

Sexual Bodies, Sensual Bodies: Depictions of Women in Suharto-Era Indonesian Film Flyers (1966–1998)

Christopher Allen Woodrich

Gadjah Mada University

chris_woodrich@hotmail.com

Abstract

This article examines one hundred and fifty film flyers released between 1966 and 1998 and identifies two overlapping trends in their depictions of women: the Sexual Woman and the Sensual Woman. The former is marked by an emphasis on sexuality, which includes more exposed skin, the use of phallic imagery, and the depictions of implied sexual relations, both consensual and non-consensual. The latter is marked by modest clothing, a demure demeanor, and an emphasis on the importance of romantic relationships between women and men. These two archetypes, we argue, were determined by the films' target audiences: the Sexual Woman was used to advertise films to men, whereas the Sensual Woman was used to advertise films to women. These flyers thus reproduced the state's gender narratives and biases, but were ultimately unable to conceal the fluidity of women and their bodies.

Keywords: advertising, bodies, gender politics, Indonesian cinema, representation.

Introduction

"Women are the pillars of the state. If the women are good, the state will also be good, but if the women are ruined, the state will be ruined as well." This quote from a 1991 edition of *Amanah* succinctly summarizes the State-sponsored and widely reproduced view of women in Indonesia under the Suharto government. So prominent was the normative representation "good" women in the Suharto era, a constructed "women's nature" (*kodrat wanita*), that it remains a fertile ground for research. Academics have attempted to explain the State's ideology (i.e. Suryakusuma, 2011; Woodrich, 2013) as well as the representation of women in both *sinetron* (Sunindyo, 1993) and the print media (Brenner, 1999). Such research has argued that, though the State promoted a family-centric model of women, they were represented in the media in a variety of ways: a woman could be a "happy consumer-housewife, devoted follower of Islam,

successful career woman, model citizen of the nation-state, and alluring sex symbol" (Brenner, 1999: 17).

Perhaps nowhere is the existence of multiple representational narratives more apparent than in the fiction film industry, which uses both visual and (oral and written) textual means to narrate and represent stories, events, and people, both through the films themselves and through promotional materials. In Indonesia, advertisements have a long history of relying on visual depictions of women, and have presented a wide variety of representations. Discussion of women and their role in and depiction by Indonesian cinema likewise has a long history, dating back to at least 1941 (Mangoensarkoro) and continuing well into the 21st century (i.e. Soh, 2007; Sulistyowati, 2011; Hughes-Freeland, 2011). However, this discussion has been focused predominantly on representations in films proper, rather than other aspects of the industry.

This paper examines the representation of women in flyers for films produced and released in Indonesia under the Suharto regime (1966–1998), a highly productive period. The one hundred and fifty film flyers examined cover a variety of genres, including horror, action, romance, drama, and comedy, and were produced (generally, but not always, by uncredited individuals) to advertise films produced by more than twenty companies. Two aspects of these flyers were considered: their visual (through illustrations and/or photographs) and their textual representