent can we consider the redubbing of

FFF is part of the “Tromatize” process, and second, what kind of dubbing is concomitant with the term “Tromatized”.

First, I will elaborate upon the term “Tromatized” as well as “a Troma Film”, as seen on the FFFF front and back covers, as a marketing strategy. I will be arguing that these terms are the identity of all Troma Team’s films.

Second, I will be undertaking a close reading of the reworks done by Troma Team, particularly the redubbing elements. I will demonstrate that, as stated by the Troma Team, redubbing is the key point of the application of the “Tromatized” strategy and makes the film “a Troma film”, therefore more marketable for their fans.

In order to answer the research questions, I firstly need to discuss Troma Team and its co-founder Lloyd Kaufman. I will also look at the inter-texts, particularly the back and front cover of the DVD and the introduction of the film by Lloyd Kaufman. I will also undertake close readings of the films by comparing and contrasting the original dialog and the redubbing, therefore I can find the patterns and trends of the “Tromatisation” process.

First, I will discuss Troma Team and its characteristics.

On Troma Team’s Identity

Home video production and distribution companies experienced a golden era from 1981 to 1986 (Wasser 2004: 104; McDonald 2007: 93). Troma Team was amongst the independent studio distribution companies which, since the 1980s, also produced their own films. In 1985, Troma Team decided to distribute films made by other filmmakers, including *Redneck Zombies* (Pericles Lewnes, 1989) (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 238). In 1995, Troma Studios initiated a new wing of the company: Troma Team Video (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 194).¹¹⁶

Here the term “independent” refers to the term of distribution and is not related to the content or financing (Wasser 2004, 16). Troma, along with Artisan, Roger Corman, and Trimark, independently distributed their films, as mentioned by Wasser. As one of the original independent

¹¹⁶ Additionally, Troma Team also founded Fiftieth Street Films, that distributed more mainstream films, including children’s films and art films. Some of the films include *Wildrose* (Sandra Schulberg 1985) and *My Neighbor Totoro* (Hayao Miyazaki 1988) (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 279)

distributors, Troma constantly searched for different markets, explored unknown genres, and explored new ways of putting together a profitable audience (Wasser 2004, 16). At that time, Hollywood major studios were indifferent, and even hostile, to videocassettes (Wasser 2004, 10); thus Troma and other non-major studios had to do the distribution by themselves.

Regarding the term “independent”, Troma Team has a slogan: “Almost 40 years of reel Independence”. Troma was started in the early 1970s when fellow Yale University graduates, Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Hartz, began producing tightly controlled budget films.¹¹⁷ Among their oeuvre of films are *The Toxic Avenger* (Michael Herz, Lloyd Kaufman, 1984) , *The Class of Nuke ‘Em High* (Richard W. Haines, Lloyd Kaufman, 1986), *Mother’s Day* (Charles Kaufman, 1980) and *Tromeo and Juliet* (Lloyd Kaufman, 1996). The *Toxic Avenger* has proved to be the most popular character (fans call him “Toxie”, a mutant in pink ballerina costume), becoming the icon of the company. *Toxic Avenger* later received two sequels and an animated TV series, *the Toxic Crusades*. Similar to the “Roger Corman Film School”, Troma studio also nurtured some film directors and actors who would become much better known in their later career with subsequent important positions within the industry. Among the actors and directors who worked for Troma are: Robert De Niro, Kevin Costner, Samuel L. Jackson, Eli Roth, Marisa Tomei, Oliver Stone, Kevin Costner, and Dustin Hoffman (Kaufman and Gunn: 1998: 241). Many people consider that Troma Team, just like Roger Corman’s film company, has unintentionally become the film school for several major Hollywood names.

Related to their target market, in an interview, Lloyd Kaufman explains:

Well, the typical Troma fans are very well educated and sophisticated about the internet and the new technology, they’re very well aware of what’s going on in the world, and many females are involved, since they’ve been an underclass, and Troma has always been about the underdogs — people with alternative lifestyles, the black people etc. — turning tables. The underdogs are the ones who support Toxie¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁷ For details of Troma Team history, please see “*The Troma Team: History and Practice*”.

¹¹⁸Please see Ognjanovic: 2007. This citation is very important, particularly when I elaborate upon film reception and cult fandom in the other chapter. Similarly, the New York Times film critic Stephen Holden has said, “you can’t be a stupid person and enjoy Troma movies. It’s only intelligent people that ‘get’ Troma films.” (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 47)

Some of the fans sometime arrange a ritual celebration (Jancovich 2002) of Troma’s films. For instance, in 28 June 2001, Washington Psychotronic Film Society organized a screening event where all four Indonesian films redistributed by Troma were screened (“Washington Psychotronic Film Society *presents*”).

FFFF as a Troma Film

Troma Team, and their cult icon CEO Lloyd Kaufman, is one of the first DVD labels that re-circulated classic Indonesian exploitation movies in DVD formats within the cult DVD circuits. It is important to note that Troma Team redistributed four Indonesian films, namely *Intruder* (Jopi Burnama, 1986), *The Stabilizer* (Arizal, 1986), *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters* (Jopi Burnama 1982) and *Ferocious Freedom Fighters 2* (Arizal, 1981).

Table 5:
Indonesian Films redistributed by Troma Entertainment¹¹⁹

No.	Original title, film production, and release date	Troma title	Troma DVD release date
1	<i>Pembalasan Rambu</i> (PT. Parkit Film), 1985	<i>Intruder</i>	n/a
2	<i>Segitiga Emas</i> (PT. Parkit Film), 1986	<i>Stabilizer</i>	July 29, 2003
3	<i>Perempuan Bergairah</i> (PT. Parkit Film), 1982	<i>Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters</i>	VHS release: 1997; ¹²⁰ DVD release: Oct 14, 2003 ¹²¹
4	<i>Membakar Matahari</i> (PT. Parkit Film), 1981	<i>Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters 2</i>	n/a

(Source: Tromashop.com, CDUniversive.com)

¹¹⁹ Originally *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters 2* was not a sequel to the first *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters*, although it also had the same actors (particularly Eva Arnaz and Barry Prima) and same producer, namely Parkit Film. The content is taken from an Indonesian film titled *Membakar Matahari* (also known as *To Burn the Sun*) a year before *Perempuan Bergairah*. Troma Team kept the original English dubbed version.

Related to other films, from the name of the main character, the audience can easily guess that the film *Intruder* (or, *Rambu’s Revenge*) is a mockbuster version of Rambo. *The Stabilizer* has Indonesia’s Mr. T (*The A Team*) as one of the characters.

¹²⁰ In the official Troma shop, it is mentioned that there is both a new introduction for the DVD and the original 1997 introduction for the VHS edition as one of the DVD features. Please see “*Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters* [DVD]”.

¹²¹ Please see “*Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters* DVD”.

The film that is under analysis in this chapter, FFFF, originally was a 1982 action-women wrestling film from Indonesia directed by Jopi Burnama. Filmed in the Indonesian language, the producer (PT Parkit Film) dubbed it into English for the international market with the straight-to-VHS strategy.¹²² As seen in Table 5, Troma Team released its VHS version in 1997, and the DVD version six year later. Troma Team's leader, Lloyd Kaufman, bought the rights to this film and decided to rewrite the script and redub the sound track, or as they put it, they: "Tromatized" the film. (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 130). Therefore, Troma Team not only changed the title, but also rewrote the story and redubbed the dialog, though they added the original song in some scenes, with Lloyd's brother Charles Kaufman being responsible for the rewriting and redubbing. (Kaufman & Gunn 1998; 320).

It is important to understand the original story of FFFF, because I want to demonstrate how Troma Team has significantly repurposed the film. Here is the synopsis:

As the oldest child, Renny Basuki, a judo champion, feels the responsibility of supporting her family when the father passes away. She accepts her best friend Mia's offer to establish a free wrestling group. She has to do it as her younger sibling needs money for medical bills. The wrestling group, named Idola, becomes famous. However, Renny is disappointed because her mother won't accept her hard-earned money. Her mother wants Renny to quit wrestling and accept the marriage proposal from a man whom her late father was indebted to. Renny won't give up. She even gets a manager, Indra. The Idola competes in Semarang and also in Surabaya against the Ballons. Renny and Mia achieve victory. It's a double victory when Renny wins the heart of Indra and Mia wins the heart of the Ballons' manager. They become happy couples ("Perempuan Bergairah").

I will later discuss how Troma Team redubbed the film and made it a totally different film.

"Tromatized"

So, what exactly is Troma? And what are the characteristics of being "Tromatized", as mentioned on the front and back cover of the film? For the word "Troma" represents "... sexuality as a

¹²² Also see J: 2011

sensory assault, a cartoony power imbalance, slapstick violence, acting so bad it seemed to mock acting.” (Dodero 2012). Troma is “...famous for its splatter-comedy factory that touts itself as the world's oldest independent movie studio”, and are considered as “...the most offensive, tasteless films in the history of cinema,” works of “questionable artistic and moral value” (Dodero 2012). The co-founder, Lloyd Kaufman is “...depending on whom you ask, either the third arm of trash celluloid's Holy Trinity, along with Russ Meyer and John Waters,¹²³ or the most persistently talentless and graphically sophomoric hack ever to exist outside a parent's basement”, who has had personal influences on prominent figures such as Quentin Tarantino, Sam Raimi, and Peter Jackson (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 3).¹²⁴

Related to the connection between Waters and Kaufman, Mendik and Schneider highlight that both filmmakers made underground US films with the ability to shock and outrage, and generated “pure gross-out cinema” (Mendik and Scheider 2002: 205, 220). In Kaufman’s case, Mendik and Scheider underlines the important elements a Troma film should have: “uneasy blend of sick humor, bodily fluids and diverse displays of gross-out...as well as depictions of grotesque and humorous depictions of the body—notably blood, buns, and bodily dismemberment—whilst also utilising established literary and cinematic motifs for parodic purposes”, but at the same time “lies a far more serious and potentially subversive message” that challenges and even overturns common social norms and values (Mendik and Scheider 2002: 205, 216,220). The terms “parodic” and “sick humor” are therefore very important elements to highlight in the FFFF redubbing context.

According to Lloyd Kaufman himself, Troma films are difficult to define, “defy genres”, and “we don’t follow conventional wisdom when it comes to “plot””. That is the reason why many video stores add new shelves labeled “Troma section” (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 4). If they have to define it Kaufman prefers the term “gory-sexy-horror-comedies” (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 3). In other words, prominent B movie director and producer Roger Corman writes that Troma Team has created “a Troma universe” that blended conventional genres of horror and science fiction with “... their own irrepressible, sometimes inexplicable, sense of humor to create a bouillabaisse of

¹²³ Also see Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 251.

¹²⁴Also see Dodero 2012. Later on, one of the apprentices and the co-writers of one of Troma’s books, James Gunn, has successfully made a box office film, *Guardians of Galaxy* (2014) which includes Lloyd Kaufman in a cameo.

unforgettable yet likable characters and films—indeed, a sort of cosmos”. The characteristics of this universe are “...subversive yet demented, extreme yet idealistic, violent yet romantic. A universe embraced by psychotic aberrants and the cinematheque Francais at the same time” (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: xiii-xiv).

To outline the wider context in more detailed picture, below I will elaborate upon some film titles released by Troma, as seen on their official website. Most of the titles sound ridiculous, including *The Toxic Avenger Part 3: The Last Temptation of Toxie* (1989), *Shakespeare in...and out* (1999), and *Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead* (2006). It can be strongly argued that some of the titles are the parodies of popular films such as *The Last Temptation of Christ* (Martin Scorsese, 1988), *Shakespeare in Love* (John Madden, 1998) and *Night of the Living Dead* (George Romero, 1968). Some other titles seem filled with the spirit of parody, mockery, and satire, such as *Cannibal! (The Musical)* (1996), *Killer Condom* (1996), and *Teen Ape vs. the Monster Nazi Apocalypse* (2011).

Another important characteristic that are embedded within the films produced and distributed by Troma is the “alternative superhero” films in which the characters represent violence, innocence and ridiculousness at the same time. Most of the main characters are, as Kaufman puts it, underdogs. Some of those kinds of films are *Toxic Avenger* and *Sgt. Kabukiman NYPD* (Michael Herz, Lloyd Kaufman, 1990).

A final element that is visible in “Tromatized” films is a deliberately ridiculous introduction by Lloyd Kaufman himself, as we can see in the special features of the DVD release of *The Stabilizer*.¹²⁵ At the opening of the film Lloyd Kaufman introduces the film and intentionally misspells the title many times. He announces that they will have a live interview with Latrina Sukarna, a fake Indonesian film critic, via satellite from Indonesia whilst he is shaving. Latrina Sukarna is busy introducing things she thinks as “ethnic stuffs from Indonesia” such as Indonesian traditional basketball shoes (which is a pair of Dutch shoes), a statue of the Peace God (which is a

¹²⁵ This title was rereleased on July 29, 2003, starring New Zealand actor Peter O’Brian, as Peter Goldson the Stabilizer, which became one of the cult icons. Please see “Stabilizer DVD”.

Toxie mask), and a bunch of flowers (that she thinks is an Indonesian version of a hotdog) in a serious manner, and she does not explain much about the film except a few lines repeatedly: “the most violence movie ever made. More violent than *Commando*, *Robocop*, and *Rambo III* combined. Lots of actions, lots of helicopters, lots of blood, good movie. And starring Indonesia’s John Wayne, Peter O’Brian”. Lloyd Kaufman, acting as if he is communicating online, says: “I am having trouble listening to you, can you explain more about the movie?” Latrina only adds one sentence: “... the scriptwriter, also writes for *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters*”. In the very next scene Latrina is naked, not too far from Lloyd Kaufman. Kaufman sighs and still greets the audience with a closing statement, and a wave to the door as a greeting to Harry Weinstein, a famous film distributor: “Okay, now, bring in Mr. Weinstein. Hey, Harry, Please sit down,” he jokingly acts as if he has invited the famous distributor. Again, satire joke, parody, and even self-reflexivity emerge as Troma’s identity.

Based on the aforementioned characteristics of Troma films, therefore, the attempt of rewriting and redubbing *FFFF* obviously has a direct link with Troma’s political economy and ideological strategy.

The Redubbing of FFFF

Troma Team states that *FFFF* is already “Tromatized”, or undertook the “tromatization” process, particularly in relation to the redubbing of the film. The application of mock dubbing is one of the selling points of Troma, and is highlighted on the DVD cover, which was released in 2003.

As shown in Figure 2, the front cover of the DVD, it is stated as follows:

See it two ways with:

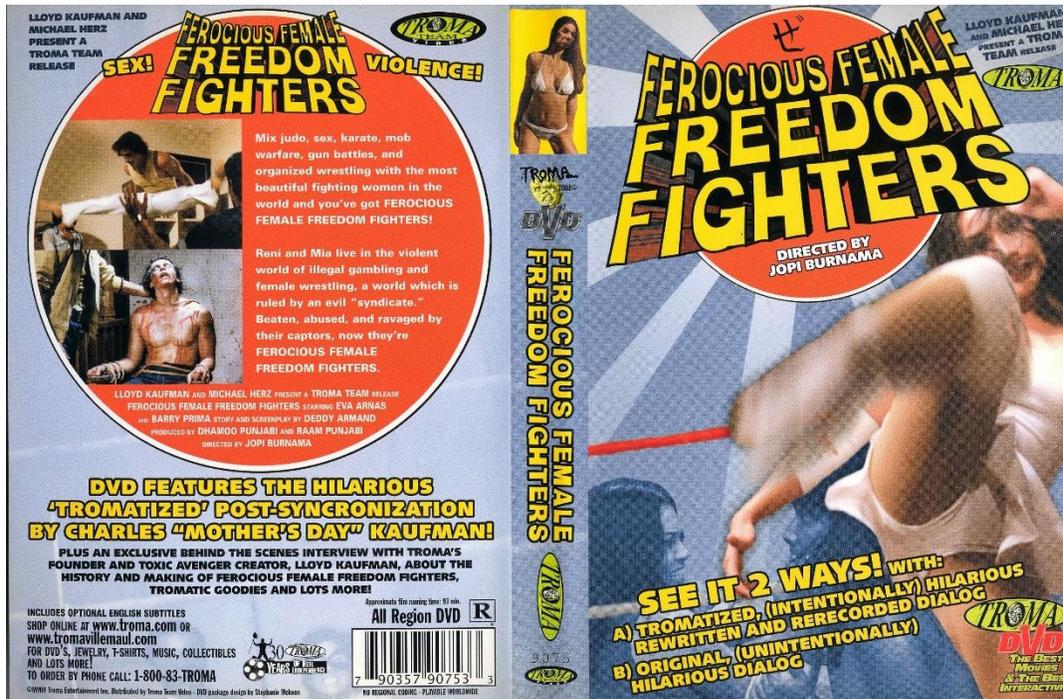
- c) Tromatized, (intentionally) hilarious rewritten and rerecorded dialog
- d) Original (unintentionally) hilarious recorded dialog

On the back cover, the promotional material says:

DVD features the hilarious Tromatized post-synchronization by Charles “Mother’s Day” Kaufman.

Figure 2:

Front and back DVD cover of *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters*



(Source: private collection)

For the execution of the dubbing process, in order to “Tromatize” the film, Troma Pictures recruited L.A. Connection (Erickson 2010),¹²⁶ a comedy troupe specializing in providing old films with new, satirical soundtracks. On the YouTube comments section, there is an interesting interjection on the dubbing process from RhinoG123:

That's my mom playing the character of "Bambi". She recorded this in the living room of Lloyd Kaufman's brother! There were only four people who did the voices. BTW, this is a Troma film, and the original film was Indonesian. I don't think the snake in the original Indonesian version spoke in Ebonics, though (“Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters Cobra Crackhead”).

¹²⁶ Mike White writes that L.A. Connection was very popular with live dubbing events within California, and that was the reason why they were asked to do the redubbing by Troma. They also did some redubbing in *What's Up, Hideous Sun Demon?* (Craig Mitchell, Robert Clarke, 1983), and they have their own film titled *Reefer Madness II: The True Story* (Ken Skov, 1985). (White: 2014)

Nonetheless, this kind of dubbing is not new. Mike White writes that the tradition of mock dubbing began in 1936, when Spaniards Antonio de Lara and Miguel Mihura dubbed a German film *Unsterbliche Melodien* (*Immortal Melodies*, Heinz Paul, 1936) with comedic tones and the result was a totally story titled *Un bigote para dos* (*A Mustache for Two*, Antonio de Lara and Miguel Mihura 1940) (White: 2014)¹²⁷. In 1966, Woody Allen already did it with *What's up Tiger Lily*, which I have further elaborated upon below. Some critics and fans also mention *Mystery Science Theater 3000* as a film that influences *FFFF*¹²⁸. Sean Welsh writes that there are many examples of films being re-edited or redubbed for foreign markets "...usually in a benign, if ruthless attempt to make the end product more marketable (notorious practitioners include American International Pictures (AIP) and the Weinstein brothers with Miramax" (Welsh 2011). However, *Tiger Lily* is a unique example for Welsh as he mentions that Woody Allen did it more creatively, but equally cynically.

Welsh writes that the main reason of doing this kind of practice is based upon the assumption, that the films have little or no worth to an English-speaking audience in their original forms. So, according to Welsh, reworking foreign films for domestic release is a standard practice in the world of low budget exploitation, science fiction, and horror distribution. But for both Indonesian cinema and Troma cases, it is arguable that the practice is not a common one.¹²⁹

As Ramon Lobato (2012, 36) stated: "There is no room for generic ambiguity in STV: producers specialized in particular genres – action, horror, and kids' movies – and stick within these boundaries". Hence the form of STV distribution influences the decision making of the distributors. For Troma Team, which has its niche following, they have to do the film branding and marketing to fit into the taste of the Toxie lovers.

¹²⁷ For the history of mock dubbing, see White: 2014.

¹²⁸ One of them is one of the spectators, Shaun Byer who wrote on *Rotten Tomatoes*. Check "FEROCIOUS FEMALE FREEDOM FIGHTERS (1982)".

¹²⁹ Troma Team only decided to redub two films. The other film is a Belgian movie, *Parts of the Family* (Léon Paul De Bruyn, 2003), which also has a newly shot scenes. (White: 2014)

From another video introduction of *FFFF*, as seen in the special feature¹³⁰ of the official DVD,¹³¹ we will instantly be informed about the reason and process of the rework. Lloyd Kaufman, the President of Troma, said that once the film was a serious kickboxing action film; or as Kaufman puts it: “They are trying to make another Rambo”. When they got the film, it was already dubbed into English, but Troma decided to “...re-write the script in English and redub a totally different script onto this film of *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters*”.¹³² So, Lloyd Kaufman asked his brother, Charles to rewrite it entirely in order to make it “...into a more Troma movie”. For example, as Kaufman explains in the introduction, “We change a kickboxing Rambo type of hero into an Elvis impersonator. We change the lady in the film from a serious Indonesia heroine into a Jewish-mama-type of person...”. They also add new sound tracks including, as Kaufman puts it in his book, “...numerous instances of farting, bad sportsmanship, and a chronically masturbating little boy who was singularly obsessed with his ejaculate and the size of his mother’s breasts” (Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 130).

In that short introduction, Kaufman admits that he was inspired by Woody Allen and his work, *What’s up Tiger Lily* (1966), where he dubbed a Japanese film into totally different story. The influence of *What’s Up Tiger Lily* is also represented in its tagline: “If Woody Allen’s *What’s Up Tiger Lily*? made you laugh out loud, this one’ll make you change your underpants”.¹³³

The other important aspect that Lloyd Kaufman underlines is the impact of the Troma version on the original film producer who was greatly displeased when they watched the Troma version in New York City, and later commented: “...if the actors saw the film they will literally kill us”. Because, after being “Tromatized”, the film looks and sounds totally different (and more ridiculous) from the original purpose. Therefore, it is important for Troma team to “tromatize” the film in order to give it a Troma identity and grab fans’ attention, even though the original producers and filmmakers may get upset.

¹³⁰ Or, in their own term: *Tromatic Stuff*.

¹³¹ Also see: Kaufman and Gunn 1998: 130.

¹³² Lloyd Kaufman’s introduction for the *FFFF*’s VHS format can be accessed on Youtube (“Lloyd Kaufman explains *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters*”).

¹³³ See the entry *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters* on the Internet Movie Data Base (“*Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters*”).

On the other hand, in 2001 Indonesian film director Joko Anwar, as (then) a film critic for *The Jakarta Post*, celebrated the Troma version of the film. He wrote:

The movie...produced in 1982, comes highly recommended on several ""midnight video"" forums on the Internet, thanks to the hilarious redubbing by Troma Films, which has produced such notoriously trashy, violent B-movies as *The Toxic Avenger*...While the movie was originally made in serious fashion here (with acute ineptness), Troma pushes it to the lowest point of stupidity by redubbing it with very dumb dialog that plays for pure laughs” (Anwar 2001)

Another attempt to embed Troma’s identity into FFFF is the patently ridiculous dialogues and jokes. Similar with other films produced by Troma, such as *Sgt. Kabuki Man* and *Toxic Avenger*, FFFF is awash with these kinds of jokes. Below I will elaborate upon the ridiculous dialogs and scenes made by Troma Team in order to make a clear and distinct modification before and after being “Tromatized”.

Table 6:
Examples of Rewritten script by Troma Team

No	Original version	Tromatized version
1	Barney chases Bambi with his car. Bambi was warned by Barney to reject the offer from the Mafia	Barney asked Bambi to marry her
2	Bambi’s little brother is sick, but the audience does not have proper knowledge about his illness.	The brother has a so-called severe dickosis where his head may blow out when he is excited or aroused. In this Troma version, the little brother is represented, as Bambi puts it, as an “old little pervert”, where he is very excited at watching female wrestling and hopes that the wrestlers are naked. And then he feels dizzy and Mrs. Basuki (his mother) comments: “I can feel the semen rush into his head”.
3	Bambi realizes that she is being set up to join a mafia that runs the illegal wrestler club, gambling, and narcotics.	Bambi and her employee are arguing about how bad Bambi, as an interior designer, did her job and displeases her boss.
4	Later on, Bambi goes to her room and meets her room-mate who indirectly sets her up. They fight and at the end	In the Troma version, her room-mate is upset because Bambi stepped on her Grandma’s earring. Later on, she says: “My father used to

	her room-mate kneels down and apologizes. Later on, some thugs come and attack, and Bambi fights back.	say:“Ask some big ugly guys to beat you up, so you have a good reason to cry about”. And then some thugs come suddenly and shout “someone called for ugly guy?”
5	Nathan, the big boss who wants to marry Bambi, visits Bambi’s house and meets her mother. Nathan asks whether the mother can arrange something and persuade Bambi to marry him, and in return he will give some money for her little brother’s surgery.	Nathan asked Bambi’s mother: “I am looking for accommodation and I am pretty sure that your son is dying. When he dies, call me”
6	Bambi is offered a job as illegal wrestler and should deliver some stuff.	Bambi is hired as interior decorator
7	Aman, the messenger of the mafia, tries to bribe Elvis and offers him recorded fighting of their rivals’ previous matches.	This messenger becomes a salesman who offers a how-to or motivational video on “how to make your romance alive”, produced by Troma“...the one who made <i>Surf Nazis Must Die</i> ”.
8	Bambi tries to rebel and fight back against the mafia. Barney warns her and tells a past story to Bambi. Apparently, Barney already tried to fight back and betrayed the gang, but he was captured, and tortured, and his wife and unborn baby were killed.	Bambi asks Barney for a date. When she mentions a particular restaurant, Barney looks shocked and says that he experienced bad service, and his protest caused him and his girlfriend trouble because they ended up getting tortured.

(Source: DVD of *FFFF*)

As you can see from Table 6, there are some significant changes made by Troma. The jokes are put into a Western context and arguably can only be followed by Troma lovers, or people who like sick humour. Below, I will elaborate upon another Troma dubbed style.

There are many ridiculous voiceovers added in the film. For example, as an Elvis impersonator, Barney starts his first fighting scene by talking to himself: “I think it is time to the man who talks like Elvis to fight...” And then one of the members of the audience comments in the voice over: “Wow this guy is fighting like Elvis!” In another scene, Barney does the rope skipping and humming “E is for Elvis. K is for King. G is for Graceland. S is for sing”. Another example, and arguably the most absurd one, is the grumpy talking Cobra, which is unleashed by the mafia in the bath tub where Bambi is.

In keeping with the Troma emphasis on slapstick sexual comedy, there is a sex scene where the couple, one of the mafia bosses and his mistress, have sex intercutting with the picture of a big

horse. During the scene there is a Frank Sinatra wannabe singing "We made love 'til we were in a coma, in an epic film by Troma" during the sex scene, and highlighting that the big horse image has nothing to do with the bed scene. The song was written by Matson, a composer that Troma purposefully hired to compose some new Tromasque blues songs.¹³⁴ In the last wrestling match, Deborah is fighting against Bambi. Deborah is almost defeated and squeaks:

Deborah: (with a choked voice): I'll pay for your parking

Bambi: (voice over): She will pay for my parking? It's a deal!

Approaching the climax of the film, and in the middle of a huge fight, everybody is fighting, both in and out of the wrestling ring, with the police about to arrive. Later on the police make an entrance and announcet: "To all actors, please leave the set, because we are going to shoot with cinemascope. And it is not enough space for all of you".

Interestingly, and highlighting the differences in audience reception, most of the time, the jokes are not recognized by Indonesian audiences. Hal Erickson mentions the many throwaway gags include references to the First Church of Muhammad Ali and the Wrestleholics Geographical Nomenclature Match (Erickson 2010), cultural references that most Indonesian spectators are not familiar with.¹³⁵

In conclusion, as I demonstrated above, as a consequence of the mock dubbing undertaken by Troma Team, the story and dialogue have changed significantly from the original. The film has become more suitable for Troma cult followers and more difficult to understand for both Indonesian audience and other spectators who are not familiar with Troma's sense of humor. Interestingly, Troma Team go further as they also insert many inside jokes throughout the film, including fart jokes, which start at the very beginning of the first scene, particularly aimed at Troma fans. By adjusting the dubbing, the film is more appropriate for Troma fans.

¹³⁴ For the composer's profile, please see "Sasha Matson". There is no info about Matson writing a score for FFFF. But Matson was mentioned at the beginning of the film with "additional music by..."

¹³⁵ This phenomenon is similar to the case of the dubbing of *The Warrior* (Jaka Sembung, redistributed by Mondo Macabro), where the characters refer to Mata Hari and Caligula, two Western figures unknown to lower class Indonesian audiences, and the music score sounds like that often used in Spaghetti Westerns, especially *Django* (Imanjaya 2009d).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the two research questions: why and how Troma Team market *Ferocious Female Freedom* as a cult film, or as they put it: more into a Troma film. Troma Team carries out “tromatized” marketing gimmicks in all of their films. The main purpose is to make the films more suitable with the taste of their consumers, which are the cult fans of Lloyd Kaufman and Troma Team. They add the characteristics of Troma Team into the film, such as parody and sick humor associated with gross-out film elements (such as fart and semen jokes).

Interestingly, *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters* has had rare treatment because Troma Team rewrote and redubbed the (already) dubbed version of the film.

The “Tromatized” effect makes the film change significantly with the story becoming more ridiculous and deliberately comedic, which follows in the tradition of other Troma releases such as *Toxic Avenger* and *Sgt. Kabukiman NYPD*. Troma Team even did the dubbing which positions the film closer to the ideology and identity of Troma Entertainment, and at the same time manages to fulfill the political economy function of the film.

The reworking of the film by Troma Team is only one attempt by one transnational distributor to repurpose these kinds of films to be more suitable with their cult own following. In the next chapter I will be analyzing the efforts of two other transnational distributors, namely Mondo Macabro DVD and VideoAsia.

Chapter 5:

Indonesian Classic Exploitation Cinema and Digital Distribution: The Cases of Mondo Macabro and VideoASia's *Tales of Voodoo*¹³⁶

This chapter will examine the marketing strategies of two DVD labels, namely Mondo Macabro and VideoASia. Both labels decontextualized the films to be more connected with their markets by reworking the extra-texts, particularly the covers and special features. However, they work in different modes of DVD re-production. While VideoAsia (as the representative of an illegal distribution case) just transferred the films from VHS to DVD as they were and promoted them as representative of the B-movies' golden age unrelated with the films (double bill, covers taken from comic books associated with B movies' heyday), Mondo Macabro (as the official distributor) approached the films as the discoveries of hidden treasures, similar with the approach of Criterion Collection.

In this chapter I will analyze two main things. First, I will elaborate upon how the 2000s transnational distributors reworked the films and the implications of decontextualisation and recontextualisation from the original culture.

Second, I want to investigate how different modes of film re-production leads to different kinds of marketing strategies and fans' consumption. In particular, I will investigate how different kinds of sources (and their legal and copyright issues) as well as distributors' attitude/treatment towards the films will affect decisions and economical directions about how the distributors rework the films, and, later, determine the consumption and critical reception from the fans.

¹³⁶ A few weeks before I submitted my final draft, Jamie Sexton published an interesting article: *The allure of otherness: transnational cult film fandom and the exoticist assumption*. He cited my 2009 paper and gave constructive criticism:

“Though he does mention actual websites, blogs, forums and fanzines that evidence the ‘cult fan boy’ engagement with Indonesian cult cinema, he does not provide examples of how such fan boys are unable to refuse marketing strategies” (Sexton 2016).

I hope to answer his criticism in this chapter as well as in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

In order to answer the questions above, firstly, I will highlight the reworks done by both labels. After I conclude the patterns of each distributor, I will compare and contrast them in relation of three elements, namely: sources of film reproduction and their copyright issues, distributors' treatments and attitude towards the films, and the critical reception by global fans. All three elements, I argue, are integral, intertwined, and interplay with one another.

I have focused my research on Mondo Macabro as an example of legal distribution, since the label is arguably one of best practices within the area and the most praised label by online global fans. Related to commercial bootlegging, I chose *Tales of Voodoo*, a market brand by VideoAsia, because it has multi-layered problematic reworks, namely the use of double bills (which are commonly associated with the B-movies' golden age) and the copy-paste style of the covers using images from classic underground comic books. I will undertake close readings of the images and texts from the DVD's front and back covers as well as the materials in the special features, including interviews, short documentaries, and texts relating to the cultural contexts of the films and the filmmakers.

Discourses on Cult Digital Distribution

Textual afterlife of the films can be extended with the DVD format; after their original theatrical releases, later attempts at repurposing is one of the keys to "... a different social and historical milieu, as well as different context of reception" (Klinger 2006, 8).

As demonstrated by Brookey and Westerfelhaus (2002), the DVD format is an effective way to repackaging the movies in the context of home viewing and drive the audience towards getting a particular watching experience and reception, by using extra-texts including interactional features (Brookey and Welterfelhaus 2002, 21). By using materials in an interactive way (such as "behind the scenes", commentaries, storyboards), the audience at home can choose "what they want to choose, when and in what order" (Brookey and Welterfelhaus 2002, 22, 23), and that is the added value for the DVD.

Due to my desire to analyze the extra-textual materials of the films, as discussed above as well as those materials related to bootlegging, I agree with Ramon Lobato's statement that "[t]he act of distribution also materially shapes the text itself, adding another layer of meaning to the viewing experience" and at the same time it can "shape public taste as well as reflect it, creating a feedback loop between distribution and demand" (Lobato 2012, 16-18). It is the role of distributors to frame

and, at the same time, feed fans' tastes through the reworking of filmic extra-texts through re-dubbing, re-titling and re-editing the films; this not only acts to contextualize these works, but also makes them more suitable for global fans' needs and expectations and, in this context, leads to the cult status of the films. Hence, the role of the distributors in selecting and disseminating the films for global distribution is very important in facilitating the de-contextualization and subsequent reconceptualization of the films (Lobato 2012, 197-199).

It is important to note that most transnational distributors deliberately market these films as "Cult Films," a phenomenon described by Mathijs and Sexton (2011) as "Meta-Cult", as they will label their own products by using the term "cult movies" (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 238).

Two Modes of Distributions

Before I go on to further analyze each case study, I will discuss the distinction between the two modes of distribution, namely formal and informal distribution.

I apply Crisp's definitions on the formal distribution. Crisp writes:

The formal distributors here typically secure the rights to distribute films in non-domestic markets long after each film has been completed and shown theatrically in its country of origin. Thus, formal distribution in this context might be better defined as 'where the producers of a film enter a contract with distributors for certain territories,'Some of the films will enjoy a limited theatrical release but quite often they will only be released on DVD. Thus, formal distribution in this context is the legal acquisition of rights to show a film theatrically and/or produce DVD/Blu-ray copies for retail sale within a given territory. (Crisp 2012: 16)

However, what I meant by informal distribution in this research is not the same as Crisp's terms of autonomous and intermediary distribution. Crisp writes:

Autonomous distribution involves an individual acquiring a copy of a film (legally or illegally) that is then (generally) encoded and/or subtitled so that it might be shared through a particular forum-based filesharing community via a peer-to-peer filesharing network. Intermediary distribution refers to when Scene51 releases, (those sourced, encoded and distributed by loosely connected but largely anonymous 'release groups') are shared by an intermediary within the same forum-based filesharing communities. (Crisp 2012, 16-17)

In the context of this thesis, informal distribution is more related to commercial bootlegging undertaken by commercial distributors, for examples VideoAsia, Brentwood/BCI Eclipse Company, Maia Film, and ZDD.

Informal distribution is where we can clearly see the legacies of the classical Indonesian VHS distribution techniques of the 1980s and 1990s as applied to the millennial cult DVD circuit in the formulation of a preponderance of bootlegged versions of the films in a variety of languages and titles. Besides the avenues of formal distribution, there was also a commercial bootleg industry which circulated Indonesian films in global video home video markets. It is important to note that, until the 1980s, commercial bootlegging was a common form of cult cinema circulation. Illegal copying such as commercial bootlegging was often considered “in the margins of accepted practices” and “rarely criminalized or prosecuted” (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 34). Furthermore, according to Lobato, there is still a grey area with no clear distinction between illegality and legality within home video markets, particularly in cult home video circuits (Lobato 2012).

On the other hand, formal distribution has been undertaken by the Troma Team starting 1997 (see Chapter 4) and later, in the early 2000s, Mondo Macabro commonly relied on a primarily straight-to-DVD strategy. For example, Mondo Macabro’s Pete Tombs, who formed a curatorial team (Imanjaya 2009c), bought the rights to certain works and led a commercial preservation project (Imanjaya 2009d, Imanjaya 2009c, Imanjaya 2009a) which I will elaborate upon in the section below.

Reworks of the Distributors and Their Importance

Related to the reworks done by transnational distributors, J.P. Telotte suggests that inter-textual materials are important to endorse the presence and survival of cult films (Telotte 1991). Bonus special features as extra-texts have been common practices in the home video business since the late 1990s, especially related to the re-release of classical films (Bertellini and Reich 2010, 104). Many DVD companies re-edit, re-subtitle, add documentaries and biographies of the filmmakers and actors, and also add commentaries from the filmmakers and critics.

Hence, transnational distributors select and remake the promotional materials in order to both feed and frame global cult fans’ tastes—as most fans only have access to the films through them. In

this context, the distributors' curatorial process, as their act of politics of taste, is important not only in choosing particular films and excluding others, but, as mentioned by Lobato:

“...involves all the typical textual reframings involved in cross-border marketing and numerous textual modifications (retitling, selective (re)dubbing, re-editing removal of culturally specific content)... which facilitated the de-contextualization and subsequent reconceptualization of the films” (Lobato 2012, 197, 199).

By implication, this kind of curatorial process frames “...how Western audiences interpret and understand Asian cinemas and, by extension, Asian cultures” (Lobato, 2012, 1978).

Therefore the role of distributors in selecting and discriminating the films from international markets and recirculating them to DVD cult circuits with some reworking are very important in shaping public taste (Lobato and Ryan 2011, 16-18). In addition, extra-textual matters are important for the cult-ness of a text. However, although both labels reworked the DVDs to make it more suitable for the tastes of cult followers, they go in different directions, which I will expand upon below.

Fans as Collectors

Barbara Klinger differentiates collectors into two categories. The first is "high end" collectors who have big budget to purchase high-quality DVDs and home video instruments. Alternately, “low end” fans do not focus on those elements and prefer obscure titles, although the images may be in low quality (Klinger 2006, 63-64). I will demonstrate that the buyers of Mondo Macabro belong to the first whereas Videoasia's fans are the second type of collectors.

I will begin with the analysis of Mondo Macabro.

The Case of Mondo Macabro: Chaperone Model of Archiving, and Its Implications.

The most important and biggest difference of reworking by Mondo Macabro compared to other DVD labels, both formal and informal, is their attempt to “restore” the film, or as they put it on the website: “Brand new anamorphic HD transfer taken from the negative” (“Mystic in Bali”). This element is considered as a key selling point of their DVDs, and they always promote their

efforts on the back covers of the DVD. This attempt is important to distinguish the label from other distributors working on cult films, and, since the quality of audio visual increased, consequently this will make the fans more satisfied. And, I argue, this kind of approach is similar with how Criterion Collection handles their DVD releases of art-house films. I will discuss this matter below.

Mondo Macabro always highlights this in promotional materials. On *Lady Terminator's* back cover, for example, it states: “[p]reviously released in a cut, full-screen version, this DVD restores the film to its original length and is presented in a digitally restored format, enhanced for widescreen TVs”. Whereas in *The Warrior* back cover, they write: “The film is fully remastered and completely uncut”.

Pete Tombs said that both films have undertaken a digital clean-up process on sound and picture in Ascent Media (the Hong Kong company, recently changed the name to Deluxe) from a 35mm negative (internegative) which he shipped to London (Tombs 2012). Let me elaborate upon the process below:

In an interview in 2009, Pete Tombs said that while writing his seminal book titled *Mondo Macabro: Weird and Beautiful Cinema around the World*, he contacted some filmmakers for his own research projects; then he started making the documentary series under the same title. And, naturally, after he established a good networking relationship with Indonesian filmmakers, he began to set up a curatorial team to plan for re-releasing the films, including buying the rights from the owners legally, and transferring and cleaning up the materials from 35mm to digital forms in Hong Kong and Thailand, and later in England for better results. Tombs admitted that the hardest part was to find out who owned the distribution rights and whether the owners still had the materials and a crucial factor was the costly budget for the transfer and clean-up process (Imanjaya 2009d, Imanjaya 2009c, Imanjaya 2009a). Below, I will provide my analysis on the case.

Frame/Preserve the Tastes: Rework as Chaperone Model

As McDonald has discussed, if the DVD distributors have the film rights they can manage to put extra materials from previously remaining resources or make new documentaries and interviews, produced by themselves or by external sources (McDonald 2007, 67). One of the best practices is Criterion Collection. McDonald, when discussing Criterion Collection, states that extra-texts not only function as added value and become the core of DVD values (McDonald 2007 62, 64-65), but also can deepen

viewers understanding of the content and even position the audience closer to the viewing experience than in movie theaters (McDonald 2007, 64). Furthermore on Criterion Collection, Bertellini and Reich write:

Since the late 1990s, most DVD editions of classic, critically rediscovered, and new films have made the audio commentary a key component of an ever-growing menu of special features;—including entire director's cuts, deleted scenes, making-of documentaries, exclusive or vintage interviews with the film's makers or celebrated critics, video essays, professional biographies, and photographic essays. (Bertellini and Reich: 2010, 104)

As a formal distributor Mondo Macabro can restore the films and exploit the materials such as interviews and documentaries that can be provided as extra-texts in the DVD special features. I argue that both the restoration effort and the distributor's treatments are an attempt to frame, as well as preserve, valuable materials, and leads to, as Fossati puts it, a "Chaperone model" of archiving.

As discussed by Fossati (2009), a restored film can have a new "life", and increase the visibility of archival films for the public. So film archives have also started new forms of distribution alongside traditional theatrical distribution such as DVD, TV Rights, and film festivals. One of the distribution models is the Chaperone model. The archival films, in these cases, are brought to the public with the archives acting as a chaperone to "show the way and, at the same time, protect the films and their content" (Fossati 2009, 96). The archivists do not only restore the films, but also become curators and explain the significance of the films to the public.

I argue that Mondo Macabro has already applied the chaperone model of archiving by providing rich materials with trivial knowledge as well as treating the films as rare collectible items, similar to what Criterion has done. Another important thing is that they have already paved the way for these exploitation films to gain decent appreciative public access and further frame and contextualize the films by showing the importance of their existence.

Bonus Special Features

Cult framings are enhanced by the rich data of the extra-text such as DVD special features. For example, on *The Warrior* DVD ("The Warrior") we can find an essay by Pete Tombs, cast bios, and interviews with producer Gope T. Samtani and screenwriter Imam Tantowi. On *Devil's Sword* they include an exclusive interview with film's star Barry Prima and an essay titled *Heavenly*

Swords: A history of magical swords by Pete Tombs. Some other bonus features include a half hour documentary on Indonesian Exploitation films, alternate scenes, extensive background information and stills galleries. On *Dangerous Seductress*' bonus features we can find: a featurette on SFX maestro Steve Prouty, a filmed interview with the director, and an SFX commentary from Steve Prouty. For *Queen of Black Magic's* DVD, they include a short documentary titled *Indonesian Light & Magic: Behind the scenes with FX guru El Badrun* ("The Queen of Black Magic").

The interviews and documentaries were taken from one of the episodes on global cult films for Channel 4. The project was held in 2001, where the co-founders of Mondo Macabro DVD Pete Tombs and Andrew Starke were teamed up for a documentary series called *Mondo Macabro*, based on the book with the same title. The TV series has eight episodes¹³⁷, including *Fantasy Films from Indonesia* which later became a bonus special feature on the DVDs (Tombs & Starke 2008a; Tombs & Starke 2008b).¹³⁸

The Repurpose by Mondo Macabro

The company's second strategy is to rebrand the films as cult. This includes online promotion on their official websites (www.MondoMacabroDVD.com, www.mondomacabro.co.uk, and MondoMacabro.blogspot.co.uk), redubbing, and putting endorsements and bombastic statements in front and back covers.

Online Promotion

On their official websites, I argue that Mondo Macabro DVD enacted meta-cult marketing by driving prospective buyers to the world of cult cinema. Their official websites evidence some attempts to associate the films with cult status. For example, on *The Warrior*, it says: "[p]acked with jaw-dropping action scenes and astonishing special effects, *The Warrior* is the ultimate cult

¹³⁷ The titles are *The Erotic Empire* (2002), *Argentinian Exploitation* (2002), *Fantasy Films from Indonesia* (2002), *The Nightmares of Coffin Joe* (2002), *Thrillers from Manila* (2002), *South Asian Cinema* (2002), *Mexican Horror Movies* (2002), and *Turkish Pop Cinema* (2001). Each episode was 25 minutes duration. See "Fantasy Films from Indonesia".

¹³⁸ Original air date: 2002 (Season 1, Episode 5) ("Fantasy Films from Indonesia").

classic, spawning four sequels” (“The Warrior”). For *Mystics in Bali* promotional materials (“Mystics in Bali”), it is stated clearly: “The holy grail of Asian cult cinema!” They also use the word “Midnight Movie” when promoting *Dangerous Seductress* (“Dangerous Seductress”):

An amazing combination of bloodsucking, black magic and killer babes, this is a real midnight movie classic. Wild and wicked, as only Asian movies can be.

As we can clearly see, they highlight the weirdness of the films as well as the restoration work, as can be seen in the *Mystics in Bali* promotion:

This is the film that introduced a new kind of monster to the world’s cinema screens. A sensation on its initial release in Asia, *Mystics in Bali* was deemed too bizarre and shocking to be screened in the west. Until now... This is the first time the film has been released in the US and is completely uncut and digitally remastered from the rare original negative...Plans that culminate in one of the most bizarre and shocking scenes in all horror cinema...”. (“Mystics in Bali”)

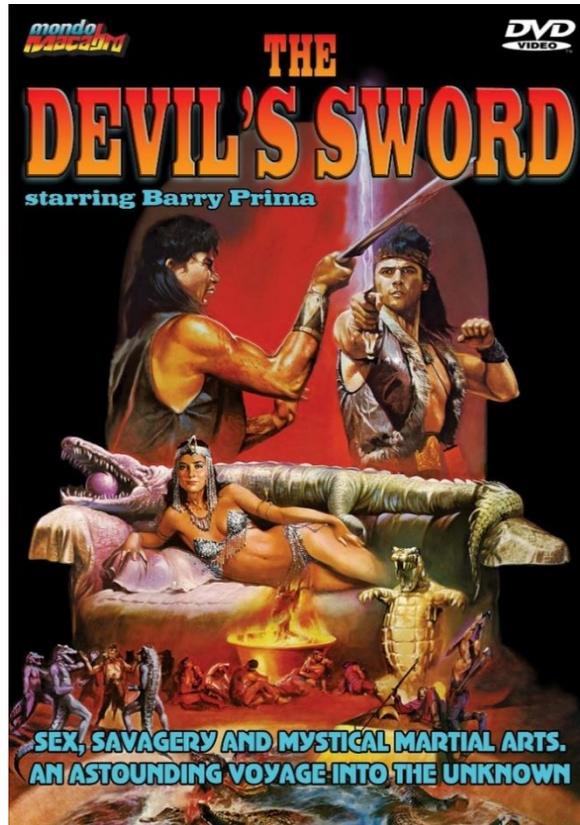
Furthermore, the promotional material for *Lady Terminator* not only mentions the film as “one of the key cult movies of the 80s”, but even relates the film to grindhouse cinema in 42nd Street, New York: “Even the jaded patrons of 42nd street were shocked to see how the lustful Lady T dispatched her victims...!” (“Lady Terminator”). The statement can be read in both their websites and on the DVD back cover.

In conclusion, Mondo Macabro tried to frame the films as cult movies through online promotion, by highlighting the strangeness and exotic elements of the films, and using well- known popular terms in Western cult cinema tradition, including "Grindhouse" cinema.

The DVD Covers

Generally, every statement used in the online promotion on Mondo Macabro’s official website is automatically put in the back cover of the DVDs, both with the same purpose: to make it more suited to global cult fans’ taste. Additionally they put a one-line strong statement on the back or front covers. For example: “Sex, Savagery, and Mystical Martial Arts, An Astounding Voyage into the Unknown” (“Devil’s Sword”, see Figure 3) and “Witchcraft and black magic versus mystical martial arts” (“The Warrior”).

Figure 3:
DVD front cover of Devil's Sword



Source: private collection

Again, weirdness and the bizarre elements are underlined, using popular cult terms. As with the above cases, I argue that this is how Mondo Macabro affects the practice of meta-cult marketing.

(Re)Dubbing

Although the Indonesian producers already dubbed the films, nevertheless transnational distributors, such as Mondo Macabro, have redubbed some of the films to make them more concomitant for their core market. Some clear examples of recontextualization of the films can be seen in *The Warrior*, where the Western figures such as Caligula and Mata Hari were mentioned

to describe the characters. Those two names cannot be found in the original version. The global cult fans most probably are familiar with the two names, but I argue that many of Indonesian audiences do not recognize the names, especially those working class and lower class viewers who watched the films in suburban and rural areas.

Trailers

In its trailers (“Mondo Macabro Promo”), Mondo Macabro always treats Indonesian films the same way as other world cult films (Imanjaya 2009d, 148)¹³⁹, both in the promotional trailers in the bonus features or other channels and their official website.

Fans’ Critical Responses¹⁴⁰

The chaperone mode, including the extra-texts, receives appreciation from global fans, particularly the wealth of extra-texts and the good quality of the restored audio visual. Unlike many labels, with such treatment the fans now can treat the trashy films as collector’s items.

In a review of *Virgins from Hell* in an online fanzine *Cinema Strikes Back*, the reviewer praises the wide screen presentation (“crisp 2.35:1 remastered anamorphic widescreen”), the essay on WP films by Pete Tombs, and the original documentary on Indonesian exploitation films. The same appreciation comes from Elijah Drenner who writes for *Film Fanaddict* (Drenner 2006). He underlines the clean-up process result as “...a sharp picture, with bright colors and bold contrasts in video quality”. Michael Den Boer also discusses the ratio when reviewing *The Warrior* (Boer 2008), stating that:

...[Even though t]he film opens with a disclaimer from Mondo Macabro about the quality of the transfer having some minor flaws due to the source materials that exist for this film. Overall this is another first rate progressive flagged transfer that is on par with Mondo Macabro’s other Indonesian DVD releases. This release comes with one audio option a

¹³⁹As underlined by Pete Tombs: “There is a small but niche audience for films that are different from the mainstream Hollywood product and this is where we try to market our movies, stressing their exotic, extreme or unusual content” (quoted in Imanjaya 2009d, 144)

¹⁴⁰In this thesis I cite all fans’ criticism and other texts as they are. No editing and proofreading have been made on these materials, unless mentioned otherwise.

Dolby Digital Stereo English mix“. Outside of some minor instances of hiss the audio sound clear and evenly balanced.”

The same compliment was also detected in Den Boer’s reviews on *Mystics in Bali* (Boer 2007), *Devil’s Sword* (Boer 2006a) and David’s article on *The Devil’s Sword* (Austin 2007)¹⁴¹.

Related to the bonus features, Elijah Drenner writes:

Man, oh man. The good folks at Mondo Macabro seem to outdo themselves on a fairly consistent basis, and with VIRGINS FROM HELL, one of the latest from those Purveyors of Perverted - this DVD company can maintain their stranglehold on the world of exotic and weird films from around the world.... If the movie itself wasn’t enough to melt your brain, Mondo Macabro has added a bonus disc of trailers from Rappi (*sich! EIJ*) Films, the bastards responsible for this movie (Drenner 2006).

The reviews above show the satisfaction of the market and therefore underline the success of the chaperone mode of archiving by Mondo Macabro.

On the other hand, the characteristics of the collectors are closer to Klinger’s "high-end" collectors (Klinger 2006, 63-64) as they prioritize the quality of audio-visual and are willing to pay more to get the original package enriched with special features.

The Case of VideoAsia’s *Tales of Voodoo*: Double Bill, Commercial Bootlegging, and Plagiarism

VideoAsia’s *Tales of Voodoo* series has different approaches towards their films. They simply transferred the VHS films to DVD format, and retitled the films. Therefore, related to content, they either keep the original language (and its foreign subtitles), or keep the dubbed version from the VHS. However, at least there are two important elements undertaken by them, namely reworking the DVD covers and double bill strategy in order to provoke the sense of the B-Movies’

¹⁴¹ The title was “The Devil’s Sword: Indonesian Sword and Sorcery Epic”. Also see the original article in Austin, 2006a

golden era. Both are intertwined with two other common elements of commercial bootleg products: the sources and copyright issues and the low quality of images and sounds.

Indeed, Eerie Publications underwent the act of commercial bootlegging. According to Marshall, in music industry bootlegging is defined as “the release of live concerts and/or studio outtakes that have never been officially released” (Marshall 2010, xiv).¹⁴² Marshall writes:

Like the pirate, the bootleg is also a new artefact rather than one passing off as a legitimate release. However, unlike the pirate, the bootleg is made up of recordings that have never been officially released. The majority of such recordings are of live concerts but there are some which feature ‘outtakes’ (Marshall 2010, 160).

In the VideoAsia context, I argue that they have copied some films illegitimately, but the DVDs are the ones that “have never been officially released” overseas in the 2000s. The difference between them and fan bootleggers is that they do it commercially. In short: commercial bootlegging.

So what is the distinction between those commercial bootlegs with general pirated DVDs? Naghavi and Schulze, discussing the case of music, write:

...bootlegs do not crowd out official sales as they have lower sound quality and higher prices than the officially released CDs of the respective band. Rather, they cater to a small market segment of “hardcore fans” ignored by the record companies. The real threat for the bands thus lies in pirated CDs, not in bootlegs. (Naghavi and Schulze: 2001, 68).

Related to the context of VideoAsia, I argue that the similar arguments can be applied to the case of DVDs. On the one hand the DVDs are just copies from VHS format and of low quality. On the other hand, they provide exclusive and rare materials to a niche market. The original versions of the DVD are very rare to find as the films are re-circulated in other forms (such as VHS, Betamax or Laser Disc) and marketed as rare collectible items with a high price. But, in the case of

¹⁴² Marshall elaborates upon three different types of piracy. The first one, the most obvious one that he calls “counterfeiting”, or “making a straight copy of a record released by the record label, including all of the packaging”, or “the unauthorised copying of the sound of the original recording, as well as the artwork, label, trade mark and packaging”, which intends to “to mislead consumers and make them think they are buying the genuine article” (Marshall 2010, 160). The second one is the pirate copy, and here Marshall quoted The RIAA antipiracy website: “the unauthorized duplication of only the sounds of one or more legitimate recording” (Marshall 2010, 160). The last one is bootlegging.

VideoAsia, the price is not as expensive as rare collectible VHS films originally from the 1980s and the 1990s. Therefore, some “hardcore fans” have no objection to the bad quality of the films, or if the DVDs have no bonus special features and the covers were taken illegally from the comic books. Mathijs and Sexton write:

Since the 1980s, the exploitation market has changed and become somewhat murkier. The traditional exhibition outlets, such as drive-ins and grindhouse theatres, began to disappear, which made it more difficult to get cheap films shown in cinemas. Video created a new market, yet while cheap exploitation filmmaking certainly existed to fill this market, straight-to-video titles rarely become cult hits. This is perhaps because such films tend to slip beneath the net of many people’s radar. Nevertheless, there is a small, yet growing, trend for people to laud straight-to-video, trashy films on the net...(Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 52)

The citation above strengthens my argument regarding VideoAsia's attempts to arouse fans’ nostalgia or feelings of vintage-connection with terms from the golden era of cult movies and the subcultures of drive-ins and grindhouse theatres, as well as the double bill strategy that commonly is associated with midnight movies culture in order to gain more cult followers (Mathijs and Sexton, 2011, 240). This very phenomenon of, as Mathijs and Sexton put it, “a mix of new and old materials, and hot and cool reputations” is common in cult film circuits (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 31). In addition, the trend of the straight-to-video strategy from the 1980s and 1990s had a great impact on the distributor since they recycled the VHS version into DVD format illegally, which made the films have low quality images and sound as well as an unsuitable ratio.

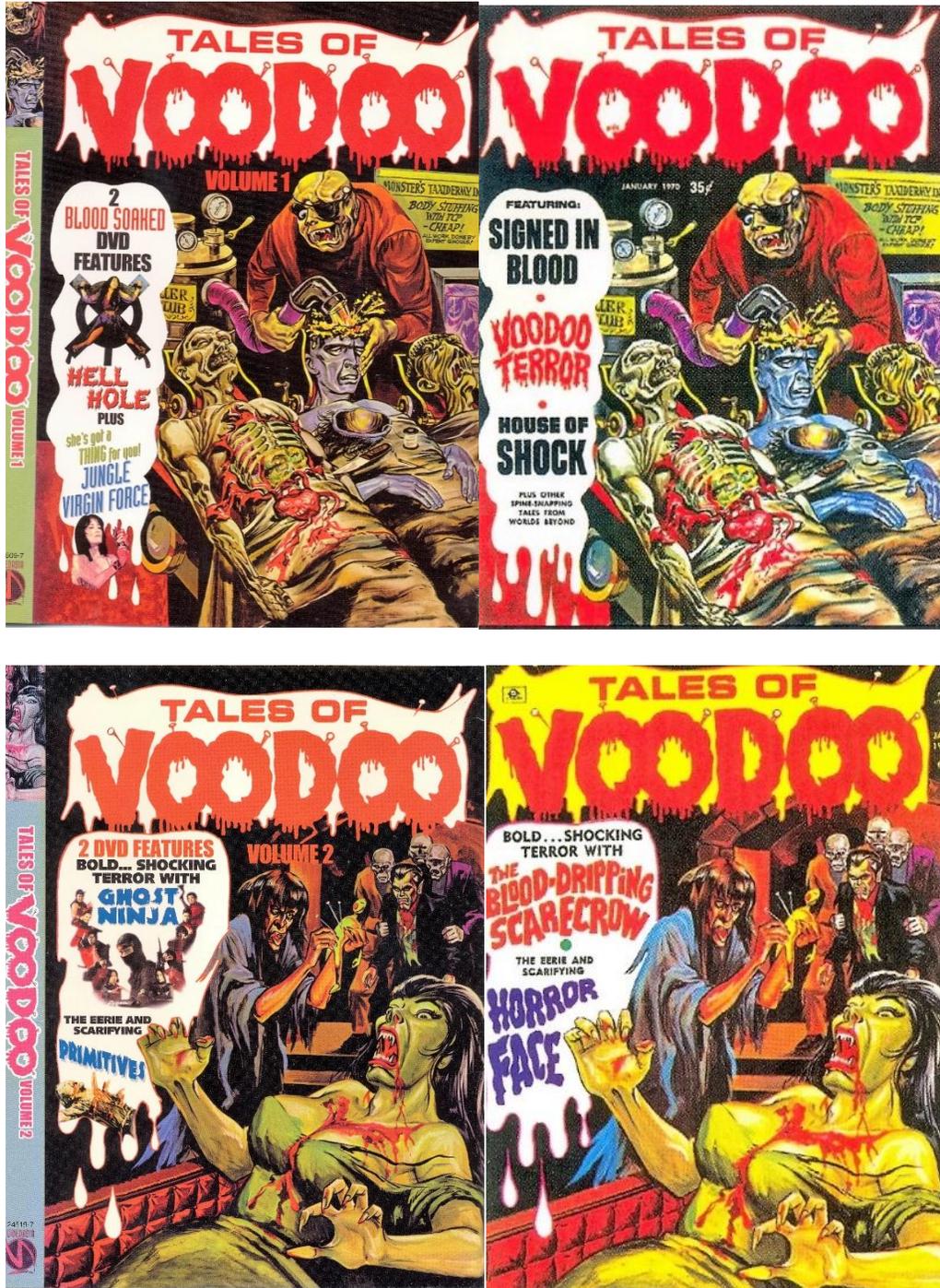
Below, I will elaborate upon how VideoAsia rework the extra-textual materials in relation to the double bill strategy and the act of plagiarism.

The DVD Covers

The DVD covers (layouts, fonts and images) are not taken from, nor do they represent, the content of the films. Instead, they can be easily traced to a series of comic book publications published by Eerie Publications with the same title, *Tales of Voodoo*.

Figure 4:

Comparison of *Tales of Voodoo* as a series of VideoAsia releases in the 2000s (left) and in the 1960s-1970s comic books (right)



(Source: private DVD collection and Howlett: 2010)

By looking at Figure 4, above, we can see clearly that there are strong similarities between the comic book covers, the images, and DVD covers - from the font, the name of the title, and the layouts.

A fan review describes the phenomenon: “Don't be fooled by the garish comic book covers either. They are merely reproductions (probably illegal) of early 70's comics covers from Eerie Publishing (I smell litigation!)” (“Odds ‘N’ Ends”).

As mentioned, this act of plagiarism is a common practice in the world of bootlegging and informal distribution, particularly in cult video circuits (Mathijs and Sexton, 2011, 33-34; Lobato and Ryan, 2011). As underlined by Mathijs and Sexton, “[o]nly rarely were such practices criminalized or prosecuted” (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 34). That is the main reason why such practices still exist until recently.¹⁴³

The double feature is another strategy of VideoAsia. As we can see from the DVD covers, they pair two films in one package. The double bill practice has been happening for decades, particularly in independent American movie theaters including Saturday afternoon matinees and late-night screenings at drive-in movie theatres (Rhodes 2011, 57; Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 33). Rhodes writes:

Dual bills were particularly attractive to independent theatres that often had to wait to screen major films after first-run houses, as well as to some affiliated chain theatres, which found programming second features to be cheaper than hiring expensive stage shows (Rhodes 2011, 57).

¹⁴³ Interestingly, Eerie Publications, a publishing company that published the comic book series *Tales of Voodoo*, also did this common practice in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Comic book critic Mike Howlett writes that the publishing company has been associated with the word of plagiarism (Howlett 2010). However, Howlett highlights that: “The practice of reusing existing material may be a little underhanded, sure, but since nobody realized that 98% of the stories were ripped from 1950s horror comics until 30 years after the fact, I’d say that no one was hurt by the practice” (Howlett: 2010, Xxv). For example, *Tales of Voodoo* VVI #11 (Nov. 1968) “... not only picked up Tales from the Crypt’s numbering, but borrowed their title logo as well: block letters above a dripping, bloody font”, and they commonly “...reprint old ‘50s horror comics in black and white with new or reprinted covers” (Howlett: 2010, 54-55, 59, 72). In short, Eerie Publications commonly recycle their covers by reusing and retouching previous works by others as well as the content. The practice is repeated in VideoAsia’s *Tales of Voodoo* case.

Rhodes also underlines that these kinds of practices were “...embraced by marginal exhibitors and low-budget producers, but attacked by most major studios and established theatre chains (Rhodes 2011, 57). Therefore, the double bill strategy has a direct relation to the distribution and exhibition of B movies.¹⁴⁴

Considering the contexts above, I conclude that both the plagiarism act and the double bill strategy by VideoAsia leads to two things: its immediate relation with exploitation films and the marketing of nostalgia, particularly around the golden era of B-grade films and drive-in cinema culture, which the double bill was generally associated with. (Rhodes 2011, 57). Howlett also associates the direct relation between the comic book and the Grindhouse phenomenon, especially those that existed in the 42nd Street, New York City:

Eerie Pub, on the other hand, are now being appreciated (in “mainstream” circles, at least), as nostalgic and kitschy, a product of their time; a throwback to something that could never fly today. They were (and are) down and dirty like 42nd Street in the ‘70s: dirty and dangerous (Howlett: 2010, Xxv).

In conclusion, VideoAsia decontextualized the films by putting non-related materials on the front and back covers of the DVDs as a meta-cult practice, in order to grab cult fans’ attention and stir their nostalgia and sense of vintage. The reason was partly related to the sources and copyrights which I will discuss below.

Sources and Copyrights

The quality of the audio visual in VideoAsia films is low. Generally, the films have the original dialogue and no (re)dubbing applied, but with English subtitles.¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, as discussed above, the materials on the covers of the DVD do not have any relation to the content. I argue that, unlike the legal distributors that can exploit the materials (McDonald 2007, 67), this particular DVD label decided to undergo commercial bootlegging partly because

¹⁴⁴ In addition, it is also important to note that, although it is a common practice in Western countries, the double bill as marketing strategy, both in movie theatres and home videos, is not normally recognized in the Indonesian context.

¹⁴⁵ Alternatively, the DVDs keep the foreign languages’ dubbing with English subtitles, or English dubbing with foreign languages, depending on the original VHS version.

they do not have the rights to distribute them. Therefore, they exploited the materials illegally from irrelevant materials.

The second important element is that they arguably do not treat the films as gems; therefore they do not enrich the special features sections and make them proper collectible items. They only reworked the front and back cover, and just represent the films as transferred from the VHS format (thus, low quality, unfit ratio, and so on).

Fans' criticism

Many buyers suspected that VideoAsia just copied the films from the VHS format circulated in the 1980s and the 1990s. That explains some elements: the ratio is not suitable for wide screen, the quality of images and sound are bad, and sometimes the spectators can see the VHS Company's label and foreign subtitles (whether it is Dutch, Greek, or Japanese). A fan named Kungfusamurai, in a thread titled "VideoAsia and their marketing strategies" in *Shaolin Chamber 36* online forum, writes:

My guess is that 4 or 5 of the films will be of really crappy quality, either looking like they were taped off the air or the image will be jerky. That's usually how these George Tan multi-film sets turn out to be...(Kungfusamurai, Shaolinchamber36.com, 25/04/2010)

A day later, the posting got a response from fellow fan:

Their non-anamorphic ports off UK DVD and tape releases aren't bad for what they are. If you need these cheap, they are the best way to go. (Dionbrother, 26/04/2010)

Another member from a thread called "What's the Story with George Tan" in the same forum writes:

It's also worth noting that VideoAsia was infamous for terrible quality prints AND technical issues like out-of-synch audio, DVDs only playing in DVD-ROM drives, and only being able to watch the fight scenes in a movie. Their TERROR TALES and TALES OF VOODOO lines were infamous for using English dubs with foreign subtitles and for often cropping the subtitles out of the frame for the majority of a film's running time (Guest Atomic Mystery Monster, Shaolin Chamber 36, 11/12/2006)

The criticism above shows the concern and demand of cult fans for proper DVD quality as many of them consider the films to be collectible items.

B-Movie Nightmares, a reviewer at *Amazon.com* (17/01/2006) clearly mentioned and complained about the bad transfer from VHS to DVD and titled his opinion as “More like Tales of a 5th-generation VHS copy” (“Tales of Voodoo 2” : Ghost Ninja & Primitives DVD Region 1 US Import NTSC: Amazon.co.uk: DVD & Blu-Ray”). He writes:

Both movies were obviously transferred from VHS prints, which is apparent from the video tracking lines and inferior image definition. I'm no stickler for perfect picture quality, heck, I even own a lot of the Brentwood DVD's that are also taken from VHS, but this is the worst DVD transfer I've seen since the unwatchable *Flesh Feast with Veronica Lake*.... The situation with *Primitives* is like that of *Ghost Ninja*, but worse. What would have otherwise been an enjoyable bad movie is ruined by the absolute garbage transfer to DVD. There's definitely a market for movies like this to be released to DVD, but why bother unless you're going to transfer from the original film print? Heck, just find somebody who has original VHS tape of the movie and go from there--these seriously look like copies off a fifth-generation VHS that was left too close to the theatre. (“Tales of Voodoo 2”: *Ghost Ninja & Primitives DVD Region 1 US Import NTSC: Amazon.co.uk: DVD & Blu-Ray*”)

It is worth mentioning that there are fans trying not to complain because of the film's rarity and exclusivity, two important elements for cult followers (Jancovich 2002). A clear case is a comment from F. Sison at *Amazon*, where this fan reviewer gave 5 out of 5 stars and stated that he or she had no objection at all, since the films are “inexpensive to buy and very rare films”.

There are some paradoxical opinions from buyers on Amazon (“Tales of Voodoo” 2: *Ghost Ninja & Primitives DVD Region 1 US Import NTSC: Amazon.co.uk: DVD & Blu-Ray*”) related to this issue. Most of the fans condemned the bad quality of *Tales of Voodoo 1*, but could not avoid it as it was the only version of the film available. Lorraine J Fleming gave 1 out of 5 stars and titled her subject as “worst DVD ever bought”:

Forget a review of the movies as the transfer to DVD of these movies is the worst I've ever seen. The reason I bought this was because I needed the film *savage terror* (on the DVD it's called *primitives*) but I really shouldn't have bothered the movie has unremovable Greek

subtitles all the way through and it's got to be the worst VHS tape they found to transfer it to DVD as it jumps and has lines and the picture goes black a couple of times. Unless you're a collector of section 3 video nasties I beg you don't waste your time and money on this like I did.

On the same website, V Pykett gave the films 2 out of 5 and warned other prospective buyers by saying that "picture quality is poor in certain parts of the film" ("Tales of Voodoo 2" : Ghost Ninja & Primitives DVD Region 1 US Import NTSC: Amazon.co.uk: DVD & Blu-Ray").

Elsewhere, on some fans' blogs and online forums, most of the fans felt disappointed about the flawed elements I elaborated upon in relation to VideoAsia. Similar to the discussion on Amazon, few fans felt grateful because they considered this to be the only way to access the films. A review writes about the distributing company as "those thieving bastards at VideoAsia/Ventura A review calls the distributor Distribution" ("Total Weirdness"). Almanacs even has a thread called "Anybody seen the *Tales of Voodoo* DVDs?" in the AVManiacs online forum ("Anybody Seen the *Tales of Voodoo* DVDs? MERGED"), with massive disappointments expressed with regards to the low quality of the illegitimate bootleg derived from VHS.

One of the bloggers, Den Boer, even compares it with Mondo Macabro:

If you look closely during the opening credits you can see that some of titles are missing off frame. Also some compositions during the film feel too cramped and early on in the film there are noticeable tape rolls. Both of these films have been sourced from VHS masters so don't expect them to look as spectacular as the excellent Mondo Macabro release for *Virgins from Hell ...Jungle Virgin Force* and *Hell Hole* are two action packed and entertaining films that deserve a better release then this. Hopefully some company like Mondo Macabro will pick these up and give them the tender loving care they desire. Overall *Tales of Voodoo* Volume 1 is a totally worthless release despite its cheap retail price. It is one of those instances in which you get what you pay for which is two solid films that are marred by crappy transfers that fail to take full advantage of DVD format (Boer 2006b)

In many cases, the fans who bought these DVDs do not prioritize the quality of the images and sounds, and do not mind the poor quality or unavailability of the special features of DVD. They

prefer to search for exotic titles, particularly those with rarities and exclusivities. I conclude that these types of fans are, to use Klinger's term, Low End Collectors.

Conclusion

As a common practice, both Mondo Macabro and VideoAsia have reworked the films to make them more suitable for the tastes of the cult fans. Mondo Macabro applied the chaperone model of archiving and treated the films as collectible items, by including many materials (such as trivial knowledge, and short documentaries) in the special features. They also retitled and redubbed the films. On the other hand, VideoAsia undertook the double bill strategy and focused on the DVD covers (such as retitling, putting images associated with the nostalgia of drive-in cinema). And, as is the nature of commercial bootlegging, they did not change or add to the content of the films.

Since both companies tried to make the films more concomitant with the cult fans, and also with their own taste with Western-centric cult tradition (titles, dubbing, taglines of DVDs, tradition of double bill and grindhouses), they decontextualized and recontextualized the films from their original cultural contexts and framed them as cult movies

Mondo Macabro bought the distribution rights directly from the producers. And since they have dealt with legal issues properly, they could do more to exploit the materials. They cleaned-up the film; and enriched their releases with special features with documentaries and interviews as well as other archival materials. They also made some changes to the dubbing of trailers and the films. They also put original documentaries on the movies produced by them. In conclusion, they consider the films as gems and collector's items to be treated with respect and appreciation. Therefore, they frame and preserve and at the same time feed these particular fans' tastes, in this case: high-end collectors.

On the other hand, VideoAsia does commercial bootlegs, imitates the title and covers as well as the fonts and layouts from cult classic comics associated with the golden era of B movies. They also market the film as a double bill or double features package, and, as I have argued, try to encourage fans' memories of the common practices of Grindhouse cinema and drive-in film cultures.

Many fans were upset by this, but, at the same time they accepted the situation considering the price is low and the films are rare, and they want to maintain the atmosphere of rarities and

exclusivities. In this context, VideoAsia gave the fans, the low-end collectors, something that “they cannot refuse”.

Section Three

Cultural Traffic and Film Reception of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Films

Chapter 6

Moral Panic and Reception of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Films:

The Case of *Lady Terminator*

The case of the withdrawal of *Lady Terminator* (*Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan*,¹⁴⁶ Tjut Jalil, 1989)¹⁴⁷ can, arguably, be one of the best examples of Indonesian taste battles, particularly with regard to local exploitation film reception. General opinion from the national media showed how some cultural elites, along with other influential members of society (often seen as the voice of “the public”), attacked the film due to concerns over scenes depicting explicit sex and violence. As a result, they forced its withdrawal. However, following this event, the massive demand to watch this particular movie, both nationally and globally, increased. Apparently, the withdrawal elicited the distribution of illegal and uncensored video versions of the film. Hence, I argue, there were multiple kinds of public reception towards the film, not only those represented by cultural elites and officials in the mass media--as written by some film journalists, critics, and scholars.¹⁴⁸

Along with *Akibat Terlalu Genit* (ATG, *The Result of Too Flirtatious*, Hadi Poernomo, 1989; an erotic comedy film), the film was withdrawn from cinemas due to erotic scenes (Jufry, Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992: 1), on 10 July 1989, after 9 days of screenings. Although regarded as being too vulgar and distasteful (“Deppen Awasi Video Rental Yang Mengedarkan PRLS”, “Yurike Belum Ditindak Sebab Parfi Belum Nonton Film PRLS”), according to PT. Perfin, 105

¹⁴⁶ Literal meaning: *Revenge of the South Sea Queen*.

¹⁴⁷ I consider 1989 as the year of circulation of the film, whereas the Film Indonesia website states 1988 as the year of production.

¹⁴⁸ For the discussion of politics of taste by the New Order’s government and cultural elites, please see Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

thousand spectators watched this film in nine days (Jufry Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 8), and it was domestically screened at 13 superhall class cinemas in Jakarta as well as in some big cities in Indonesia (““Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan” Beredar Di Empat Benua”).

Based on the public discourses in mass media, the infamous film was one of the most discussed in Indonesian cinema history due to its content (sensual scenes), distribution/exhibition (the local and global circulation of illegal and uncensored versions), and policy making (the fact that the film actually passed the censorship board (Badan Sensor Film, BSF). Indeed, overall, this film generally received strong criticism from newspapers and magazines. The public discourses on the films in the media were not balanced as most of the opinions and statements devalued the film and highlighted its negative socio-political impact (Daryan: 1989, Henridewanto et al : 1989, “Kebijaksanaan Perfilman Terlalu Lunak dan Longgar”, Martha : 1989, “Sebuah Catatan untuk BSF”, Soegoeng : 1989, Sukanto : 1989, Mohammad : 1989, “Yurike Pemain Spesialisasi Begituan”). For example, J.B. Kristanto criticized the film, commenting that it “...insults the intelligence of the viewers” due to its “illogical and unreal stories” (Jufry Baharuddin, Pasaribu 1992, 1). Another prolific film critic, Salim Said, whilst not objecting to the sexual scenes within the film, criticized the general filthiness (“*kejorokan*”) of the work (Henridewanto et al 1989, 72). As a member of the National Film Council and Permanent Committee of Indonesian Film Festival, Said also states that the film policies ‘are too soft and loose, and the filmmakers misuse the policies by producing films that ruin the good name of our nation abroad’ (“Kebijaksanaan Perfilman Terlalu Lunak dan Longgar”, also see “Sebuah Catatan untuk BSF”).¹⁴⁹

The criticism towards the film continued until 1994 when the re-censored version of the film was released, and the title changed to *Misteri Pusaka Laut Selatan (The Mystery of South Sea's Amulet)* (“Lady Terminator (1988)”). During those years, based on the reportage in media, it seems that *Lady Terminator* caused moral panic in the public, particularly in the years immediately after its withdrawal.. Protests regarding the circulation of the movie came from some influential members of society, namely journalists, film critics, public intellectuals, Muslim scholars, policy makers, and members of parliament. Parliament Member, Ali Tamin, suggested that the Minister of

¹⁴⁹ The biggest national magazine, *Tempo* weekly, addressed this phenomenon, particularly the case of *Lady Terminator*, on 22 July 1989 with the headline “Astaghfirullah Film Indonesia”, or “Oh My God, Indonesian Movies!” *Astaghfirullah* is an Islamic term, which means “Oh God please forgive me”, and I find it interesting that this term was used by a secular and liberal magazine to illustrate the heated situation in 1989.

Information should prosecute the censorship board in Court (Henridewanto et al, 1989, 72). Two of the organizations that officially asked for the withdrawal and re-censoring of the film are *Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia* (Indonesian Journalists Association, PWI) Jakarta branch (“Sukanto, BSF, dan Sensor”) and Bapfida Jakarta branch (“Deppen Awasi Video Rental yang Mengedarkan PRLS”).

Although the voices of moral panics related to film have dominated the media sphere in Indonesia, I will argue that this kind of reception is not the only discourse related to *Lady Terminator*. Whilst the public discussion within the media has seemingly been controlled by one-sided criticism and perspectives represented by cultural elites and other influential members of society, here I want to elaborate the other side of the public, namely the mainstream audience and film distributors, both local and global.

First, in order to gain a broader understanding, I want to investigate to what extent can we consider the phenomenon as a “moral panic”? I want to highlight how and why domestic cultural elites tried to engage in public censorship and thus incriminated the film, even years after the withdrawal event, and dominated the media with their statement on behalf of the public.

Second, I will also investigate to what extent the framing of public opinion succeeded as the other members of the public opposed these attempts and still tried to circulate and consume the withdrawn film.

By looking at the discussions published in newspapers and magazines, as well as the film policies related to the issue, I will demonstrate that actually it is not the mainstream public, but just limited numbers of cultural elites and policy makers, who highlighted the moral panic phenomenon caused by *Lady Terminator*. Contrary to their statements many audiences, both domestic and international, demanded more of the films, which, was shown by the prolific illegal reproduction and exportation of the uncensored version of the film.

By focusing on audience reception, particularly in relation to film distribution and popular consumption, as published in mainstream journals and magazines, this chapter is expected to provide a better understanding of the consumption by “the other kind of public”, which was not clearly discussed within the analyses provided by the majority of film scholars or in articles published within the mass media.

Finally, this chapter will highlight how global flows had an effect upon the taste battles among the Indonesian government and cultural elites at one end of the spectrum and local and global audiences as well as distributors on the other.

Before I discuss the case, I will elaborate upon certain key terms utilized within this analysis, namely moral panic, whilst also drawing conclusions as to the nature of the larger picture regarding contemporaneous cultural debates, specifically within an Indonesian context, prevalent before 1989.

Moral Panic vs. Blockbuster Spectators

I argue that this intense relationship between the voices of influential society members and the mainstream audience will be made clear by focusing on the theories of moral panic. I chose Moral Panic as my focus because, as Critcher puts it, "... they reveal a lot about the working of power, specifically who has the capacity to define a social problem and prescribe appropriate action" (Critcher 2006, 4). As mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter 1, I want to interrogate how different kinds of politics of taste interact, negotiate, and influence each other, which has a direct relationship to the term "working of power" outlined by Critcher above.

Moral Panic has been described as, "a condition which emerges and is defined as a threat to societal values and interests" (Cohen in Critcher 2006, 29; Cohen 1994, 9). Yet another definition, as forwarded by Critcher, states:

Individuals and social groups can by their very activities emerge as a basis for outrage expressed by influential members of society who perceive these activities as seriously subverting the mores and interests of the dominant culture" (Watson and Hill 2003:196 quoted in Critcher 2006: 1-2).

In short, it is ultimately about "reconfirming moral values" (Critcher 2006, 9).

As suggested by these theorists, moral panics are usually caused by elite groups (identified as claims makers, moral entrepreneurs, or primary definers), who construct public opinion towards

an issue and act as spokespeople of the public (Critcher 2006, 177, 179, 181, 182), namely those from the press and broadcasting, pressure groups and claim makers, politicians and government, police and law enforcement agencies (Critcher 2006, 4). According to Hall et al (quoted in Critcher 2006, 15), in a moral panic situation, “Cohen's 'societal control culture' maintaining a 'moral consensus' is replaced by the state struggling to maintain hegemony or ideological dominance”. Within an Indonesian context, it was not only the state who engaged in such situations, but also non-state actors, particularly cultural elites, who tried to frame the concept of national cinema with the term *Mencari Wajah Indonesia* (The attempt to search for Indonesian faces on screen) and *film kultural edukatif* since 1977 (see Introduction and Chapter 1).

Additionally, the role of mass media is important to frame the public opinion, as Stanley Cohen writes:

...its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians, and other right thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions (Cohen 1994, 9)

In newspapers and magazines, mainly in 1989, it seems that the influential members of society, including film-related cultural elites, dominated the media discourses. However, only few people, or scholars who had dissenting opinions, were interviewed by the press as representatives of the mass audience. The voice of the “other kind of public” was rarely shown in the public sphere, although the mainstream spectators regularly watched this kind of film in the public movie-theaters as demonstrated in the box office charts during the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, in many cases, these kinds of films dominated the local film scene. For example, 80% of films which participated in the FFI 1989 were those mystical films full of sex and violence (“Dimension Kultural Edukatif dan Acuan Selera Pasar”, “Film Indonesia Seharusnya Antara Mutu dan Komersil”).¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ *Banjarmasin Post* stated that of the 104 films in circulation in 1989, only about 60 could participate in FFI, 40 of them were rejected by the committee, including both withdrawn films, due to their content (“Film Seharusnya Tetap Berpijak pada Kultur Bangsa”).

The other important aspect of studying moral panics is that they "... require us to face up to some awkward questions about truth in relation to social problems" (Critcher 2006: 6). In the context of *Lady Terminator*, as well as in the case of classic Indonesian exploitation cinema in general, many of these kinds of films had successfully reached popular box office status with tens of thousands of spectators. However, these kinds of spectators either remain under- or unrepresented in both popular mass media and scholarly works.

Lastly, Critcher underlines that since 'Moral Panic is ostensibly about the forms of troubling behavior which society appears unable to control', they represent a series of responses to changes (Critcher 2006, 7). And, as Cohen writes, in some cases, the objects causing the moral panic is "...something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight". (Cohen 1994, 9). These claims are important to this case as they generate a perspective to analyze the context of the New Order, particularly in view of the fact that sex and violence on screen already existed before the case of *Lady Terminator* and even before New Order was founded.

In the world film industry, the discourses about moral panic occurred when scholars discussed the phenomenon of "video nasties" in the UK (1982-1984, 1992-1994), while similar cases happened in Sweden (1982-1983), New Zealand (1986) and Australia (1996). (Critcher 2006, 64). Regarding the case of Video Nasties, Martin Barker (1984, 7) underlines the roles of elite groups who campaigned on behalf of these 'dangerous' films. He argues that the claim "...is a politically motivated rhetoric, which systematically distorts the meaning and nature of the videos themselves" (Barker 1984, 7).

Moreover, Barker states that the voices of concerns and political-cultural movements were undertaken by only elite groups, and not the entire public. He writes:

In truth, it never was a real 'general public' that was appealed to in the debates. It was a specially defined group of people with certain qualities who could make up a 'proper' general public. The actual public could not be relied on. (Barker 1984, 26)

The citation above, in addition to the aforementioned discussion, can be applied to the case of *Lady Terminator*, as I will demonstrate below.

Another important element related to this issue is the emergence of new media technology, namely home video (Critchler 2006, 79), which also plays an important role in the *Lady Terminator* case, as I will discuss.

In order to understand the context in which the New Order operated, particularly during 1989, I will look at the relationship between mass media reception and the discourses mentioned above, with a focus on the issues surrounding *Lady Terminator*. It is pertinent that, while I do a close reading of the discourses in relation to some general newspapers and magazines, one should be careful about the biases of the media. As underlined by Cohen, in many cases, newspapers seem to alter the essence of the news and mislead the readers, particularly those who are not familiar with the context and zeitgeist of the cases. (Critchler 2006, xii).

Moral Panic in pre-1989 Indonesia

Moral Panic and the concerns about the negative socio-political influences of exploitation films were indeed a cultural dilemma at least since the early years of the New Order era, if not before. Evidence suggests that during the 1960s, when *Antara Bumi dan Langit* (*Between Earth and Sky*, 1950) was screened, it caused protests because it contained the first kissing scenes in Indonesian film history. Additionally, in the early 1970s, there were two infamous cases related to the aforementioned issue. One of them, *Bernafas dalam Lumpur* (*Breathing in Mud*, 1970), is considered as the first film to accentuate sex and rape, whilst also incorporating salacious dialogue, and thus received sharp criticism from “the public” (Franto 2009; also see Yngvesson 2014, 71; Imanjaya 2009d, Imanjaya 2009b).¹⁵¹

These were not isolated incidents; in 1972 alone, there was a veritable plethora of films that did not pass the censorship boards due to depictions of sexuality and violence, for example *Samiun dan Dasima* (*Samiun and Dasima*), *Impas* (*Getting Even*), *Bengawan Solo* (*Bengawan Solo River*), *Insan Kesepian* (*Lonely Person*) (“Inilah Beberapa Adegan Jang Digunting Sensor”) and *Lorong Hitam* (*Black Tunnel*) (“Lorong Hitam”). Of the latter, *Sinar Harapan* daily writes that the film almost got banned. It was watched by Bapfida three times before being categorized as a ‘film suitable for 21 and above’ because ‘... the movie will likely bring considerable influence to children and students who watched it’.

¹⁵¹ See Chapter 1 for further discussion on this issue.

Social Scholar Arief Budiman (*Harian Kami*, 8 January 1972) in his seminal analysis on the phenomenon, states that many Indonesian films were in fact full of sensual scenes because the filmmakers were also the film importers, and therefore they had some economic interests in selling the both films and treated films as commodities, not as a means for cultural and artistic development.

Other sexploitation films, as briefly discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1 of this thesis, including *Bumi Makin Panas* (*The Earth is Getting Hotter*, Ali Shahab 1973) were banned in Cianjur (West Java) and the neighbouring country Malaysia.¹⁵²

In 1976, the government improved the supervision of illicit filmmaking (“Pengawasan Film2 Sex dan Sadism Ditingkatkan”, “Bumi Makin Panas”; Yngvesson 2014, 54), because they believed such films “...would be a bad influence on the growth and mental development of young people”. They also criticized Bapfida and suggested that they better supervise the movies being scrutinized appropriately by watching them themselves, rather than only reading the synopses. In addition, the article also underlined the violation made by distributors who used the name of high-ranking officials and institutions for the sake of their own benefit. On the other hand, film producers felt insecure if they did not include sex scenes, since in not doing so they may fail to return the investment made by internal and external funding sources. (“Film Nasional Banyak Diwarnai Soal Sex”).

In 1983, Cultural Critic Subagyo Martosubroto wrote that it is the producers who are responsible for the low quality of the films because “they only looked for profit by exposing advertisements which were inappropriate to the censorship board’s regulations, or tacitly reedit the censored version of the films” (“Stop Film Porno & Sadisme”). A year after, films related to sex and sadism mushroomed, and the Minister of Information, Harmoko, made a strong statement, stating that the films as well as other kinds of media (newspapers, magazines, bulletins, brochures, video, and ads) violated regulations, obstructed religious beliefs, and impinged upon the formation of national characters and the ideological values of the *Pancasila* as the state ideology.¹⁵³ He instructed that all related institutions (including The Department of Information, The Department of Internal

¹⁵² The other film was *Bernafas dalam Lumpur* (*Breathing in Mud*, 1970).

¹⁵³ On *Pancasila*, see footnote 53.

Affairs, The Department of Religious Affairs, The Department of Education and Culture, The Commander of Security and Order, The Attorney General, and The Indonesian State Intelligence Agency) stand against exploitation films (“Pornografi dan Sadisme. Pemerintah Tidak Segan Mengambil Tindakan Tegas”).

The Case of *Lady Terminator*

Lady Terminator is one of the most controversial films that caused a moral panic in Indonesia, particularly in 1989.¹⁵⁴ In the global context, the film was exported overseas without approval from the censorship board in the late 1980s (“Karena Tidak Melalui Sensor”) and became one of the world cult movies celebrated by global fans.. It has several different titles, including *Nasty Hunter*. The film was globally re-circulated in the 2000s and the 2010s, and was also included in the “100 Cult Films” list by Mathijs and Mendik (2011).

The film apparently had two versions, the one with local actors for domestic circulation, and one with foreign stars which was aimed at the global market. Yurike Prastika, one of the main actors, stated that she had to undertake two versions of the sex scenes: with local actor (Johan Saimima), and then with a Caucasian actor (“Yurike Pemain Spesialisasi Begituan”) and that the transnational version was indeed more sexual than the domestic one (“Karena Tidak Melalui Sensor”).

With regard to national contemporaneous cultural debates, as discussed briefly above, the film became a target of harsh criticism by influential members of society and some professional and mass organizations demanded the withdrawal the film from movie theaters. Before and after the banning of the film, many important figures wrote articles or were interviewed by the press, excoriating the film. I have already elaborated upon some of the criticism earlier in this chapter.

¹⁵⁴ *Lady Terminator* is an exploitation legend-action film, a mockbuster of James Cameron’s *Terminator*). Here is the synopsis:

To avenge herself for being humiliated by a powerful man, Nyi Roro Kidul (the legendary Queen of the South Sea) possesses the body of Tania, an American anthropologist researching for the legendary myth. Any man who has intercourse with Tania will die because a "keris" (a short wavy blade) will come out of her vagina. (“Lady Terminator (1988”).

However, I will detail a few more censures towards the films from different elements of society. For example, after watching the movie three weeks after its withdrawal, the Indonesian Islamic Scholars Council (MUI, *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*) suspected that there were some deliberate attempts done by some specific groups to include pornographic elements both within the movies and also the literature. (“Ada Kesengajaan dlm Film Porno?”). In an editorial, the editor of *Merdeka Daily* blamed the filmmaker, suggesting that he only wanted to seek profit while blatantly ignoring any form of moral responsibility (“Begitu Berdosakah BSF”).

The target of the condemnation was not only against the film and its filmmakers, but also the BSF that passed both films (“Begitu Berdosakah BSF”). In an article titled *Lingkaran Setan dalam Film Indonesia* (The Vicious Circle of Indonesian Cinema), *Tempo* magazine writes that after the banning the BSF was severely criticized by film critics and cultural elites. There was an argument accusing this censorship board of being susceptible to bribery, but no evidence to support these claims was ever found (Henridewanto et al, 1989, 72).

Furthermore Ali Tamin and Salim Said suggested that the Minister of Information, Harmoko, should sue the censorship board for such indiscretions. Said said: “The filmmaker and the producer of the film should be investigated by the police. If proven guilty, they must be punished” (Henridewanto et al, 1989, 72). Such sanctions, according to Said, could result in not only their dismissal from film organizations but also in a revocation of their film production license.

Additionally, in a report, a journalist encouraged people to criticize films that are not suitable to the values of society. Martin Say wrote that the protests and complaints against visualizations of sex and obscenity were considered as a “sense of justice in society” and a sign that these kinds of films are not any longer in line with people’s values (“Masyarakat Harus Berani Menggugat”).

In response to this issue, one day after the withdrawal, The Minister of Information Harmoko inaugurated the new members of the BSF for 1989-1991 period, 11 days earlier than was initially planned. (Henridewanto 1989, 72). As a further response to the controversy over the withdrawal Harmoko established five, instead of three, members to every working group of censorship fractions, which raised the total membership from 39 to 45. As usual, the members consisted of representatives from the Government’s Ministries, non-Ministries (such as the Armed Forces, the State Intelligence Agency, the Attorney General, and so on), public organizations (such as

institutions from the five religions, Youth and Women organizations, and Scout), and public figures (Henridewanto 1989, 73).

Being accused by influential members of the community, the Head of The Censorship Board, Thomas Sugito, thought that the BSF had always tried to filter the films in accordance with the values of the *Pancasila*. But, on the other hand, as mentioned two years earlier in the case of the withdrawal of *Ketika Musim Semi Tiba (When Spring Comes)*, he had said that the censorship board had a moral mission to support national cinema by passing all works that come before the board. And he added that sexual scenes are allowed if and only if they are in a small proportion, and are used specifically to spice up the movies, and thus entice viewers (Henridewanto 1989, 73).

Responding to the criticism, the director of *Lady Terminator*, Hajj Tjut Djilil, argued that he had followed all the film procedures properly, and he thought that the sexual scenes in the movie were not excessive for adult movie audiences. (Sukarno and Tamtono 1989, 74- 75). However, at that time, similar racy films did not get withdrawn such as *Permainan yang Nakal (The Naughty Game)*, *Bukit Berdarah (Bloody Mountain)* , *Bumi Bundar Bulat (The Earth is Round)*, *Nyi Blorong (Snake Queen)*, and did not get attention from mass media (Henridewanto et al 1989, 73).

Considering the situation above, a suspicious question was raised among some filmmakers: “Was the process selective to particular movies or filmmakers?”

Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that although the film was withdrawn on 10 July 1989, based on the media coverage, it seems that some related-institutions or influential representatives had not watched the film until after its withdrawal. For example, MUI watched it in late July (“MUI Khawatir Ada Unsur Kesengajaan dalam Peningkatan Bacaan dan Film Porno”). Parfi, the state-approved organization for actors, had not watched it until early August, three weeks after the withdrawal; therefore, they could not impose any sanctions on the local main actress, Yurike Prastika (“Yurike Belum Ditindak Sebab Parfi Belum Nonton Film PRLS”). Hence, either they, as significant elements of the public, did not get involved in proposing to withdraw the film, or did they support the retraction of the movie after the day it got banned.

Additionally, supportive action emerged from filmmakers. A group of filmmakers and actors organized a seminar titled “*Sikap Orang Film Menghadapi Keresahan Masyarakat Mengenai Film Porno*” (The Attitude of the Workers regarding the Public Concern on Porn Movies) on 30

September 1989. They concluded that sexual scenes were necessary on screen but filthiness would not be tolerated, and that the public must not blame the actors for the content of the films in which they appear because they are only following the director's commands. ("Seks Itu Perlu dalam Film")

Although the media were overwhelmed by criticism from primary definers, nevertheless, there was another kind of reception of the film, and "the other side of public" even violated the film laws, as I will discuss below.

The Other Side of "Public"

As discussed, after some public figures attacked the film and forced the censorship board to withdraw the film for nine days, it was banned. However, even given these sanctions rather than just socially vilifying this work, the demand for watching the film increased. Many people, particularly those who had not watched it yet, were curious and tried to get access to the film. Yolanda, one of the young models of that era, said that the withdrawal made her more intrigued about the sex scenes and she "...wanted to know how to make such scenes, but not for copying them" ("Yolanda Penasaran Ribut Soal Adegan Panas"). This kind of curiosity in some cases could occur due censorship and controversial issues, making the public more aware of the film (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 49).

Thus, an illegal version of the film, along with other titles, was circulated secretly and widely without any censorship certificate ("Selundupan, Film Tanpa STLS"). For the domestic context it was reported that Ananda Rarasto, head of the regional offices in the Department of Information, instructed his subordinates to supervise and be aware of video rentals and cinemas that circulated the film ("Deppen Awasi Video Rental Yang Mengedarkan PRLS"). Rarasto also highlights that 26,000 pirated videos of various titles had been distributed in 50 video rental outlets (out of 394 state-approved video rental outlets and 106 that hold a temporary permit), and that three rentals had been prosecuted in court for piracy or renting banned films, whereas the other rentals were not since the video rental owners already voluntarily gave their copies of the film to the Department.

The video cassettes, as a growing market, apparently played an important role in the circulation of illegal films, both domestically and internationally in Indonesia during this era. This not only included video rentals, but also illegal traveling video shows which were similar to the *layar*

*tancap*¹⁵⁵ distribution culture. It is important to note that traveling video shows were cheaper and more affordable to hire than the layar tancap ones as they were being in video cassettes format, as indicated in *Suara Karya daily* in 1997. (“Layar Tancap vs. Video Keliling”).

Illegal uncensored film exportation is another issue. It is important to note that, in the same year, even before the date of withdrawal, the film was exported abroad without any export license or censorship certificate (“Kebijaksanaan Perfilman Terlalu Lunak dan Longgar,” “Karena Tidak Melalui Sensor”). The film was globally distributed, both in the video format and at movie theaters, in Japan, USA, India, Taiwan, Spain, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, West Germany, and France, as seen in advertisements published in *The New York Post*,¹⁵⁶ *Amsterdam News*, *Daily News*, and *The New York Times* (“Peredaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri Tanpa Izin Deppen”; “Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan” Beredar Di Empat Benua”).

The Directorate General of Radio, TV, and Films, Alex Leo Zulkarnain, confirmed this and stated that without any censor certificate and export license, a film would be considered, treated, and prosecuted as a smuggled good (“Selundupan, Film Tanpa STLS”). Moreover, cultural activist Rosihan Anwar, in an interview, said that he had heard a report stating that there were some practices of making and internationally circulating indecent movies, particularly joint-production films which involved foreign production companies (“Film-Film Indonesia yang Beredar di Luar Negeri Lebih Jorok”). These films shared characteristics of the exploitation films: equally incorporated amateur foreign actors, several famous international actors, and foreign film crews (“Peredaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri Tanpa Izin Deppen”). It is reported that at least four producers were involved with illegal film exportation because it was not under the Information Department’s control. The article admits that the exportation was a continuation of Prokjetap Prosar’s activities back in 1982-1983 (discussed in Chapter 3), but it became uncontrollable since there were no other regulations (“Peredaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri Tanpa Izin Deppen”).

¹⁵⁵ For the analysis on *Layar Tancap*, please see Chapter 2

¹⁵⁶ The *Lady Terminator* screenings included one at a cinema on 42nd street, New York City, which was a popular location of Grindhouse cinemas (Leavold 2014,189, 193, 205).

An investigation was undertaken beginning in October 1988, but the research team had difficulties in accessing the films since the producers prevented them from watching the films, and they only managed to watch one film at that time. Salim Said explained that they could not control the film circulation overseas because the films were exported from Hong Kong, where the filmmakers did the post-production themselves, not from within Indonesia. Hence the films disseminated abroad were not yet officially censored nor did they get STLS. (“Kebijaksanaan Film Terlalu Longgar dan Lunak”, “Peredaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri Tanpa Izin Deppen”). Thus, there was no regulation or sanction of any kind imposed upon such attempts at illicit distribution (“Film-Film Indonesia yang Beredar di Luar Negeri Lebih Jorok”).

This kind of outlawed act of circulation raised questions among elite groups, as film critic Salim Said wondered: ‘Why is it that the film that has been withdrawn from circulation can be circulated abroad?’ (“Kebijaksanaan Perfilman Terlalu Lunak dan Longgar “).

In 1994, five years after the event, the film was re-censored and finally passed as an 80 minute version (“Lady Terminator (1988)”) which was consumed by the majority of the audience, particularly those from the working classes and lower classes in society, mostly through the *Layar Tancap* shows in rural and suburban areas.¹⁵⁷

The above phenomenon is a sign that there was indeed another alternative kind of film reception and consumption in both national and international markets. And as the demand for the film increased, accelerated by the home video format, the post-production of the film was processed abroad utilising new technology to facilitate this process as well as to escape the censors.

The Tip of the Iceberg

As I mentioned earlier, this phenomenon is not the first issue related to sexual scenes and Moral Panic in Indonesian film’s New Order industry. But I argue that *Lady Terminator* is the most

¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately, I cannot find the information about the original duration. According to *Nerdist*, the film has three different versions all with different durations: 80, 82, and 84 minutes (Kyle, 2015). On the Belfast Film Festival website, it is cited as 82 minutes (“Lady Terminator: Directed by H. Tjut Djailil”). If we consider 84 minutes to be the longest version it is only four minutes longer than the official version released in 1994.

significant case in Indonesian film history because, according to *FilmIndonesia*, for the first time this kind of phenomenon was discussed publicly and continued to be for years to come (“Lady Terminator (1988)”). Well-known directors Slamet Rahardjo and Erros Djarot seriously state that Tjut Djalil is a hero because he opened the “ulcers” of Indonesian film industry (Sukarno and Tamtono 1989, 75).

As I discussed in Chapter 1, there are always two opposing sides with regard to these policies during the New Order Regime; on the one hand, a quality approach and on the other a quantity or audience approach, both negotiating and influencing each other. Even as The New Order regime, supported by cultural elites, applied strict state control on films and filmmakers, they also framed the concept of national cinema; that is films which would attempt to ‘search the real Indonesian faces on screen (Barker, 2011, 57-58). For this regime, a good film is a film with cultural and educational purposes (*film kultural edukatif*) which should thus function as a form of mass communication, education, and information (“Kultural Edukatif, Dasar Filsafat Perfilman Indonesia”). On the other hand, the government issued some regulations that paved the way for the production of ‘trashy films’, for example, Ministerial Decree no. 74/ 1973 (on tax revenues) and no. 47/1976 (on the obligation to produce films to get the right to import films). Since 1970 films with sexual and violent scenes were produced in order to feed the audience’s needs and tastes. And the 1980s era is known by global fans and scholars as the Golden Years of Indonesian Exploitation Cinema (Ojeda: 2009, Ojeda 2010).

I argue that the case of *Lady Terminator* is in fact the tip of the iceberg of problems, which directly resulted from the paradoxical policies made by the government. I also highlight that ironically, in the same year, the mass media bombarded the film with criticism, and *Lady Terminator* was also exported overseas without any official censor certificate and export license.

When considering the issue of Moral and the fact of some cultural/social and political elites encouraging public censorship and public criticism, the phenomenon fits the definition of moral panic, as the film was considered to be a threat by influential society members. But, did the whole society panic? Who represents “society”? Critcher mentions that moral panics express the power

relations within the society, particularly they show particular persons who describe social predicaments and specify proper movements (Cricher 2006, 4). In the case of *Lady Terminator*, there were indeed some influential members of society namely film critics, cultural elites, members of parliament, religious scholars, and several influential common people who wrote letters to the editors of mass media.¹⁵⁸

Lady Terminator is just one case of a “smuggled film”. There were in fact many Indonesian films being exported without any censorship certificates and export licenses at this time. One of the reasons for this may be due to the fact that the government could not control the production process undertaken abroad (“Karena Tidak Melalui Sensor”). I argue that the phenomenon of joint-production and the post-production abroad had the impact similar to Prokjetap Prosar back in the early 1980s.

However, regarding the tip of the iceberg issue, I should first set a more general context regarding the film. In the 1980s, particularly in 1989, national film scenes were dominated by mystical films, films with sexual and violence scenes, and horror, all elements of mainstream exploitation films in Indonesia (Gintini, 1989; “Film Indonesia Seharusnya Antara Mutu dan Komersil”, “Ketidak Berdayaan KUHP atas Film Cabul”). Gintini, in one of her journalistic reports, mentions specific exploitation films being analyzed in this thesis as the ones that dominated at the local cinema, namely *Rimba Panas* (globally known as *Jungle Heat*), *Harga Sebuah Kejujuran* (*Java Burn/Diamond Run*), *Jaringan Terlarang* (*Forceful Impact*), *Peluru dan Wanita* (*Jakarta/Triangle Invasion*), and *Nyi Blorong* (*The Snake Queen*) (Gintini, 1989). Amy Priyono, chairperson of Jakarta Arts Council even highlights that 90% of the films incorporated portrayals of sex, sadism, violence, and horror (“Ami Priyono soal Film Seks: Anak-anak Dipaksa Menjadi Dewasa dalam sekejap”). Some of the films became box office hits, including *Nyi Blorong/the Snake Queen* (1982), *Sundel Bolong* (1981), *Petualangan Cinta Nyi Blorong/Hungry Snake*

¹⁵⁸ For example, a reader writes letters to the editorial team titled “Welcome to the Freedom of Sex” in *Kompas* daily (Soegoeng 1989). Another letter with the same title, dated a day before the withdrawal of the film, stated that: “I am not personally acquainted with Nyi Roro Kidul. But this kind of chaotic depiction of her, besides making me sick, might hurt many parties”(Soegoeng 1989). The other letter was dated October 26, three months after the withdrawal stating the writer’s concerns regarding the circulation of the banned film in pirated video format which was “hotter than the theatrical release version”. Muchoyaroh, the writer, said that the film is like cancer, its nastiness can erode nation’s morality. (Muchoyaroh 1989).

Queen (1987) *Bercinta dengan Maut/Dangerous Seductress* (1993), *Pasukan Berani Mati/Hell Raiders* (1982), and *Jaka Sembung Sang Penakluk/The Warrior* (1982) (“Data Penonton”).

In short, within the domestic film market, exploitation films became mainstream films for commoners, particularly the working class and lower class people. And the data above excluded the *layar tancap* audience which was statistically ignored by BPS or other related institutions.

On the other hand, as I discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1, the government applied an audience, or quantity, approach in order to foster national films by giving the audiences their needs and wants, which at this time was films with action, sadism and sexual scenes.

Conclusion

The case of the withdrawal of *Lady Terminator* in 1989 is the tip of the iceberg of problems within the New Order’s Indonesian cinema and encompassed negotiations of politics of taste and paradoxical policies between the quality approach (with the concept of national cinema searching for Indonesian faces on screen with *film kultural edukatif*) on one side and an audience or quantity approach to boost low national film production on the other. I also underline that, as moral panic happened in 1989, the film at about the same time was disseminated both locally and globally without any censorship certificate and export license.

A moral panic did happen, where society was restless and agitated with the film, but this was confined only to the cultural elites and educated communities such as journalists, religious scholars, Members of Parliament, and film critics. The fact that some important organizations, such as MUI and Parfi, watched the movie a few weeks after the withdrawal underlines that not all the public figures supported the action from the beginning. And indeed, not all related institutions, let alone public in general, protested about the film’s content and distribution.

There is also the other kind of public with different kinds of reception and consumption. As I discussed above, in the same year, the film was circulated illegally in national markets on home video without any censorship certificate. One of the reasons the public demand for the film increased was because of the banning of the film. The other reason is that the emergence of video cassettes and traveling video shows made it easier to produce and circulate copies of the films.

For the foreign market, the uncensored version of the film also got circulated illegally, since the film was sent abroad for post-production processing. Commonly *Lady Terminator* and other films were joint-productions and, I argue, *Prokjatap Prosar* had made a big impact in early 1980s.¹⁵⁹

It is also important to note that while PRLS and ATG were withdrawn, several films with similar content were still screened in local movie-theaters and I could not find any article showing direct criticism against the other films, meaning, arguably that both films were targeted by the cultural elites, along with other influential members of society, who selectively criticized specific films.

I argue that the phenomenon is the impact of direct global flows, in Appadurai's term, emerging in the 1970s and 1980s. As the product of the joint-production system and being post-produced abroad, the film automatically became transnational and thus the Indonesian government could not control it. Subsequently, the film managed to reach international film circuits, spectators, and fans and the fact that the global technology of home video emerged in the 1980s and accelerated the circulation of the film.

In addition, as with the case of *layar tancap*, this phenomenon was also part of the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization, where the government and the cultural elites tried to protect "the real Indonesian culture" and to filter and "indigenize" foreign media with local values. However, in a way, they could not properly handle the global traffic of the mediascape equipped with new technology and modes of circulation.

¹⁵⁹ As I explained in Chapter 3, film producers, particularly Parkit Film's Raam Punjabi and Rapi Films' Gope Sampani learned how to market their own films during the process of *Prokjatap Prosar* in 1982 and 1983 and it paved their ways to market the films independently, learned global taste, and met potential global business partners and eventually produced joint-production films. This kind of modus, I argue, became trends in the 1990s. In addition, the global audiences are already familiar with and became fans of Indonesian exploitation films, since the films were introduced and massively circulated by *Prokjatap Prosar*.

Chapter 7:

“Crazy Indonesia”:

Politics of Tastes and Niche Criticism by Global Cult Fans Towards Classic Indonesian Exploitation Cinema

Whilst classic Indonesian exploitation films are not considered as the official version of “national film” by the New Order government and are shunned by cultural elite, these films are considered to be the “true” representatives of fantasy and imagination of Indonesian culture by global fans.

As discussed in the Introduction and Section 1, cultural elites and policy-makers of the New Order tried to frame the concept of national cinema as films which searched for the essence of Indonesia (*Mencari Wajah Indonesia*) through *film kultural edukatif* that represented true Indonesian culture. These attempts were highlighted in most of the film policies enunciated by the New Order, where they sought to define *film Indonesia* or *film nasional* in a manner that prevented or reduced sexual, sadistic, or violent scenes as well as shunned the preaching of forbidden ideologies such as Communism. The majority of the scholarly and popular books and articles also supported these ideas which, as a consequence, negatively branded exploitation and B-grade movies.

In short, the government and film elites have carefully designed and controlled film images which reflected the concept of national cinema as the true representative of Indonesian culture both locally and globally. In the process, sadistic and sensual scenes in exploitation films are sharply criticized. Obviously, such kinds of films were not officially intended to become a representation of Indonesia to overseas audience.

On the contrary, transnational cult fans take the exact opposite position. While some of them still ridicule the films (Jancovich et al 2003, 4), many global fans consider them as gems in terms of their particular politics of taste by undertaking a process of “fierce selection” (Fiske 2008, 446-

448) and criticism. Jack Jensen, one of the fans, calls it “Crazy Indonesia” (see Introduction). What transpires is how Jensen and other “Crazy Indonesia” fans fantasize about representation and imagination of Indonesia through their politics of taste¹⁶⁰.

This chapter will focus on the critical reception and consumption by global fans of “Crazy Indonesia” films. And, as I will elaborate upon below, the texts of fan criticism demonstrate how seriously they treat these films and their own authoritative knowledge of the films (Jancovich 2002, 307). By doing so, I will analyze their politics of taste and conclude how they define and formulate the term “Crazy Indonesia” and the Indonesia-ness of the films. It is worth mentioning that the global cult fans mostly can only access the international versions of the films; meaning that most of the films have been reworked, repurposed, or, in Appadurai’s term, been de-territorialized by transnational distributors.

As mentioned in the Introduction, I will look at fans texts in some of the blogs and e-fanzines as well as online forums, as my primary sources. For the first category, I will predominantly examine *Cinema Strikes Back*, *Shocking Images*, *Mondo Digital*, *10K Bullets*, *Tales of a Bearded Movies Aficionado*, *Ninja Dixon*, *Critical Condition*, and *Eccentric 3 Cinema* by collecting their reviews of the films by using the tags (such as “Crazy Indonesia”, “Indonesia”, “Indo Films”, or other similar names) and analyzing them. For online forums, I will analyze a specific thread at *AVManiacs*, namely “Crazy Indonesia”.

While selecting representative texts to elaborate upon and support my findings, I argue why and how global fans celebrate the films in relation to their own politics of taste, and differentiate their tastes of “Crazy Indonesia” with the taste of other world cult films. In the process, I want to understand the term “Crazy Indonesia” and all its various nuances.

Before analyzing the abovementioned materials, I will start with highlighting the important key terms, namely cult connoisseurship, niche criticism, fan criticism and Do-It-Yourself (DIY) criticism.

¹⁶⁰ On the definition of Politics of Taste, see Introduction, particularly in subchapter titled “Politics of Tastes and Legitimate Culture”.

Niche Criticism as Fans Texts

The first term, as one of the core terms, is Cult Connoisseurship. “Connoisseurship” can be identified as “the skill and talent to be an arbiter of taste and to deliberately pitch expertise against mainstream and middle brow conventionality” (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 50). Cult Connoisseurship focuses on films with cult status and a cult following which are not culturally accepted by the mainstream audiences. Mathijs and Sexton classify Cult Connoisseurship as belonging to the following categories: Surrealist Criticism, Cult Cinephilia and MacMahonism; and is subject to niche criticism which consists of Fan Criticism and DIY Criticism (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 50-55).

“Niche criticism” is defined by Mathijs and Sexton as:

a form of criticism that has a strong emphasis on closeness with the object of scrutiny, an alignment with its receptions, and an intensification of the commitment that has the cultist see pretty much all of the world through the lens of their object of fascination – and attitude shared by fan and marketer (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 52-53).

If we analyze the definition, clearly fan texts can be included as a niche criticism. The term can be classified in two categories: fan criticism and DIY criticism. Both types display themselves as “forms of specializations” and “forms of amateurism” which often hold an oppositional position to professional criticism (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 53). However, as part of amateurism, the works of fans in both forms are often “...made through bricolage and illustration instead of through academic reasoning” (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 53).

Fan Criticism consists of two types of publication, prozines and fanzines. Prozines are professional magazines for mainstream readers with the main purpose of making profit from them. On the other hand, Fanzines are more amateur works, closely devoted to their subject matter (Mathijs and Sexton 2011, 53-54). Both prozines and fanzines, differ significantly from cinephiliacs by giving more credit to the communal collaboration instead of the individual filmmakers as auteurs. Most of the fanzines are a “one-man-operation”, marketed to niche readers, niche interest, and occasions, such as fan conventions, collector’s weekends, specialist stores, or spin-offs (Mathijs and Sexton

2011, 54). In this chapter, I will only focus on online fanzines, or e-fanzines, including individual blogs

DIY Criticism is another form of amateur criticism that can be seen in online commentaries, such as “user comments”, “threads,” “responses”, “message board comments” embedded in various kinds of new media, such as Blogs, Facebook, and Online Forums. Some characteristics of these types of reviews include subjective opinions in opposition to mainstream reviews, and offer trivial knowledge on subject matters, sometimes even indulging in gossip and speculation. (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 54).

As discussed above, I will focus on e-fanzines (as part of fan criticism) and online forums (as part of DIY criticism). However, I will not differentiate between them in my analysis, treating both as part of fan texts. Below I will analyze the content of both types.

Defining “Crazy Indonesia”

If we read the related reviews, the first element highlighted by the writers is the weirdness, otherness, and exoticism of the films that form their subject matter. The examples below will make my statement clear:

SPECIAL SILENCERS (1979) - Oh my God! This is one of the most outrageously insane action/fantasy films I have ever had the pleasure to view. This is one funny Indonesian film, thanks to whoever was responsible for the hilarious dubbing and the unusual screenplay (by Deddy Armand). (Adelman 2014)¹⁶¹

Indonesian Islamic martial arts mayhem! To date I've seen only a handful of Indonesian exploitation films, but they've all been wild, wacked-out mamajamas — *The Devil's Sword* (1983) and *Lady Terminator* (1988) being the hands-down nuttiest. 1981's *The Warrior*, newly released on DVD by the obscure cinema specialists at Mondo Macabro, really gives 'em some 4 competition in the bat-shit crazy action movie department. (Lindsey 2014)

¹⁶¹ As I mentioned in Chapter 5, I keep the original version of fans' comments and other texts. No editing and proofreading have been made on these kinds of texts, unless mentioned otherwise.

We can see that both reviewers pay attention to some factors, such as the film's audio-visual aspects ("the most outrageously insane action/fantasy films I have ever had the pleasure to view"), dubbing ("the hilarious dubbing"), and script ("the unusual screenplay") described in a strange manner ("wild, wacked-out mamajamas", "hands-down nuttiest"). Below are texts from *AVManiacs* highlighting the same spirit:

If you guys don't already have it... track down SPECIAL SILENCERS! NOW! It's one of the craziest, goriest, wildest, over-the-top Indo-fantasy-flicks ever. (M Guenther, *AVManiacs*, 28/09/ 2007)

His posting got some replies:

Arrrrgh, I watched this tonight and... arrrrrgh!!! I can only agree with the both of you!!! This is truly one of the craziest, goriest, wildest, over-the-top Indo-fantasy-flicks ever!!! ...It's over-the-top and faaan-fucking-tastic! Gore, violence, trees growing out of peoples bodies in very gory detail, bad kung-fu, bad romance, Corny dialogue, weirdness, weird magic, fire, torture by smelly shoes, rats, snakes, more gore, Barry Prima, Eva Arnaz ... (Jack J, *AVManiacs*, 22/10/2007)

Count me in on SPECIAL SILENCERS. Even crazier than the Turkish stuff I've seen. What surprised me was how gory it was and the dialog is hilarious. And it has some good fight scenes too. Those "killer tendrils" were fantastic! (Horace Cordier, *AVManiacs*, 11/11/2007)

On *White Crocodile Queen*, Jack J writes:

Suzanna plays both an ordinary girl and an evil crocodile witch! It's completely gory, and there's scenes that just make you go: 'Whaaat!!' ha. Scenes like a girl giving birth to a crocodile, and then to a baby, and then she's killed in gory detail with a machete, and a big guy jumps up on her husband's shoulders and jumps on him so he disappears halfway into the ground!! And in the second half it turns into an EXORCIST rip-off with possessed girl, shaking bed and all (actually the bed even flies out the window!). (*AVManiacs*, 25/09/1007)

Fred Adelman, on *Revenge of Ninja*, mentions that:

While the film is all over the map and confusing as hell, I enjoyed it immensely. Sorcery, disembowelments, heart-ripping and kung-fu zombies! What's not to like? (*AVManiacs*, 28/09/2007)

Barry M also highlights the exoticism and the marketing-driven attempts that shaped the elements characterizing the films:

The Devil Sword's like pure pulp, and with the strong female characters (good and evil), I was actually thinking C.L. Moore for a minute. The exotic fantastic usually depends pretty heavily on orientalism, so it's kind of trippy to see an Indonesian film using the same tricks. Intended for export, I'm guessing, and deeply influenced by (ok, ripped off from, more like) western commercial fantasy films, it's interesting as all get out, but what sells it is the sheer commitment. Committed to entertain, at any cost: wire-fu, gore effects, martial arts, crocodiles, witch queens, wizard monks, and mighty mighty warriors. (*AVManiacs*, 12/02/2008)

Again, the reviews above underlined the badness as well as the strangeness of the films, particularly the dialogue (“corny dialogue”), the cultural elements (“weird magic”, “bad kung-fu”, “some good fight scenes”), weird stories (“torture by smelly shoes”, “trees growing out of peoples bodies in very gory detail”), and the transgressions (“how gory it was”). As the intrinsic part of exploitation films, their badness and transgressions add value to the films.

However, among others, strangeness and otherness also depict two interesting elements.

Strangeness, as highlighted by Mathijs and Mendik (2008, 8), is one of the elements that attracts global cult fans. They write:

Some films may seem normal to their home cultures, but become objects of curiosity once they leave that context. The reception of a film outside its initial cultural surrounding may easily evoke celebration, devotion or even hostility of a cultist kind. (Mathijs and Mendik, 2008, 8-9).

From this perspective, it seems that cult fans of “Crazy Indonesia” have no differences to other cult fans. In the light of their discussions and reviews, the fans appear to treat Indonesian films the same way as the cult films from other regions, even comparing them frequently.

Fiske underlines that fandom fiercely selects the materials through discrimination and distinction in terms of their own tastes with those of others (Fiske 2008, 446-448). Hence, the next questions are: ‘what differentiates their taste with others?’ and ‘what is “Indonesia” in the “Crazy Indonesia” according to global fans?’ Below, I will elaborate upon some reviews highlighting the Indonesia-ness of “Crazy Indonesia” which make distinctions with, for instance, “Rare Filipino” or “Wacky Siam”¹⁶².

David Austin, for example, writes that Indonesian filmmakers have their own style, despite their effort at imitating Western exploitation films, particularly in the case of *Virgins from Hell*:

VFH is a pure product of the ‘80s, a bastard child of the Roger Corman Filipino women-in-prison (WIP) films, and Golan and Globus’s patented low-budget Cannon cheese-fests like American Ninja. Indonesian artisans added their own touches, ratcheting up the gore while combining obviously exploitative subject-matter with a demure ban against nudity. (Austin 2006b, my emphasis).

Austin attempted to differentiate “Crazy Indonesia” with Roger Corman’s WIP and other films, and Golan/Globus’s low-budget Cannon films, by simply saying they “*added their own touches*” without offering any further explanation in the matter. Nathaniel Thomson shares the same statements by underlining that *The Warrior*’s martial arts are influenced by Shaw Brothers, but still has its own uniqueness.

Some of the martial arts scenes appear to be influenced by earlier hits from companies like Shaw Brothers, *but no other country could have come up with such sequences* as the

¹⁶²The terms above were coined by Fred Anderson in a thread at *AVManiacs*, 25 November 2009. It was the first posting of the thread called “Wacky Siam! The Wild Exploitation of Thailand!”. Original quote:

After threads like Rare Filipino action stuff and Crazy Indonesia I'm surprised there's not a tribute-thread to Thailand and their huge amount of fantastic movies. Thailand, like Indonesia, is a country of fantastic legends and that has created thousands of strange, wonderful, fun, wild, bizarre, crazy and cool movies through the years (*AVManiacs*, 25/11/2009)

diabolical wizard being hacked to pieces and reattaching his limbs in one very memorable showdown (Thompson, 2014, my emphasis)

Again, while emphasizing that “Crazy Indonesia” has a style that cannot be found in other films produced by other countries, he only highlights the strangeness and uniqueness of the martial arts scenes with short explanations. Thomson also argues that some Indonesian films have Hong Kong elements, “...*but this is pure 100% Indonesian insanity all the way*”. Below, I quote the full paragraph:

When international horror first infiltrated the home video market back in the early 1980s, the Indonesian supernatural freak-out *Queen of Black Magic* was many viewers' first taste of low budget but outrageous Eastern filmmaking insanity, albeit in a badly cropped and borderline unwatchable form. Its title, which was often shortened to simply *Black Magic* or some variation thereof, caused it to often become confused with the gross-out Shaw Brothers series from Hong Kong in some reference guides, *but this is pure 100% Indonesian insanity all the way*. Even if it doesn't quite hit the madcap heights of the legendary *Mystics in Bali* (heck, what could?), this make a fine companion feature all the same. (Thompson, 2014, my emphasis).

And, again, Anderson tries to highlight the distinctive elements of Indonesian films, although he did not elaborate upon the characteristics with an in-depth explanation. The same tone also appears in Anderson's review of *Samson dan Delilah*:

For the love of Satan, how many outfits can a woman have? Suzanna, as the evil Delilah, has one new outfit for each scene in *Samson dan Delilah*, and with that ridiculous wig she looks like a slimmer version of Miss Piggy! *Yes, Samson dan Delilah is a very weird Indonesian take on the biblical story of Samson with his curly hair and super strength... Yes, this, Samson dan Delilah, is crazy motherfucking wacky Indonesia in full bloom.* The fights are absurd and colourful (everything in this movie is colourful) and the gore is over-the-top and with a lot of spraying blood. Of course we're getting some fun magic, including a self-repairing magician! (Anderson 2010, my emphasis)

In the “Crazy Indonesia” thread, the discussions also try to highlight discrimination and distinction between celebrated Indonesian movies with others. Below, I cite some discussions undertaken on the thread:

Really, at least with their 70s and 80s films *there was some hint of originality in them*, a bizarre style that is completely unfamiliar, making their films much different from the usual in any genre (Chris Koenig, *AVManiacs*, 11-09-2010, my emphasis).

Again, Koenig underlines the strangeness and uniqueness of “Crazy Indonesia” by mentioning “*some hint of originality*” in the films that made them different from other films, by using the words “bizarre” and “unfamiliar”. This statement was challenged by a member, most probably an Indonesian. Newginafets argues that, Indonesian old films are similar to recent films by imitating world cinema and combining elements of martial arts, the supernatural, and action (*AVManiacs*, 31/09/2010). In reply, Chris Koenig, writes:

Well, when I say "originality", in my eyes with the Indonesian films of the 70s and 80s I feel that I am watching *something quite different and not overly typical*. Yeah, the stories and situations may not be original, but what unfolds on-screen comes off as *unexpectedly different*.

But yeah, I'll take martial arts, supernatural and action mixed together in a heartbeat over stale "Ringu"-style imitations. That may not be exactly original, but at least those film from that era delivered something. (*AVManiacs*, 13/09/2010, my emphasis).

Similarly to the above arguments, Jack J replies that there are irreplaceable elements in the films:

Yes, maybe they were but *they were very Indonesian at that! Nobody in the West made films like the ones you mention*. The reason why they're being collected by fans now is *that they were so different and wild*. They may have had martial arts in them but they sure weren't like kung fu movies from HK or anywhere else. The horror films of Indonesia today (and I admit to only having watched less than a dozen) are very much like the ones in American, Japan, and Europe. I'm not putting down present day Indo cinema but I just don't

see it as being as over-the-top and wild as the old stuff. (*AVManiacs*, 13/09/2010, my emphasis).¹⁶³

In conclusion, all reviews and discussions above try to formulate the term “Crazy Indonesia” as pertaining to a particular politics of taste, by underlining the otherness, weirdness, exoticism, and other peculiar things that fans love about the films. They can sense the Indonesia-ness of the films, and they are “Indonesian-ly” weird, not just a “something different” factor. But it appears that no rigorous definition has been formulated yet. Hence, what exactly is the “The Indonesia-ness” that they love and celebrate and how is it distinct from other international cult films? What kind of politics of taste do they have and apply? However, as amateurism is one of the characteristics of Fan Criticism and DIY Criticism, they only highlight some factors without explaining further.

Specific Sub-Genres of Indonesian Films

Based on the Indonesian films reviewed, I will undertake genre mapping of these kinds of movies. I will apply Karl Heider’s Indonesian popular genres theory as a tool for analysis and I will relate the theories to fan texts. As I briefly discussed in the Introduction, while analyzing popular films, Heider suggests various genres and types into which most Indonesian films can fit comfortably (Heider 1991, 39-40). Heider argues that popular genre films are the best examples to do a cultural analysis on since films directed by auteurs or for the purpose of artistic expressions were intentionally detached from their cultural origins.

I argue that there are two basic types of classic Indonesian exploitation films. The first one is, as mentioned in Introduction, films that have stories rooted in Indonesian tradition, history, folklores, or storytelling. Commonly, these kinds of films are full of strangeness, exoticism, and otherness, according to the perspectives of Western fans. The Legend genre, *Kumpeni* genre, and Horror

¹⁶³Replying to both statements, newg inafets underlines the different context of viewing in Indonesia and Western countries which leads to a different kind of reception of “Crazy Indonesia” films. newg inafets writes:

...unlike in the West, then cult movies were every day in Indonesian cinemas and tv, something that [is] rare in the West. If ever the Westerners had the same "opportunities" to enjoy Indo's old movies maybe they would have thought differently. (*AVManiacs*, 13/09/2010)

In the introduction, I also argue a similar claim. I will elaborate upon this issue in the Conclusion.

genre (in Heider's context)¹⁶⁴ belong to the first basic type of the films, all of which contain elements of mysticism and/or traditional folklores.

The second type is the ones whose look and feel has many similarities with international exploitation films. I argue that there are three genres formulated by Karl Heider with these kinds of characteristics; firstly, the Japanese Period Genre. Heider writes:

This genre has even more sadistic violence than do *Kompeni* Films, and the Japanese soldiers are much more brutal than the Dutch. Sexual sadism--rape and other abuse—is especially prominent in these films. Female nakedness is standard but only as part of the violence, never as a consequence of love. (Heider 1991, 42)

I argue that this genre is very close to the Western exploitation sub-genres, namely womensploitation and Women in Prison films¹⁶⁵.

Secondly, *Perjuangan* (struggle) period films, which are about the battles to defend a nation's independence (Heider 1991, 42-43); these look similar to mainstream American action B-grade films. Both genres are rooted in historical stories of wars in Indonesia.

And lastly, cannibalism or, as Heider's puts it, Expedition Films. Some scholars and critics call these "Jungle films" (Tombs and Starke 2008, Sen: 1999, Tombs 1997). As I discussed in the Introduction, the plot consists of a group of "civilized" people discovering unknown places and encountering its native inhabitants (Heider 1991, 45), as in *Primitif* and *Jungle Virgin Force*.

It is important to note that there are some hybrid films with the characteristics of more than one genre, and can be categorized and fit in some sub-genres of Western exploitation categories. For example, I argue that characteristics of the Mockbuster or Remakesploitation are embedded in *Lady Terminator*, which is a blend of Legend and Horror, and has "adopted" parts from *Terminator* mixed with the traditional folklore of The Queen of South Sea; whereas *Intruder* (original title:

¹⁶⁴ As I briefly discussed, the Horror genre, in Heider's terms, is close to the Legend genre, but set in the present time. Like the Legend and *Kumpeni* Genre, the stories of the Horror genre deal with mystical powers and creatures, and are rooted in traditional folklores (Heider 1991, 43-44).

¹⁶⁵For the definition, please see 'W.I.P.'.

Pembalasan Rambu, or *Rambu Revenge*) is, clearly a *Rambo* rip-off. In addition, *Virgin from Hell* is similar with the genre of women-in-prison films.

In the latest development, some films were produced during the 1990s by domestic producers simply by adopting sub-genres from American exploitation cinema, dubbed into English (sometimes subtitled with other foreign languages) or with Indonesian and English subtitles, and sometimes using both new/amateur and popular foreign actors, such as Peter O'Brian and Cynthia Rothrock, and, in some cases, co-produced with foreign film companies. For example, *Java Burn/Diamond Run*, *Forceful Impact*, and *Jakarta/Triangle Invasion*. While some of them simply mimic Western exploitation films, some others mix Westernized style and genres with Indonesia's legends and black magic.

In most cases, films from the second type were produced during the New Order era intentionally for international tastes and markets, particularly during and after the success of *Prokjetap Prosar* (see Chapter 3).

I argue that the politics of taste undertaken by global fans, based on their own reviews and discussions in online media, cover all sub-genres above. They fiercely exclude any other kind of films, including Indonesian ones from the same era, which I will elaborate upon in the sub-chapter below.

Discriminating Other New Order films

Based on discussions and reviews, the online fans have interest only in specific types of films that they label “Crazy Indonesia”, with characteristics which are similar to Heider's theories of Indonesia's (sub)-genres. I concluded this statement, considering that I cannot find any global fan's texts that signify interests in Indonesian movies in other sub-genres from the same era; although the films are considered as cult films by Indonesian spectators, such as the Dangdut musicals,¹⁶⁶ or comedies starring Warkop DKI,¹⁶⁷ or Benyamin Sueb,¹⁶⁸ or propaganda films such

¹⁶⁶For further information about *dangdut* and *dangdut* musicals, please see Weintraub 2010 and Barker 2011.

¹⁶⁷ Warkop DKI, stands for *Warung Kopi* (Coffee shop) Dono-Kasino-Indro, and is a famous trio of comedians from Jakarta. Most of their films became box office hits and many of them received the Antemas Award at the FFI for the most popular films. For more information about Warkop DKI, see Badil & Warkop 2010.

¹⁶⁸For more on Benyamin Sueb, please see Hanan and Koesasi 2011 and Munir 2014.

as *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* ('*The Treason of G30S/PKI*, an official version of the 1965 event).¹⁶⁹ Those films were not circulated in global VHS circuits in the 1980s and are not in the cult DVD circulation of the 2000s, not even in low quality bootleg formats.

The reason behind the lack of interest is mainly because the films were not exported worldwide since the international film market at that time only demanded horror, mystic, and action films (See Chapter 3). The fans do not even discuss the non-exploitation films that were also exported by Prokjatap Prosar, like *Janur Kuning*, *Seputih Hatinya*, *Semerah Bibirnya* (*As white as her heart, as red as her lips*) and *Perempuan dalam Pasungan* (*Woman in Stocks*), since the films do not fall within the "Crazy Indonesia" taste.

However, in some cases, if the films fulfill their tastes for "Crazy Indonesia", the fans would hunt for the films even though the films are not available in the transnational cult circuits or were exported during the New Order era. For example, Fred Anderson mentions that he watched *Perjanjian di Malam Keramat* (*Covenant in a Sacred Night*, Sisworo Gautama, 1991) and he claimed it as "the Indonesian *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4*" (*AVManiacs*, 03/05/2010). The members of *AVManiacs* also tried to find and collect non-exported exploitation films, and even visited the official non-English website of Rapi Films, one of the most prolific film production units associated with this kind of film. Additionally, they tried to find rare films, the ones that previously had been disseminated in the Western countries in the VHS format during the 1980s and 1990s but cannot be found anywhere now. Related to this case, particularly, Jack J mentions Tjut Djalil's *Satan Bed* (15/09 2007).

On the other hand, there were some titles being exported by Prosar with these films, such as *Ratu Laut Selatan* (*Queen of the South Sea*) and *Si Bongkok* (*the Hunchback*). But I did not find any reviews or discussions of these films in the fans' blogs, fanzines, or online forums.

¹⁶⁹ The film was compulsory and to be watched by all students annually and became the official version of the G30S event when the communist party was accused of killing six high ranking generals and wanted to instigate a coup d'etat. The event led to the banning of PKI and the rise of the New Order, as briefly discussed in the Introduction. See Heryanto 2006, 198-199. Also see Heryanto 2008

Discriminating Post-New Order Indonesian Films

Most of the fans also did not want to discuss post-1998 Indonesian films, although the movies have similar characteristics to “Crazy Indonesia” films, such as sexual and transgressive scenes.

There are few writers and readers, mostly Indonesians, who tried to make connections with more recent films such as films by Joko Anwar (*Joni's Promises* (2005), *Kala* (*Dead Time* (2007)), The Mo Brother's *Rumah Dara* (*Macabre*, 2009), and Gareth Evan's *the Raid* (2001). In a review, there are comments which tried to encourage to “Crazy Indonesia” fans to watch contemporary Indonesian films which had some facets associated with “Crazy Indonesia” films. Daniel Hutomo, most likely an Indonesian fan, writes a comment on Austin's review on *Virgin from Hell*:

Great review. *But there is one new movie gem from Indonesia that still captures the old charm but made with competence.* The title is JONI'S PROMISE (Janji Joni) by the country's star director Joko Anwar. Check it out (Daniel Hutomo (22/02/2007) in Austin 2006b, my emphasis).

Dan, most probably another fan from Indonesia or knowing much about the post-New Order films, also mentions few non-exploitation Indonesian films in the same article:

Good review...*is there any other dvd released there either than 20 year old movies?* like ‘pasir berbisik’,¹⁷⁰ ‘daun di atas bantal’,¹⁷¹ ‘tjoet nyak dien’,¹⁷² ‘berbagi suami’?¹⁷³ (Dan (12/07/2006) in Austin 2006b)

David Austin, the reviewer, replied that he did not rule out the possibilities and opportunities for the discussion of current films on his blog, but he thinks that the main reason is, again, the lack of access. He writes:

¹⁷⁰ See: Intan Paramaditha 2007

¹⁷¹ The film, directed by Garin Nugroho, was officially selected at Cannes Film Festival 1998. See “Daun di Atas Bantal”

¹⁷² The film was also directed by Eros Djarot, and officially selected at Cannes Film Festival 1989. See “Tjoet Nya'Dhien”.

¹⁷³ For more info about this film, please see Imanjaya 2009e. Also see Kurnia 2009.

Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any Western market at the moment for contemporary Indonesian films. In fact, it's only in the last couple of years that even the older stuff has seen new releases, primarily through Mondo Macabro's releases of this film, *The Devil's Sword*, *Mystics in Bali*, and *Lady Terminator*, and a few other scattered cult films like *The Stabilizer*. Still, there's no reason not to hold out hope - Thai films were unheard of in the West until a few years ago, and South Korean films a few years before that. (David Austin, 12/07/2006 in Austin 2006b).

Austin did not realize that some current Indonesian films were being circulated in international DVD markets in 2006, the time he wrote the reviews. Films such as *Of Love and Eggs* (*Rindu Kami PadaMu*, Garin Nugroho, 2004), *Eliana* (Riri Riza, 2002), and *Opera Jawa* (Garin Nugroho, 2006) are commonly available online from EBay and Amazon.¹⁷⁴ Since the films are not exploitation ones and do not have the "Crazy Indonesia" elements, they are off the radar of Austin's blog and neglected by reviewers and forum members in "Crazy Indonesia"-related forums, e-fanzines, and blogs.

A few exceptions, however, exist. One of them is a discussion on *Janji Joni*, which does not have elements of exploitation. Jon H asked about it (*AVManiacs* 06/12/2010), and Mike T instantly replied, in one long sentence, and related the film to a cult icon the fans love: Barry Prima.

Joni was really quite good. But it is a light romantic comedy, so just be aware of that. It does, however, feature a cameo by Barry Prima! (*AVManiacs* 06/12/2010).

Actually, films such as *Dead Time*, *The Raid*, and *Macabre* have some "Crazy Indonesia" elements, such as goriness and unusual martial arts sequences. Considering that the films got bigger global exposure, particularly in international film festivals and the fandom of fantastic genre films, the lack of access is no longer an excuse for the "Crazy Indonesia" fans to hunt and discuss the films. I cannot find any discussion about why most of the fans abandoned or avoided the films.

¹⁷⁴ Regarding Indonesian post-New Order films circulated globally, *Opera Jawa* and *Eliana-Eliana* are two popular Indonesian films online, as we can find them on Amazon.co.uk and Ebay.co.uk. Other film such as *Of Love and Eggs* can be found on Amazon, whereas popular genre films such as, *Red and White* (*Merah Putih*, Yadi Suganti, 2009, a new *Kumpeni* genre film), *Macabre* (*Rumah Dara*, The Mo Brothers, 2010, slasher), *Ritual* (*Modus Anomali*, Joko Anwar, 2012, psychological thriller), *Shackled* (*Belenggu*, Upi 2013, a psychological thriller), and *Killers* (*The Mo Brothers*, 2014, psychological thriller) are available on EBay.

Most of them simply did not reply to any postings related to this topic, or did not review the films; or, if they did review the films, they differentiated them from “Crazy Indonesia” films. I argue that the main reason for this phenomenon is that the new films are not adequately endowed with the tastes of “Crazy Indonesia” fans, particularly in the strangeness, uniqueness, and badness of the films concerned. These particular films are not B-grade movies and their production values and storytelling mores are closer to Hollywood ones, rather than Heider’s sub-genres

To present a bigger picture and a clearer argument, I will elaborate upon a few more cases related to this, particularly from the *AVManiacs* forum. Talal writes on *AVManiacs*:

There's this new Indonesian action movie called *The Raid* that everyone is raving about. From what I've seen, it looks nuts. Even Roger Ebert gave it one star which is a sign of good quality when it comes to gory action movies. (*AVManiacs*, 18/04/2012).

But no further discussion happened. Most of the group members did not explore the topic. Again, although there are some issues related to the lack of access and information on the recent films, I argue that mainly it is about the politics of taste belonging to this subculture. Indeed, even the few reviewers and bloggers who recognize or became fans of recent Indonesian films deliberately excluded them from the term “Crazy Indonesia”:

On the basis of this year’s *Forbidden Door* and last year’s *Kala*, Joko Anwar is one of the most fascinating new talents working in genre cinema. *His work is a far cry from the extremely fun but trashy Indonesian films of the 1980s*, like *The Warrior* or *Mystics in Bali*, and he deserves a far wider audience. (Austin 2009, my emphasis)

However, few of the reviewers somehow relate new films to “Crazy Indonesia” films., although they still excluded these new films as “Crazy Indonesia” movies. For instance, Fred Anderson, in his review on The Mo Brothers’ *Macabre*, writes:

It's also connects back to vintage Indonesian genre cinema, with the root to all evil based in the Dutch colonizers of Indonesia....Shareefa Daanish is a new Suzanna (Anderson 2012b)

Some exceptions did appear in the fan reviews. For example, there are a few reviews of titles that did not re-circulate in both the 1980s VHS markets and the 2000s cult DVD circuits, but belong to the basic genres formulated by Heider, such as *Taring* (literally: *fang*, 2010)¹⁷⁵ and *Jenglot Pantai Selatan* (the Jenglot of South Sea, 2011),¹⁷⁶ which were only reviewed by Ninja Dixon's Fred Anderson.

Hunting Non-Recirculated Films: Rarities and Exclusivity

On the other hand, the global fans do hunt for and review the non-exported New Order films militantly and persistently if they are in accordance with fans' politics of taste. For example, the members of the "Crazy Indonesia" thread explore and try to collect VHS tapes from the 1980s from all around the world (Japan, Denmark, Greece), get in touch with commercial bootleggers and buy cheap VCDs from Malaysia online or go to Chow Kit (an Indonesian town in Kuala Lumpur).¹⁷⁷ Jack J, for example, keeps checking the titles of this kind of films at <http://www.cinemashops.com/>, although the website and the films are not dubbed or subtitled into English (*AVManiacs*, 15/09/2007, 16/09/2007, 28/04/2009, 19/10/2009). Guenter also mentions the existence of un-subtitled and un-dubbed "Crazy Indonesia" films in the VCD format on the website, although the quality is not the best:

Wrong aspect ratio (mostly full screen). Bad picture quality. Sometimes censored. A lot of Indonesian fantasy and horror flicks were released on VCD in Malaysia and they are (or were) available at Cinemashops. There certainly are some gems out there that most of us have never heard of. (*AVManiacs*, 27/09/2007)

Bootleg transactions and information on VHS (particularly on how ridiculous the prices are nowadays) are among the most discussed issues in this thread.

¹⁷⁵ See Anderson 2011. Also see his posting at "Crazy Indonesia", *AVManiacs*, 17/06/2011.

¹⁷⁶ See Anderson 2012b.

¹⁷⁷ There were circulations of cheap-low quality-yet-official VCDs in Indonesia and Malaysia in the 2000s and the 2010s by distributors, namely Karyamas Vision, Navirindo Audio Visual (Jakarta, Indonesia), and Lokasari SDN BHD (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). These VCDs are not available in common markets or from VCD stores, but in particular exclusive shops such as those in Glodok (Jakarta's Chinatown) and Chow Kit (Kuala Lumpur's Indonesia town), or certain online shops. Thus, only true fans know of their existence and how to buy them. Regarding Chow Kit, the fans did not specifically mention the name of the place or shop in Malaysia. But, since I visited Chow Kit in 2009, I know about the place. I briefly wrote about my experience in *Cinematheque Quarterly* (Imanjaya 2013).

There were discussions and barter/non-commercial transaction activities related to this topic. For example, on 15th September 2007, Lorne Marshall wrote that she has *Lady Exterminator* (also known as *I Want to Get Even*) in the VHS format in an All American label. On the same date, Jack Jensen mentioned that he has an old Danish VHS of *Daredevil Commandos*. Jensen also had Greek VHS versions of *Jungle Heat* and *The Snake Queen*. In another posting at the same thread, Jack J, the founder of the forum, also discussed how difficult it was to find the VHS format, because, quoting Damon Foster from *Oriental Cinema* magazine, “They are more rare than getting laid at a dike slumber party”, and the price on EBay became more expensive. Jensen even bought and watched an un-dubbed/un-subtitled Malaysian VCD.

Sometimes, fans also try to show off their collections to other fellow fans in their online community. For example, Jack Jensen put his VHS covers on his blog, including the Danish version of *Daredevil Commandos* and the Japanese version (fully uncut print) and Argentinian version with Spanish subtitles. As Jancovich argues, this kind activity is needed for building the sense of rarity and exclusivity, two important keywords for maintaining sub-culture identity (Jancovich 2002).

Jack J and Patrick P discuss about these rare and costly collections below:

My god!! Check this eBay auction out for THE WARRIOR (aka Jaka Sembung) sequel WARRIOR AND THE NINJA (aka Warrior Vs The Ninja Warrior & The Ninja Girl); Right now there's about four days to go and the price so far is... \$400!!! (Jack J, *AVManiacs*, 04/01/2009)

It is the very nice Greek letterboxed tape but still. Early last year I won it from the same seller (who happens to be Bill from Onar) and got it for a "mere" \$66 (which is also insane for an old video tape, I know, I know). My bet is this sudden interest is caused by Mondo Macabro's new DVD release of THE WARRIOR and more people are aware of the series now. But still, absolutely insane, haha.

Yeah. Collecting these rare VHS tapes is getting kinda crazy. I wrote 400 and almost clicked on place bid! But I had to slap myself. Yeah, it's a rare Indonesian movie and it has great actors, and are probably awesome, but I couldn't even live on soup if I where to make

such a huge bid on a VHS tape. VHS tape, man. Think about it for a second (Patrick B, *AVManiacs*, 27/01/2009).

These kinds of discussions and complaints happen on both online forums and blogs. However, if one successfully got the rare and exclusive collection, they will proudly put them online and show them to fellow collectors.¹⁷⁸

Conclusion

After analyzing fan texts on Indonesian films - particularly those involving the reviews on blogs and E-fanzines and discussions on the “Crazy Indonesia” thread - it seems that the fans try to define the term “Crazy Indonesia” with specific politics of taste; as far as narrative elements are concerned, the reviewed films conform to Heider’s genre, particularly the Legend and *Kumpeni* genre, as well as Americanized exploitation genres such as mockbusters, and Japanese period films (Indonesian version of women-in-prison films). Hence, they are only interested in some specific genres and styles from a specific era of production.

In short, they are only interested in Indonesian exploitation films produced and exported from Indonesia during the New Order era (1979-1995) and/or re-circulated during the 1980s-1990s and the 2000s by transnational distributors. They love the strangeness, exoticism, badness, and uniqueness of some elements of these films, including the martial arts, audio visual features, the eastern mystical aura (particularly in Legend and *Kumpeni* genres), stories and storytelling techniques, and their dialogues.

In this case, they exclude Indonesian exploitation and cult films from the same era such as comedies starring Warkop and Benyamin Sueb, and dangdut musicals starring Rhoma Irama. On the other hand, if the films are suitable with their tastes, some fans even searched for and reviewed non-subtitled VCDs produced and distributed in Malaysia (especially Chow Kit area in Kuala Lumpur) as well as DVDs and VCDs in Indonesia. In some cases, the fans tried to connect “Crazy Indonesia” films with recent films such as Mo Brothers’ *Macabre*, or Joko Anwar’s *Forbidden*

¹⁷⁸For a discussion about the issue of fans as collectors, see Chapter 5. Also see Klinger 2006, 63-64.

Door, but they differentiate the films distinctly and clearly from the classic “Crazy Indonesia” films.

Although the transnational cult followers are initially interested in the otherness, strangeness, and exoticism of the films, they try to define their own taste by differentiating “Crazy Indonesia” films with other films from the region (such as “Wacky Siam” and “Rare Filipino”), or Indonesian films not exhibiting “Crazy Indonesia” characteristics from the same era, and even with current films associated with the “Crazy Indonesia” category.

Nonetheless, although they know their taste for these kinds of films, and even try to define the term “Crazy Indonesia” and the Indonesia-ness of the films with certain typical characteristics, they fail to rigorously formulate the term and the characteristics they are looking for. Amateur criticism is mainly the reason, which does not require a rigorous analysis but involves more of a passion for the films. However, it is important to note that, as fans, they do have an authoritative and deep knowledge about trivial information, compared to the global prozines and even film scholars and critics, including myself.

Regarding the non-Narrative Element, they mostly review films exported to international film markets from the 1980s and the 1990s and circulated outside Indonesia both in the New Order era (particularly 1979 to 1995) and post-New Order era (starting late 1990s by Troma Team and mostly in the 2000s and 2010s) mostly in home video format, including VHS, DVD, sometimes (non-subtitled) VCD, and Laser Disc (no theatrical releases). However, exceptions in certain cases did happen. If they found that a film was imbued with “Crazy Indonesia” characteristics, but not re-circulated globally, they will try to source it for the sake of its rarity and exclusivity.

It may, thus, be said that global fans in the millennial era did not fancy other Indonesian films from the same era. They also did not review the 2000’s non-exploitation DVDs circulated globally, such as *Of Love and Eggs*, *Eliana Eliana*, and *Opera Jawa*. And there are only a few post-New Order exploitation and B-films reviewed by them.

It is important to note that, as the global fans reviewed and fantasized the exotic faraway land of Indonesia, they have their own images and imagination of Indonesia and the Indonesian culture. They also try to elaborate the Indonesia-ness of the films. And this kind of fantasy and representation is totally the opposite with the New Order’s conventional concept of Indonesian cinema. Therefore, they have produced the other concept of “Indonesian cinema” in their own communities and networks within the cult fandom circuits.

And finally, I have to underline that, before the trend of “Crazy Indonesia”, the mainstream Indonesian audience, critics, and scholars, and even the domestic cult fans did not consider that some of the Indonesian films mentioned had cult status, or at least do not use the word “cult” to describe the phenomenon. Most of them still devalue the films by ignoring them. However, after the recirculation of the films (mostly by Mondo Macabro DVD and Troma Team), and the works of global fans, the local fans tried to (re)discover and celebrate the films. Therefore, I argue, that the global flow and cultural traffic of the films took the films back to their country of origin.

Conclusion

Classic Indonesian exploitation films are generally considered as insignificant and negligible in the context of both Indonesian and global cinema in terms of film industry, film criticism, and scholarly discourses. However, my thesis has demonstrated that, by analyzing the cultural traffic of the films, classic Indonesian exploitation films (1979-1995) gain significant roles in the arena of the battle of taste among a variety of interested groups and agencies. Therefore, I have argued that the journeys of these kinds of films - from Indonesia to global cult circuits, from the late 1970s to early 2010s – significantly challenge the official Indonesian history of cinema as well as the concept of Western-centric cult cinema.

In establishing arguments, I have interrogated various fields of film studies, including policy studies, archival studies, critical historical approaches, film reception and spectatorship, and global online fandom. My research process has involved challenging conventional viewpoints which frequently devalue those films in the following steps. Firstly, I challenged the “official history” of Indonesian cinema by studying the framework of cultural traffic and underlining the importance of exploitation and B-films; leading to the conclusion that the films need to be included in any serious discussion on cinema. Secondly, I argued that, from the standpoint of the film traffic, classic Indonesian exploitation films are both the outcome and the source of conflict arising from various politics of taste involving several agencies like the State, cultural elites, local film producers, local film distributors and exhibitors, local audiences, transnational distributors, and global fans.

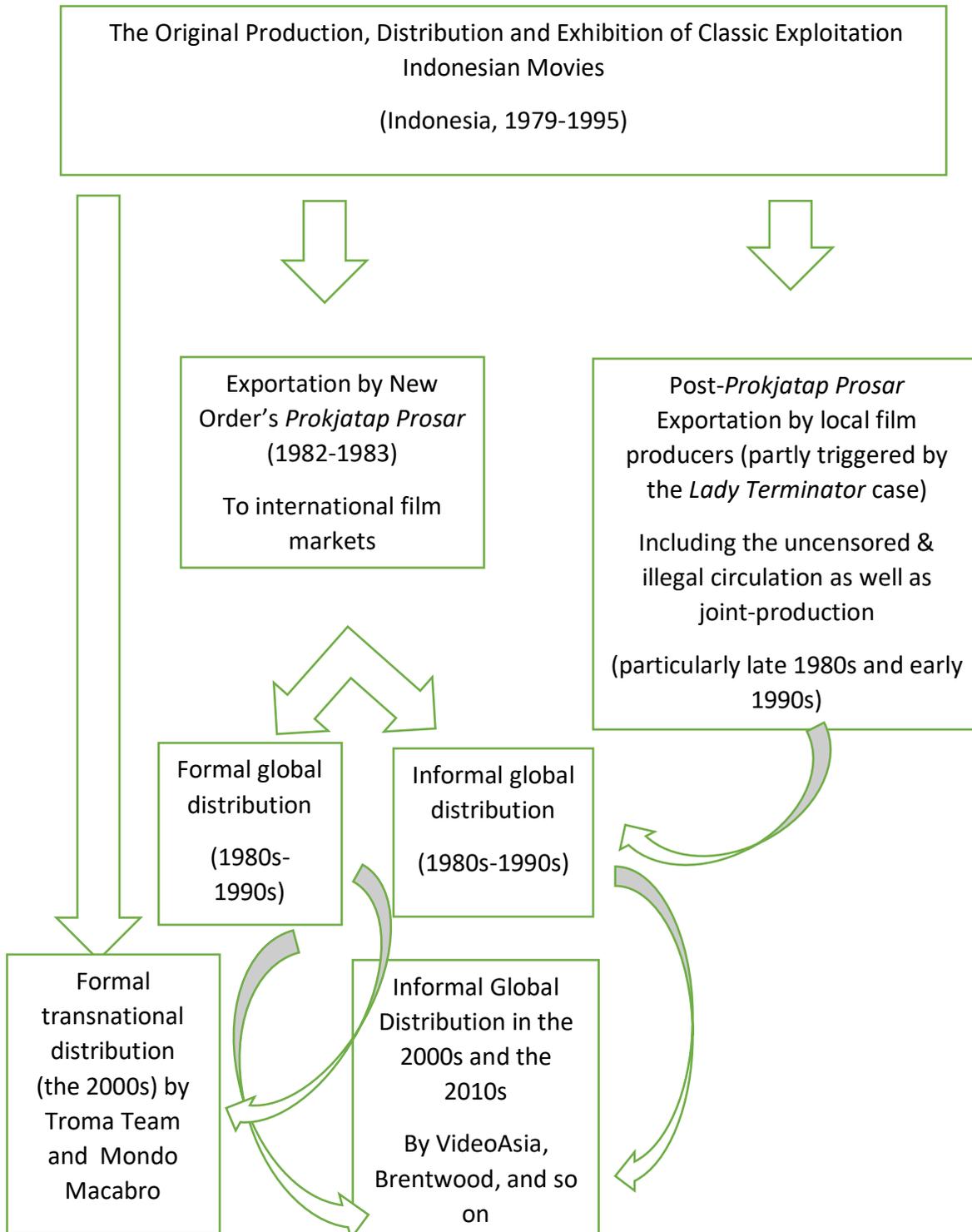
In a greater context, the thesis also interrogates how the international dynamics of political, economic, social, and cultural transformations of trashy films have formed and impacted both domestic and worldwide film cultures.

Cultural traffic and politics of taste are the two cornerstones which form the essence of the thesis. Both interplay with the reconstruction of Indonesian cinema history and the concept of cult cinema. Both have shown the dynamics of both national and transnational film cultures by placing the trashy films as the central point of discussing various interests in the political, cultural, and economic fields, each of which generate their own dynamics in the system. In this context, these kinds of taste battles, I argue, can also be read as part of, as Appadurai puts it, the dynamic tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization within the global flows (Appadurai 1996, 32). Below I will elaborate upon the two terms, and later I will highlight my findings and interventions from each chapter.

Before discussing the two terms and each chapter, to show the big picture, I have simplified the global flows of Classic Indonesian Exploitation movies in Figure 5 as shown below.

Figure 5

Cultural Traffic of Classic Exploitation Indonesian Movies



Cultural Traffic and the (New) History of Indonesian Cinema

Opposing the traditional approach of Indonesian film history which generally undervalues and excludes these films from historical and scholarly discourses, this thesis critically examines these films from the perspectives of cultural traffic and politics of taste and highlights the important roles they have played in Indonesian film history and beyond. In this sense, this thesis upholds the idea that trashy films constitute significant discourses within Indonesian cinema history. I argue that this work is in line with Heider's claim that popular genre films, including the exploitation ones, are the most appropriate ones for cultural analysis, instead of *film nasional* which were closer to the culturally-distanced art-house/auteur kind of films (Heider 1991, 8).

I have also underlined a series of contradictions between the New Order and its cultural elites, a topic that is rarely touched upon in Indonesian film scholarship, which reflects a paradoxical historical fact: why and how the New Order produced, distributed and exported the kind of films that they were actually trying to police, avoid, and eliminate; being the exact opposite of their own concept of the *film nasional*; why and how the exploitation films, dominated by sensual and sadistic scenes, were blooming in the New Order era, notorious for its state control and censorship. In this given context, I challenge the official history of Indonesian cinema by balancing and complementing it with the discourses on "marginalized" films. In doing so I aimed to enhance public and academic understanding in order to instigate a rethink and reconsideration of the cultural significance of these films in forming a cultural capital and a cultural heritage which reflects a particular representation of Indonesia excluded, so far, from meaningful studies. Therefore, I conclude that my work is in line with the spirit of New Film History.

Cultural Traffic and the Indonesian Context of Cult Cinema

I find it interesting that, while researching this topic, both the concept of cult cinema inherited from the West and the context of Indonesian film industry and policies during the New Order regime challenge each other constantly. The assumptions about and the expectations of Cult Cinema and Exploitation Movies, are largely formulated by the Western tradition and scholarship with Western perspectives and approaches, does not always fit the Indonesian context. However,

it is the Western DVD labels and transnational fans who label the films as cult movies in the first place. The Western cult cinema theories deviate from Indonesian cinema, particularly from the point of view of fandom and fan texts and their related exhibition/distribution culture.

First of all, the notion of “Cult Cinema” was not familiar in the context and studies of Indonesian cinema, until the domestic film critics discovered the theories of “cult movies” from Western film studies. Before that, neither the fans nor the scholars/critics had considered the films to be cult movies or exploitation movies. Moreover, the phenomenon of re-naming the genre or label of these films in the national scene took place only after transnational distributors started massively re-circulating them worldwide in the early 2000s.

The phenomenon was domestically being analyzed for the first time by director/fan Joko Anwar (Anwar 2001, Anwar 2003), who linked films such as *FFFF*, *Lady Terminator*, and *The Warrior/Jaka Sembung* series to exploitation and cult film websites and online midnight movie forums which attracted a large number of younger generation fans who paid attention to the films and recognized them as “Cult movies”. However, in the Indonesian context, 10 years earlier, both Salim Said and Karl Heider had coined the exploitation-film-related terms such as “Trashy movies”, “slapdash movies”, and “poor quality movies” (Said 1991, 89) and “The art of movie advertising” (Heider 1991, 24), respectively. In addition, Rosihan Anwar once also used the term “exploitation” when he sent a plea about rejection and concerns about these kinds of films to the Ministry of Information in 1978 (quoted in Said 1991, 90),

Regarding the aspects of rarity and exclusivity of these films to maintain the subcultural identity among cult followers (Jancovich 2002), the domestic fans do not face these kinds of issues. Unlike their fellow global fans, the films are still being screened on Indonesian public television, particularly during school holidays, as well as in the traditional *layar tancap* shows. One can also find the “combo package” of the pirated DVDs (eight in one, or five in one packages labeled as “Suzanna’s Films”, or “Barry Prima’s Films”), or original cheap VCDs in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. Originally, these films were also in the mainstream, being watched by mainstream spectators, with some of the films having reached the status of being box office successes. That is why I have discussed the notions of “Mass Cult” (Grant 1991) and “Cult Blockbusters” (Mathijs & Sexton 2011) as being terms which can be applied to these films.

The discourse on the cult of mainstream films is important considering that, although they are glorified by international fans for their otherness and rarity, “Crazy Indonesia” films are recognized as mainstream films in their country of origin. Regarding that account, I need to highlight, as pointed out by Krishna Sen (Sen 1991), that commonly in Asia it is difficult to label popular films as marginal, including Indonesian exploitation films.

In the Indonesian context, the films fit in with most of the characteristics mentioned above, particularly their low budget and being marginalized by cultural elites and the Government; however, at the same time they are being watched by the majority of mainstream audiences in mainstream movie-theaters. In Indonesia, some film companies who also produce these kinds of films, such as Rapi Films and Parkit Films, are considered as major companies which cater for the mainstream.

The next issue is fan culture woven around these films. Cult movies are basically identified as such by the celebration and the rituals of their followers. I cannot find any Indonesian fanzines related to the films I am analyzing, both produced in the New Order era or during the 2000s. There were no fan rituals, like cosplay, comic-con, and so forth, until a few years ago, and the only film communities which existed, such as *Komunitas Film Jadul* (Old School Film Community) or *Komunitas 1980an* (The 1980s Generation Community), do not exclusively focus on exploitation films.

Moreover, the traditions associated with Western cult cinema, such as Midnight Screenings, Midnight Movies,¹⁷⁹ Drive-in cinemas¹⁸⁰ and Double Bills are not common in Indonesia. As

¹⁷⁹ In a recent attempt, Indonesian Fantastic Film Festival (INAFF, 2007-2011) tried to reconstruct the rituals of the Grindhouse double bill in 2007 and 2008. I was at the 2008 INAFF, watching Wes Craven’s *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977) and Peter Jackson’s *Bad Taste* (1987) as part of a midnight screening. See: Liem: 2008. But this attempt was considered a failure. INAFF stopped in 2011 due to lack of funding, as indicated in their Facebook group, 12 October 2012 (“Berita Penundaan Pelaksanaan INAFF”).

¹⁸⁰ Actually, there was a drive-in in the Ancol Area in Jakarta, named “Teater Mobil”. It started in 1970 when the area was built into amusement park (Nia 2013; Mulyani 2011). Rumor has it that the Drive-In stopped operating in 1985 because of its bad reputation and the spectators partaking in immoral behavior (including having sex in their cars, known as the *Mobil Goyang* (Shaky Car) phenomenon); however, since I cannot find substantiated information about this matter, I cannot confirm this practice or whether it had double feature program. Based on the advertisement in *Kompas* daily (1/3/1977, 5/3/1977), it is noted that the outdoor theater screened matinee shows (10, 12, 14, respectively) and evening shows (19.00-22.45-24.30), and screened variety of genres, including *Shaolin Hero*, *Gone in 60 seconds*, and *Dandut Musical’s Rhoma Irama Penasaran* (The Curious Rhoma Irama). I interpret that the Drive-in tried to be a family-friendly gathering as well as providing adult entertainment (which would be in line with there being several nightclubs in the area).

mentioned above, most of the films were produced by major film companies and were released theatrically and on home video format for mainstream audiences, and became popular films with some of them even gaining blockbuster status. In this context, as discussed earlier, the term “Cult Blockbusters” (Mathijs and Sexton 2011) and “Mass Cult” (Grant 1991) are relevant to the situation in Indonesia’s New Order era.

This is the main reason why I have decided to discuss *layar tancap* which, despite having few things in common with Midnight screenings, is different from the tradition of cult cinema practices prevalent in the West.

However, related to theories on exploitation films, the ideas of “industrially marginal”, “aesthetically bankrupt”, and “lacking identifiable star”, as indicated by Schaefer (1999) and others, are compatible with the condition of classic exploitation films from Indonesia within a global context; many of the films were initially unknown, but eventually the fans came to know the important directors and cult icons from Indonesia. In the local context, the films are also recognizable from their inclusion of famous movie stars, such as Barry Prima and Suzanna, and yet remained “industrially marginal” as the films were always discriminated against by the cultural elites and the New Order’s cultural politics. However, during the 1990s, the producers tried to gain international attention by casting amateur foreign actors, like Ilona Bastian, Barbara Anne Constable, Peter O’Brian, and so forth, for the international releases – with the exception of actors such as Cynthia Rothrock, who were already famous at the time - which, in the long run, gained them global recognition.

Cultural Traffic and the Origin of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Cinema

Basically, I divided my thesis into three sections, the original production and circulation of the films, film mediation, and film consumption, all of which show the cultural traffic of the films as they engage with the battles of taste involving many groups through space and time. Below, I elaborate upon the conclusion of each section and chapter, starting with the first one.

In Chapter One, I focused on the origin of classic Indonesian exploitation films by discussing the original production of the films in Indonesia during 1975-1995; in Chapter 2, I discussed the domestic distribution and exhibition of the films; in Chapter 3, I analyzed the initial and official export of the films during 1982-1983 which made the films become transnational and eventually achieve cult status during the 2000s and, as one of my findings, a series of contradictions conducted

by the New Order is often found in historical patterns within government cultural policies and actions and eventually generated the negotiation of taste that it initiated among the Government, cultural elites, *layar tancap* owners, local audiences, transnational distributors, and global cult spectators.

In the first section, one of my main interventions is that these kinds of paradoxical policies paved the way for trashy films, the ones that the New Order actually tried to eliminate. In an era which professed pristine notions of Indonesian culture such as *film nasional* or *film kultural edukatif*, the trashy films provided a conflict of interests for many interested parties, including those held by the New Order and the cultural elites, which ultimately paved the way for “The Golden Age of Indonesian Exploitation Films” (Ojeda 2009, Ojeda 2010) involving the official exportation and global dissemination of the films.

The first chapter, on the original production of the films, highlights the reasons why the New Order and cultural elites permitted the production of and, in some respects, endorsed exploitation films, the very films which were an antithesis of their own notion of national cinema. As the majority of scholars of Indonesian film have stated that the New Order attempted to control all aspects of the domestic filmmaking process according to their own politics of taste (Marseli and Achnas 2002; Sen 1994; Heider, 1991), I argue the opposite perspective: The New Order era is an era where exploitation films blossomed.

In this context, I conclude that there were some paradoxical policies issued by the Government, particularly by the Ministry of Information which ‘surreptitiously’ both aided and abetted the production of trashy films. Thus, after the ideological and financial turbulence during 1964-1966, the New Order regime was founded and tried to revive and improve the workings of the film industry and national economy in general. Consequently, the government issued some policy statements that paved the way for the production of “trashy films”. In short, from the very beginning of The New Order, there existed two sets of conflicting policies, namely the “Quality Approach” and the “Quantity/Audience Approach”, which influenced the production of domestic exploitation films and, later, the global dissemination of the films.

The first, Quality Approach, included the founding of the DPFN which controlled state film funding and the selection of state-approved films that were sent to international film festivals or won FFI, ministerial decrees, and BSF.

The other pole, Quality/Audience Approach, was an attempt to improve the film industry by multiplying the numbers of local films, particularly with Ministerial Decree no 71/1967, which induced the mushrooming of the domestic exploitation film, which, in the process, also brought about a phase of domination by Hollywood films that eventually affected local film languages, conventions, and genres including 'exploitation' films. In this category the other significant policy of note is the Quickie Quota (1976) which required local film exporters to produce several films under the rule of the right to import movies (Said 1991, 88), a policy which was in response to the decline of film production in 1977 (Said 1991, 88). As a result, the quantity of B-grade films increased significantly with the 1978 film scene in Indonesia being dominated by 'mystic' and 'legend' films. Salim Said underlines this phenomenon under the caption "the rise of trashy movies" (Said 1991, 89-90).

The social and cultural tensions between the Government and the cultural elites on the one hand and the audiences and filmmakers on the other made the New Order regime issue a series of conflicting policies, which fully reflected the contradictions that the process entailed.

One other point which needs emphasis is that the return and popularity of Hollywood films, after the country had banned the films from 1964 to 1966 due to the ideological turbulence that led to the rise of the New Order. The return of American cinema, as a consequence of the new policies of the new government as well as the media flows, had indirectly influenced the tastes of the film producers (in the form of imitating Hollywood styles and genres) and the local audiences (who became familiar with their filmic language and formula) (Sen 1991). The global flows of Hollywood films into Indonesia, with their own values embedded in the movies which were not always in line with the New Order's politics of taste, inevitably influenced the local film scene. On the other hand, eventually these local films were being trafficked overseas and returned to Hollywood as well as other parts of the US, European countries, and other places.

Regarding domestic distribution and exhibition, I discuss traveling cinema as the outlets of exploitation films for rural, suburban, and remote areas scattered throughout the Indonesian archipelago. In opposition to Van Heeren's statement, I argue that *layar tanca* shows and their

rural audiences are important for New Order from the beginning of the regime, precisely because the spectators were the villagers and suburban people from lower and working class society. I argued that the New Order policed the *layar tancap* shows as a political and cultural vehicle which were meant to disseminate their policies among the rural people who formed the majority of the Indonesian population. In this sense, the *layar tancap* shows were not only considered as a vehicle to approach important voters, but they also functioned as propaganda for the government's developmental ideas by acting as Suharto's political vehicles nationwide.

The subject matter of the films caused a "tug of war" between the central and local government, the audience, and the *layar tancap* owners. The policy makers made some decrees, including the concept of *Pagar Budaya* (cultural fence) in 1993, which was meant to police the attitude of the country dwellers' daily life to fit with the concept of "national culture" as well as shelter them from the negative impacts caused by the global import of movies shown by *layar tancap*. Therefore, some rules were framed in obligating the touring cinema owners to strictly play only out-of-date local films in 16mm (instead of 35mm) and re-censoring the films.

Nonetheless, *layar tancap* had become a significant channel for the circulation and distribution of trashy films (particularly the mystic/horror and legend/*kumpeni* films) and led to the formation of different kinds of film audiences who, I argue, can be characterized as cult followers with specific attitudes towards the films, such as throwing stones to the screen and uprooting the pole if something did not meet their expectations.

Therefore, we have during these years, two different politics of taste colliding with each other: while, on the one hand, the intention of the New Order was to apply the "cultural fence" concept to police the mobile cinema culture in order to filter foreign values embedded in foreign films and, on the other, most of the films screened were exploitation films. Moreover, in order to meet the demands of the rural spectators, the traveling cinema owners often broke regulations by, for instance, screening 35mm prints, the imported new films and, in some cases, even screening the uncensored ones.

Lastly, it has been shown that the initial cultural traffic of the films through *Prokjatap Prosar* has been an official attempt to export films which dealt with the taste of transnational distributors and

global fans. The New Order's paradoxical policies of *Prosar* raised tensions between various interest groups of taste and formed a part of what Salim Said called the "Trial and Error" period (Said 1991, 93). However, even though this state-owned organization failed to fulfill its main aim of getting *film nasional* selected in major film festivals, such as the Berlinale and Cannes, it inadvertently succeeded in marketing many exploitation films, the opposite characteristics and types of film *kultural edukatif*, gaining much profit from them. Apparently the New Order's initial mission could not compete with the politics of taste undertaken by transnational distributors and global fans which started demanding exploitation films in the early 1980s, hence *Prosar* made some adjustments during the process. Therefore, the international buyers and their target markets dominated the negotiation of taste and dictated the cultural characteristics of Indonesian film exportation in the international film market in early 1980s.

This is the point where the films travelled from their original country, ironically exported by the New Order official agency, and circulated in global cult circuits both in theatrical releases as well as home video, eventually being re-circulated and celebrated by global fans since the 2000s. This is a new development which I discussed in Chapter 4 which dealt with the Troma Team, Chapter 5 examined Mondo Macabro and VideoAsia, and Chapter 7 considered Global fans.

Moreover, inspired by the success of exporting these films by *Prokjabat Prosar*, some film producers who were members of *Prokjabat Prosar* tried to go to international film markets independently after organization was liquidated by the Government. It caused the phenomenon of "smuggling films", as a resistance effort from the various kinds of opponent groups of taste towards the concept and movement of the Government and the cultural elites. This attempt peaked with the case of *Lady Terminator*, as discussed in Chapter 6. Later on, the film producers modified their attempt by hiring both amateur and popular Western actors and imitating the styles and genres of Western exploitation films or blended them with the local genres, such as Legend and *Kumpeni*.

Cultural Traffic and Film Mediation

The second section consists of the international circulation of the films, particularly on how transnational distributors, namely Troma Entertainment, Mondo Macabro and VideoAsia, reworked the films and marketed them as "cult movies" for global fans. Both chapters consider

the interplay of politics of taste, especially those between the DVD distributors and the cult followers. The film traffic during this period led to, in Appadurai's term (1996), "deterritorialization" of the films which decontextualized the films and recontextualized (and, later, repurposed) them from their initial cultural values by providing new kinds of distributors and audiences.

The global flow of the films, initially disseminated by *Prokjetap Prosar* in early 1980s, attracted transnational distributors, mainly during the 2000s, which re-circulated them in new forms and to new kinds of audiences during the post-2000 period. The distributors marketed the films as "cult movies" and reworked them to make sure that the films were more suitable for the taste of the new audience consisting of global cult fans.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the Troma Team's redistribution of classic exploitation Indonesian films and their reworking as DVDs, the first time such films had officially been reworked and released by an international distributor in DVD format. By focusing on the redubbing of *Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters*, I considered how the film had been "Tromatized" by making it more suitable for the tastes of Troma's cult followers. Therefore, I argued that the DVD distributors selected and reframed the films to fit their followers' taste before the fans did it themselves. Generally the Troma Team redubbed the dialogue (which originally was already dubbed into English) which located the film closer to the ideology and identity of Troma Entertainment as well as fulfilling the economic function of the film.

Troma Team chose the style of mock dubbing and, consequently, the story and dialogues were switched considerably from the original into their totally new forms. By doing so, the movie became more appropriate for the Troma Team fans. Additionally, the Troma Team also included inside jokes throughout the films, including parody and sick humor associated with filthy elements (such as fart and semen jokes), which narrowed the market of the films by restricting it primarily to their fans. Therefore, automatically, the film became more problematic for general Indonesian audiences and other spectators who are not familiar with Troma's sense of humor, making it difficult to comprehend, let alone being in line with the slogan of national culture and "*film Indonesia*".

The global flows of the films attracted not only Troma Team, but many transnational distributors which distributed the films both legally and illegally. Mondo Macabro and VideoAsia are two of them who indulged in reworking the films as well as circulating them both legally and illegally. I argue that the two different modes of dissemination naturally led to different forms of reworking and marketing strategies. However, although the films were being de-contextualized and re-contextualized from their original cultural contexts, both of the DVD distributors received different kinds of reception from fans from the kind of treatment they gave to the films.

Since Mondo Macabro, as the legal distributor, owns the right of distribution, they can exploit the materials and even have access to the 35mm and restored prints of the films. Hence, they formally re-purposed the original sources and enriched the special features of the DVDs with much additional material, including producing texts involving trivial knowledge and short documentaries. They also changed the titles and dubbed the films into English. They considered the films as gems and treated them with utmost respect, archiving them appropriately, the process that is also adopted by Criterion. I argue that the strategy adopted by these companies was meant for high-end collectors (Klinger 2006, 63-64).

Since VideoAsia, being an illegal distributor, does not own the rights of film distribution, they officially do not have original sources and copyrights of the movies to exploit. As a consequence VideoAsia undertook a commercial bootlegging strategy. They de-contextualized the films by plagiarizing para-texts unconnected with the films and putting them on the front and back covers of the DVDs in order to generate an “old school” feel and nostalgia among the fans. This practice has been in vogue in the Western tradition of cult media, particularly the *Tales of Voodoo* comic books, the tradition of double bills, grind houses, and Drive-in cinemas. I argue that based on the bad quality of the audio visual material as well as the lack of special features, their marketing goals were aimed at low-end collectors (Klinger 2006, 63-64). Even though a substantial number of buyers have been dissatisfied and gave negative feedback regarding the bad quality of the films, they still bought the DVDs acknowledging the rarity and exclusivity of the materials concerned, since the labels gave them “an offer that they cannot refuse” due to elements of rarity and exclusivity. As a consequence, VideoAsia removed the film from its original cultural roots.

Two different distribution companies having the same goal to market the films in the global cult circuits but having two very different marketing strategies has led to different kinds of treatment and reception. But both of them did rework the films.

Cultural Traffic and Film Reception

The third section is on the consumption and reception of these films, particularly the moral attacks against *Lady Terminator* in 1989 in Indonesia (Chapter 6), and the online global fan texts in the 2000s (Chapter 7). In this section, I highlighted “the other kind of audience” and their politics of taste.

The film flows, again, show the struggles and tensions between various interested parties of taste. The first case concerns the battle between official institutions and cultural elites revolving around the circulation of *Lady Terminator* involving local producers and spectators and global spectators which finally led to the dissemination of an illegal version of the film both nationally and internationally; a process which was accelerated by the availability of new technology in relation to home video.

Chapter 6 highlights the tension underlying the various politics of taste, primary resulting in a conflict which had four agencies differently aligned on the issue: the New Order’s censorship board which initially passed the films, some cultural elites, together with other influential members of society, who fiercely attacked the film including the decision of the censorship board (LSF) to pass the film, indirectly declaring a war on them by inciting a “moral panic” in 1989, and the local producers and distributors who deliberately violated the regulations by circulating illegal version of the films both locally and globally, and the taste of local and transnational fans who bought the illegal films. As a result, even though *Lady Terminator* was withdrawn from national circulation and banned (until the release of the re-censored version in 1994), the film was still widely circulated both locally and globally.

It has been five years since *Prokjatap Prosar* authoritatively disseminated classic Indonesian exploitation films abroad which had helped the producers learn about foreign tastes and procedures of film exportation. The influence of *Prokjatap Prosar*’s paradoxical policies, which massively

started the cultural traffic of early films during the '80s, has been strongly emphasized here. Thus, for example, the producers who used to be the members of *Prosar* learned not only how to export films but also how to modify the style of the films by imitating Western exploitation films and even including Western actors in the films, as in *Jungle Heat* and *Intruder*. They often got foreign partners overseas to do the post-production work which also helped them in distributing the films directly from their partners' country, thereby by-passing the requirement of censorship certificates and export licenses. The main reason for this is that they needed to fulfill the taste and demand of "the other kind of audience" in global contexts.

Regarding "the other kind of audience" in national context, apparently their existence was hindered by public discourses on Moral Panic issues towards the film. The 'Moral Panic', which undeniably occurred in 1988, remained limited to a few cultural elites and similar-minded people who shared the same concerns and consisted of some members belonging to the press, a few religious figures, some Members of Parliament, and some film critics. Although the interviews and articles occurring during this time always mention that they are acting on behalf of "the people", I proved that the mainstream audiences were not of the same mindset and did not reject the films. And it is important to note that some significant institutions, such as Muslim clerics' MUI and Actors' Parfi, did not get involved in exerting pressure to get the films withdrawn, an apt example of their attitude being that they watched *Lady Terminator* even weeks after its withdrawal.

On the other hand, the public, as shown in many journalistic reports, stated that they were intrigued by the harsh criticisms of the films and encouraged to watch it illegally. In addition, there were some other movies dealing with similar topics and with a similar audio-visual style that did not attract adverse attention and criticism and hence could be watched in regular movie-theaters. I further argue that this phenomenon happened because the cultural elites selectively attacked certain films while ignoring other similar types of films.

The overall phenomenon, I argue, is the effect of straightforward global flows, which, in Appadurai's terms (1996), evolved during the 1970s and 1980s followed by the emergence of home videos in a big way during the 1980s which simplified copy-making and enhancement processes that considerably simplified the dissemination of these films. As the product of joint-production scheme and being post-produced abroad, the films inevitably became global

commodities which could not be policed by Indonesian officials any more. Eventually, these films found their new circuits, spectatorship, and fandom.

The last chapter is dedicated to the productivity of the fans, primarily focusing on the phenomenon of “Crazy Indonesia”, a term initially popularized by Jack Jensen and subsequently used by global online fans. Apparently, the fans produced their own texts with their own niche criticism. In Mathijs and Sexton’s terms, Fan Criticism and DIY Criticism can be in many formats, including personal blog reviews and threads in online forums. I argue that, even while some of them still ridicule the films, they are actually doing so in terms of their own distinctive tastes which differentiated their kind of films from other similar kinds of films. In the process, the global fans inadvertently formulated a sense of “Indonesia-ness” on the basis of how they distinguished the films. Thus, for instance, they differentiated the films from “Wacky Siam” and “Rare Filipino” which celebrated weird and exotic things from the faraway archipelago.

However, as an act of amateurism, even though the fans did not articulate their terms rigorously, they still could differentiate between “Crazy Indonesia” films and other Indonesian films or World cinema.¹⁸¹ They did not want to discuss recent films as part of the world of “Crazy Indonesia” films, although they did appreciate a few such films, like Mo Brothers’ *Macabre* and Joko Anwar’s *Forbidden Door*. They did not also celebrate the New Order’s other locally produced exploitation films belonging to other sub-genres such as comedy and the *Dangdut* musical, the kind of films that are still celebrated by the domestic spectators.

After carefully reading the reviews and comments of the fans, I defined what “Crazy Indonesia” films meant for its fans. In doing the analysis, I borrowed Heider’s concept of using Indonesian sub-genres, namely Legend and Kumpeni, as well as Westernized films such as “mockbusters” and Japanese period films, the latter having many similarities with women-in-prison films and women-exploitation films. In conclusion, I argue that “Crazy Indonesia” films, according to its fans, are limited to those Indonesian exploitation films which were produced and exported during the New Order regime in Indonesia, especially between 1979 and 1995, and/or which were

¹⁸¹ Nonetheless, it is significant to underline that, as fans, they have an authoritative and wide knowledge about trivial information, compared to those professional journalists as well as both local and global film scholars and critics.

redistributed during the 1980s-1990s and the 2000s by international distributors. The global fans celebrated the elements of weirdness and otherness of these films, including their use of martial arts, audio-visual features, eastern mystical atmosphere, their stories and storytelling techniques and dialogue.

The craziness of these fans for “Crazy Indonesia” movies was such that if they discovered a film with the same characteristics and belonging to the same time period, they would immediately try to buy them as collectors’ items, even unearthing them in any country, including the neighbouring country such as Malaysia, as an act of maintaining the rarity and exclusivity of their collection. And finally, as global films resulting from cultural traffic, these films became the unofficial ambassadors of “the face of Indonesia on screen”. In the recent global context, instead of the New Order’s concept of *film kultural edukatif* and *film nasional*, “The Face of Indonesia on Screen” is represented by “Crazy Indonesia” films, which are simply the opposite of the official intention of the Government.

Further Study

Related to the reconstruction of the history of Indonesian cinema which would include exploitation and B-grade films, a new history-writing would be necessary. My work only covers the New Order era, whereas the new history of Indonesian cinema would need to contain these kinds of trashy films from the very beginning--a process which was already started by few critics including Mereisonne (2014)--until the recent ones emerged, such as the significance of the local infamous horror filmmakers such as Nayato Fio Nuala and KK Deraj¹⁸² or Gatot Brajamusti’s *Azrax Melawan Sindikat Perdagangan Wanita (Azrax Against Women Trafficking Syndicate, 2013)*, the latter being celebrated as the new cult movie by some local fans.¹⁸³

¹⁸²Post-1998 horror films in Indonesia are commonly considered as egregiously bad movies, but not in the notion of “so bad it’s good”, they are simply considered by both most of the local film critics and the film fans as bad since the films contains a poor story blended with a soft porn style. Even Joko Anwar, as a B-grade movies propagandist, does not like the films (Anwar 2001, Anwar 2003). However, the films attracted at least 300 to 500 thousand spectators and remain “guilty pleasures” among Indonesian youngsters (Downes 2014).

¹⁸³Regarding *Azrax*, the bad film is considered as the new cult movie by some domestic “Crazy Indonesia” film fans and is celebrated by them, including directors Joko Anwar, Timo Tjahjanto (from The Mo Brothers), and Gareth Evans, and only reached seven thousands spectators (Pratama 2013; Ferdian 2013). According to many audiences and critics, *Azrax* is a bad movie. Even the director Dedi Setiadi stated *Azrax* is a “rotten movie” (*film busuk*), and the

In addition, the condition of current B-grade films, in some ways, is quite similar with what happened with classic B-grade films in the New Order era: they were marginalized, even by the mainstream audiences. For instance, some of the mainstream viewers defined recent the horror film genre as “as cheap, exploitative and derivative, morally and aesthetically bankrupt, and emblematic of all the worst problems facing the Indonesian film industry and Indonesian society in general” in contrast to the domestic “quality films” (Downes, 2015). Their terms are similar to the terms used by Schaefer in connection with exploitation films (Schaefer 1999, 17), whereas the oppositional term “quality films” is similar with the jargon *film kultural edukatif* and Salim Said’s “idealistic filmmaking” (Said 1991). Only time and future research projects will determine whether current B-grade movies can achieve the cult status domestically and transnationally.

Regarding to the Indonesian contexts of cult cinema, I have made my interventions into the rethinking of the "cult cinema" notion for movies that have transnationally travelled globally, with the idea of “deterritorialization”, “decontextualization”, and “recontextualization” of the films in difference contexts and film culture. However, I would strongly recommend that, for the next batch of researchers, it would be an extremely fruitful area for their scholarship and elucidation to undertake more research on redefining or reformulating the theories of cult cinema with an Indonesian or Southeast Asian perspective, as it would require the formulation of different methods, methodologies, approaches, and research questions.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have made interventions in the history of Indonesian cinema and the notion of cult movies, as well as contributed in the fields of politics of taste and cultural traffic or global flows of trashy films.

director was disappointed with the unprofessional attitude of the producer/main actor Gatot Brajamusti. Setiadi was interviewed by reporters after attending the interrogation as a witness regarding the current situation of the arrest of Brajamusti for using a real pistol as shooting property for his second feature film, *D.P.O.* By the time the conclusion is being written, Brajamusti was currently under arrest for possessing and misusing drugs (28 August 2016) a day after he was reelected as the chairperson of PARFI. He was also charged for a rape crime (5 October 2016). Regarding the controversial figure of the main actor and the limited access of the film, I argue that the film will get international cult reputation in near future, if the producer globally released the official DVD or VCD. However, again, the discourses on current cult movies should be undertaken in proper investigation.

Related to Indonesian cinema history, I critically included the discourses of trashy films into film studies within an Indonesian context. I argued that, as the opposite of the main attempt of the New Order's concept on *film nasional* representation and imagination of "the true culture" of Indonesia, the imagination of Indonesia is represented by "Crazy Indonesia". The New Order issued a series of contradictory policies towards trashy films and as a consequence the domestic exploitation movies blossomed and the New Order's *Prokjatap Prosar* was the main agency of film exportation which began the circulation of "Crazy Indonesia" films abroad.

As the notion of cult cinema and the discourses of Indonesian cinema constantly interplay, I found that the Westernized cult cinema theories do not always fit in the contexts of non-Western countries, particularly Indonesia. Indonesia's film industry had their own dynamics. Until the films were rediscovered by transnational distributors and fans, the films were not considered as cult movies nor significant for any intellectual discussion. To bridge the gap, I borrowed Karl Heider's Indonesian genres theories to analyze the phenomenon.

In regards of global flows, I already showed that, in the process of cultural traffic of the films, classic Indonesian exploitation films became both the arenas and objects of the taste battles among various kinds of politics of taste, both in the 1970s-1990s and beyond, in Indonesia and worldwide. Therefore, the films played significant roles as the factors to drive various cultural, economical, and political attempts related to film culture in Indonesia and world cinema scenes, from New Order's cultural policies, the reworks by transnational distributors, to the reception of global online fans.

On distribution film culture, it is a common practice for international distributors to repurpose the films. I agree with Fiske's arguments (2007) that the fans fiercely discriminate the films and only select the most suitable ones related to their own taste. Nevertheless, in the case of "Crazy Indonesia" films, distributors discriminate them before the fans. It was the film distributors who fiercely selected the exploitation Indonesian films, instead of the *film nasional* ones offered by *Prokjatap Prosar* in the international film market in early 1980s. And, more recently, DVD labels in the 1990s and the 2000s did the same practices, in order to make the films more suitable for their market, including labeling the films as "cult movies".

List of Tables and Figures

Figure

Figure 1 : Japanese DVD cover of <i>Pengabdian Setan</i> (Satan's Slave).....	9
Figure 2: Front DVD cover of <i>Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters</i>	136
Figure 3: DVD front cover of <i>Devil's Sword</i>	152
Figure 4: Comparison of Tales of Voodoo as a series of VideoAsia in the 2000s (left) and 1960s-1970s comic books (right).....	157
Figure 5: The Cultural Traffic of Classic Exploitation Indonesian Cinema.....	207

Table

Table 1 : Works of <i>Prokijatap Prosar</i> at Manila International Film Festival, January 1982.....	108
Table 2: The Works of <i>Prokijatap Prosar</i> at 32 nd Berlin International Film Festival, February 1982.....	110
Table 3: Works of <i>Prokijatap Prosar</i> at Cannes Film Festival, May 1982.....	111-112
Table 5: MIFED (Mercato Internazionale Del Film Del TV Del Documentario) in Milan, October 1982.....	112-113
Table 5: Indonesian Films redistributed by Troma Entertainment.....	131
Table 6: Examples of Rewritten script by Troma Team.....	139-140

List of Transnational Classic Indonesian Exploitation Films

(in chronological order of the original production)

No	Year of production	English Title	Indonesian title	Production Company	Director	DVD distributor
1	1978	Primitives	Primitif	Rapi Films	Sisworo Gautama Putra	VideoAsia's Tales of Voodoo (15 Nov 2005)
2	1979	Queen of Black Magic	Ratu Ilmu Hitam	Rapi Films	Lilieek Sudjio	Mondo Macabro (27 May 2008)
3	1979	Special Silencers	Serbuan Halilintar	Parkit Films	Arizal	Delta Video
4	1980	Five Deadly Angels	5 Cewek Jagoan	Parkit	Danu Umbara	
5	1981	Mystics in Bali (Leak)	Mistik (Punahnya Rahasia Ilmu Iblis Leak)	Pusat Perusahaan Film, Video Tape Corp. (Sydney)	H. Tjut Djalil	Mondo Macabro (2 Oct 2007)
6	1981	The Warrior	Jaka Sembung Sang Penakluk	Rapi Films	Sisworo Gautama Putra	Mondo Macabro (18 Nov 2008)
7	1982	Burn the Sun/ Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters 2	Membakar Matahari	Parkit Film	Arizal	Troma Team (VHS: 29 Sep 1997)
8	1982	Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters (The Fighters)	Perempuan Bergairah	Parkit Film	Jopi Burnama and Charles Kaufman	Troma Team (VHS: : 29 Sep 1997)
9	1982	Satan's Slave	Pengabdian Setan	Rapi Films	Sisworo Gautama Putra	Lokasari SDN; Brentwood Home Video/BCI Eclipse' Eastern Horror (4 July 2006);
10	1982	The Snake Queen	Nyi Blorong	Rapi Films	Ratno Timoer	
11	1983	Jungle Virgin Force	Perawan Rimba	Parkit Films	Wellson Danu Umbara	VideoAsia's Tales of Voodoo (15 Nov 2005) & Grindhouse Experience
12	1983	The Blazing Battle	Lebak Membara	Rapi Films	Imam Tantowi	
13	1983	The Warrior II (The Warrior and the Blind Swordsman)	Si Buta Lawan Jaka Sembung	Rapi Films	Dasri Yakob	

14	1983	Escape from Hell Hole	Kawin Kontrak	Rapi Films	Maman Firmansyah	VideoAsia's Tales of Voodoo (as Hell Hole, , 15 Nov 2005) & Grindhouse Experience; : Cornerstone Media (5 Mar 2007)
15	1983	War Victims	Kamp Tawanan Wanita	Parkit Films	Jopi Burnama	ZDD Visual Media; Van Girl Video (Dutch); Theatrically released by Atlas International
16	1983	Lady Exterminator (I Want to Get Even)	Barang Terlarang	Rapi Films	Maman Firmansyah	
17	1984	No Time to Die (Danger - Keine Zeit zum Sterben)	Menentang Maut	Rapi Film, Rapid Film GMBH (Munich)	Helmut Ashley, E.G. Bakker, Hasmanan	
18	1984	Revenge of Ninja	Gadis Berwajah Seribu	Rapi Films	Ratno Timoer	
19	1984	The Devil's Sword	Golok Setan	Rapi Films	Ratno Timoer	Mondo Macabro
20	1985	Bloody Vengeance	Darah Perjaka	PT Dara Mega Film	Ackyl Anwary	
21	1985	Blind Warrior	Si Buta Dari Gua Hantu (Neraka Perut Bumi)	Rapi Films	Ratno Timoer	Terror Vision's Eastern Horror; Maia Film
22	1985	Daredevil Commandos	Komando Sambar Nyawa	Rapi Films	Eddy G. Bakker	
23	1985	Hell Raiders	Pasukan Berani Mati	Rapi Films	Imam Tantowi	CBS
24	1985	The Warrior and the Ninja	Jaka Sembung & Bergola Ijo	Rapi Films	H. Tjut Djali	
25	1986	Final Score	Dendam Membara	Rapi Films	Arizal	
26	1986	Satan's Bed	Ranjang Setan	Soraya Intercine, Nafila Film	H. Tjut Djali	
27	1986	The Intruder	Pembalasan Rambu	Parkit Films	Jopi Burnama	Troma Team
28	1986	The Stabilizer	Segitiga Emas	Parkit Films	Arizal	Troma Team (29 July 2003)
29	1986	The Terrorists	Menumpas Teroris	PT Kanta Indah Film	Iman Tantowi	
30	1987	Hungry Snake Woman	Petualangan Cinta Nyi Blorong	Soraya Intercine	Sisworo Gautama Putra	
31	1987	Virgins from Hell	Perawan Disarang Sindikat	Rapi Films	Ackyl Anwari, Fred Wardy Pilliang	Mondo Macabro (31 Jan 2006)
32	1988	Empire on Fire	Permainan Dibalik Tirai	Rapi Films	Manman Firmansjah	
33	1988	Forceful Impact	Jaringan Terlarang	Parkit Films	Ackyl Anwary	
34	1988	Jakarta (Triangle Invasion)	Peluru dan Wanita	Parkit Films	Charles Kaufman, E.G. Bakker	
35	1988	Java Burn (Diamond Run)	Harga Sebuah Kejujuran	Parkit Films, Novacom International	Henky Solaiman, Robert Chappell	

36	1988	Jungle Heat	Rimba Panas	Rapi Films	Ratno Timoer	
37	1988	Lady Terminator	Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan	Soraya Intercine	H. Tjut Djalil	Mondo Macabro (28 Sep 2004)
38	1988	Lethal Hunter (American Hunter)	Pemburu Berdarah Dingin	Rapi Film	Arizal	
39	1988	White Crocodile Queen	Ratu Buaya Putih	Soraya Intercine	H. Tjut Djalil	
40	1990	Double Crosser / Crocodile Cage	Membakar Lingkaran Api	Rapi Films	Arizal	
41	1990	Angel of Fury (Triple Cross)	Pertempuran Segi Tiga	Rapi Films	David Worth, Ackyl Anwari	Medusa (13 Jan 1997)
42	1992	Dangerous Seductress	Bercinta Dengan Maut	LA 20th Century Productions, Soraya Intercine	John Miller, H. Tjut Djalil	Mondo Macabro (16 Nov 2004)
43	1992	Lady Dragon 2	Bidadari Berambut Emas	Rapi Films	Ackyl Anwar	
44	1993	Rage & Honor 2 - Hostile Takeover	Membela Harga Diri	I.R.S. Media Inc	Guy Norris	
45	1992	Lady Dragon	Tiada Titik Balik	Rapi Films	David Worth, Clifford Mohr	
46	1995	Without Mercy (Outraged Fugitive)	Pemburu Teroris	Rapi Films	Robert Anthony	

Source: modified from Barker 2014, 4-9

List of Foreign actors in New Order's Indonesian B-Movies

No	Foreign actor	Film
1	Cynthia Rothrock	<i>Pertempuran Segitiga/ Angel of Fury (Triple Cross)</i> (1990), <i>Tiada Titik Balik/ Lady Dragon</i> (1991), <i>Bidadari Berambut Emas/ Lady Dragon 2</i> (1992), <i>Membela Harga Diri/ Rage & Honor 2 - Hostile Takeover</i> (1992)
2	Peter O'Brian	<i>Pembalasan Rambu/The Intruder</i> (1986), <i>Rimba Panas/Jungle Heat</i> (1988), <i>Pertempuran Setigita/ Triple Cross/ Angel of Fury</i> (1990), <i>Double Crosser / Crocodile Cage/Membakar Lingkaran Api</i> (1990), <i>Lethal Hunter/American Hunter/ Pemburu Berdarah Dingin</i> (1988), <i>Stabilizer/Segitiga Emas</i> (1986)
3	Chris Mitchum	<i>Dendam Membara/Final Score</i> (1987)
4	Frank Zagarino	<i>Harga Sebuah Kejujuran/ Java Burn (Diamond Run)</i> (1988), <i>Pemburu Teroris/ Without Mercy (Outraged Fugitive)</i> (1994)
5	Chris Noth	<i>Peluru dan Wanita/ Jakarta (Triangle Invasion)</i> (1987), <i>Harga Sebuah Kejujuran/ Java Burn (Diamond Run)</i> (1988)
6	Gillian Theresia	<i>Stabilizer/Segitiga Emas</i> (1986)
7	Wilson Peter	<i>Stabilizer/Segitiga Emas</i> (1986)
8	Sue Francis	<i>Peluru dan Wanita/ Jakarta (Triangle Invasion)</i> (1987)
9	Mike Abbot	<i>Dendam Membara/Final Score</i> (1987), <i>Harga Sebuah Kejujuran/ Java Burn (Diamond Run)</i> (1988)
10	Barbara Anne Constable	<i>Lady Terminator/Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan</i> (1988)
11	Anna Sylviana,	<i>Lady Terminator/ Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan</i> (1988)
12	Christopher Hart	<i>Lady Terminator/ Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan</i> (1988)
13	Richard Norton	<i>Tiada Titik Balik/ Lady Dragon</i> (1991)

14	Tonya Lynn,	<i>Bercinta Dengan Maut/ Dangerous Seductress</i> (1992)
15	Kristin Ann	<i>Bercinta Dengan Maut/ Dangerous Seductress</i> (1992)
16	Billy Drago	<i>Bidadar Berambut Emas/ Lady Dragon 2</i> (1992)
17	John Norton	<i>Membela Harga Diri/ Rage & Honor 2 - Hostile Takeover</i> (1992)
18	Glen Robert	<i>Membela Harga Diri/ Rage & Honor 2 - Hostile Takeover</i> (1992)
19	Richard D	<i>Membela Harga Diri/ Rage & Honor 2 - Hostile Takeover</i> (1992)
20	Martin Nove	<i>Pemburu Teroris/ Without Mercy (Outraged Fugitive)</i> (1994)
21	John Philip Law	<i>Menentang Maut/ No Time to Die (Danger - Keine Zeit zum Sterben)</i> (1984)
22	Winfred Glateader	<i>Menentang Maut/ No Time to Die (Danger - Keine Zeit zum Sterben)</i> (1984)
23	Dyalag Mayer Grazyna	<i>Menentang Maut/ No Time to Die (Danger - Keine Zeit zum Sterben)/Menentang Maut</i> (1984)
24	Cindy Lee Duck	<i>Forceful Impact/Jaringan Terlarang</i> (1987)

Source: FilmIndonesia.or.id

List of Policies

As included in *Himpunan Peraturan-Peraturan Perfilman Tahun 1964-1978*

(Biro Hukum: n.P) (in chronological order):

Presidential Decree No.1/1964 on Film Development (*Pembinaan Perfilman*) by The President of Indonesia. 5 March 1964.

Ministerial Decree no. 71/SK/M1967 on Benefits from Imports for Interests of increasing production and rehabilitation of National Film Industry. (*Pemanfaatan Film Impor untuk Peningkatan Produksi dan Rehabilitasi Perfilman Nasional*). By Minister of Information BM Diah, 15 December 1967.

Circular Letter (*Nota Edaran*) no. D-01161/67/16. Issued by Department of Foreign Affairs, dated 27 February 1967. No signature.

Ministerial Decree no. 34/SK/M/1968 on National Film Production Council (*Dewan Produksi Film Nasional*). By Minister of Information BM Diah, 30 May 1968.

Ministerial Decree no 44/SK/M/1968, on Film Censorship Board (*Badan Sensor Film*), by Ministry of Information, Air Marshall Budiardjo, 24 July 1968.

Ministerial Decree no. 46/8/1968 on Angka Pengenal Ekspor (APE) (Export Identification Number. Issued by Ministry of Trade Sumitro Djojohadikusumo. 19 August 1968.

Ministerial Decree no. 59/Kep/MENPEN/1969 on National Film Council (*Dewan Film Nasional*). Issued by Minister of Information Boediardjo, 29 July 1969.

Directorial Decree no. 4/KEP.DIR/DF/1970 on Importation of Sex Education-themed films (*Pemasukan Film Film Berthema Pendidikan Sex*) . by Directorate of Film Sjuman Djaya, 23 January 1970.

Ministerial Decree no. 12A/Kep/Menpen/1973 on *Penyelenggaraan Pengikut-sertaan Film-Film Nasional Dalam Festival Film Internasional dan Pekan Film Internasional di Luar Negeri* (Implementation of the National Films participation in the International Film Festival and the International Film Week Abroad). Issued by Ministry of Information Air Marshal Boediardjo. 15 Maret 1973.

Ministerial Decree no. 58B/Kep/Menpen/1973 on Badan Sensor Film (Film Censorship Board). Issued by Ministry of Information Mashuri Saleh, 25 July 1973.

Ministerial Decree no. 47/KEP/Menpen/1974 and 246/Kpb/VI/74 on *Ketentuan-Ketentuan Ekspor Film Jadi Produksi Nasional* (Provisions of the National Export Film Production). Issued by Ministry of Trade (Radius Prawiro) and Ministry of Information (Mashuri). 3 July 1974.

Ministerial Decree no. 55b/KEP/MENPEN/1975 on the organizational structure and working procedures of Departement of Information (*Susunan organisasi dan tatakerja departemen penerangan*), by Ministry of Information Mashuri Saleh. Kapan

Ministerial Decree no. 52/KEP/MENPEN/1976 on Formation of Imported Film Consortiums (*Pembentukan Konsorsium-Konsorsium Film Impor*). by Minister of Information Mashuri Saleh, 31 March 1976,

Ministerial Decree .114A/KEP/MENPEN/1976 on specialization on professional organizations of film in Indonesia (*Spesialisasi Profesi Organisasi-Organisasi Perfilman di Indonesia*). By Ministry of Information Mashuri Saleh, 24 August 1976.

Ministerial decree 114B/KEP/MENPEN1976 on inauguration of organizations of cinema as a professional organization (*Pengukuhan Organisasi-Organisasi Perfilman sebagai Organisasi Profesi*). By Ministry of Information Mashuri Saleh, 24 August 1976.

Ministerial Decree no 31/KEP.MENPEN/1977 on National Film Development Institute (*Lembaga Pengembangan Perfilman Nasional*). By Minister of Information Mashuri Saleh, 10 February 1977.

Ministerial Decree no. 32/KEP/MENPEN/1977 on Regional Film Development Body (*Badan Pembinaan Perfilman Daerah*). By Minister of Information Mashuri Saleh, 10 February 1977

Ministerial Decree no. 193/KEPMENPEN/1977 on Film Import Quota 1977 (*Quota Film Impor Tahun 1977*). Issued by Ministry of Information Mashuri Saleh, 9 September 1977.

Ministerial Decree n0. 224/KEP/Menpen/1978 on Provisions on Import Films (*Ketentuan-Ketentuan di Bidang Impor Film*) . by Minister of Information Ali Moertopo, 30 November 1978

Other Policies

Ministerial Decree, Ministry of Information of Republic of Indonesia, no. 74/ 1973.

Ministerial Decree, Ministry of Information of Republic of Indonesia no 47/1976.

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The modification version of Chapter 2 is in being process of publication in forthcoming Cine-Excess Journal, 2017, titled “Entertaining the Villagers: Rural Audiences, Traveling Cinema, and Exploitation Movies in Indonesia”.

The modification version of Chapter 5 will be in the process of publication in forthcoming Plaridel journal on Film and Archive in Southeast Asian Cinema.

List of Acronyms

ABRI	: <i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)
AMPAI	: The American Motion Pictures Association in Indonesia
APE	: <i>Angka Pengenal Ekspor</i> (Export Identification Number)
ATG	: <i>Akibat Terlalu Genit</i> (<i>the Result of Too Flirtatious</i> , an erotic-comedy film, nationally released in 1988)
BAKIN	: <i>Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara</i> (the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency)
BAPFIDA	: <i>Badan Pembinaan Film Daerah</i> (Regional Film Development Agency)
BKKBN	: <i>Badan Kordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional</i> (National Family Planning Coordinating Board).
BSF	: <i>Badan Sensor Film</i> (The Board of Film Censorship)
VCD	: Video Compact Disc
DVD	: Digital Video/Versatile Disc
DFN	: <i>Dewan Film Nasional</i> (National Film Council),
DPFN	: <i>Dewan Produksi Film Nasional</i> (National Film Production Council)
Dirjen RTF	: <i>Direktur Jendral Radio, Televisi, dan Film</i> (The Director General of Radio, Television, and Film)
FFI	: <i>Festival Film Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Film Festival)
FFFF	: <i>Ferocious Female Freedom Fighters</i>
GASFI	: <i>Gabungan Studio Film Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Association of Film Studios)
GASI	: <i>Gabungan Subtitling Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Association of Subtitlers).
GPBSI	: <i>Gabungan Perusahaan Bioskop Seluruh Indonesia</i> (All Indonesian Association of Movie Theater Companies)

Golkar	: <i>Golongan Karya</i> (The Functional Group, the New Order's ruling party)
GPEI	: <i>Gabungan Perusahaan Ekspor Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Association Export Company)
INAFFF	: International Indonesian Fantastic Film Festival
KFT	: <i>Ikatan Karyawan Film dan Televisi Indonesia</i> (Union of Film and Television Employees)
LEKRA	: <i>Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat</i> (Institute of People's Culture, affiliated with PKI)
LEPFINAS	: <i>Lembaga Pengembangan Perfilman Nasional</i> (the Institute for National Film Development)
LSF	: <i>Lembaga Sensor Film</i> (Film Censorship Institution)
MIFED	: <i>Mercato Internazionale Del Film Del TV & Del Documentario</i> (International Market for Film, TV, and Documentaries)
MUI	: <i>Majelis Ulama Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Islamic Scholars Council)
Mukernas	: Musyawarah Kerja Nasional (National Working Deliberation)
Orba	: <i>Orde Baru</i> (New Order)
Orla	: <i>Orde Lama</i> (Old Order)
P4	: <i>Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila</i> (Upgrading Course on the Directive for Realization and Implementation of The Five Principles)
Pancasila	: The Five Principles of the State
PARFI	: <i>Persatuan Artis Film Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Film Artists Union, PARFI),
Pelita	: <i>Pembangunan Lima Tahun</i> (Five-Year Development Program)
Perbiki	: <i>Persatuan Pengusaha Bioskop Keliling</i> (Union of Operators of Mobile Movie Theatres)
Perfiki	: <i>Persatuan Perusahaan Pertunjukan Film Keliling Indonesia</i> (Association of Indonesian Mobile Cinema Screening).
PKI	: <i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (The Indonesian Communist Party)
PPFI	: <i>Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Film Producers' Union)
PRLS	: <i>Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan</i> (the national title of <i>Lady Terminator</i>)

Prokjabat Prosar	: <i>Kelompok Kerja Tetap Promosi dan Pemasaran Film Indonesia di Luar Negeri</i> (The Permanent Working Committee for the Promotion and Marketing of Indonesia Films Abroad)
PT. Perfin	: <i>Perseroan Terbatas Peredaran Film Indonesia</i> (Incorporated Company for Circulation of Indonesian Films)
Puspen ABRI	: <i>Pusat Penerangan Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> (Information Center of Indonesia's Armed Forces)
PWI	: <i>Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Journalists' Association)
SARBUFIS	: <i>Serikat Buruh Film dan Sandiwara</i> (Film and Theatrical Workers Union)
Sinetron	: <i>Sinema Elektronik</i> (electronic cinema/soap opera)
SK	: <i>Surat Keputusan</i> (decree)
STLS	: <i>Surat Tanda Lulus Sensor</i> (Sensor Graduate Certificate)
TP2FV	: <i>Tim Pengawas Peredaran Film Video</i> (Supervisory Team of Film Distribution and Video)
TVRI	: <i>Televisi Republik Indonesia</i> (Television of Republic of Indonesia)
VOC	: <i>Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie</i> (the Dutch East India Company)
VHS	: Video Home System

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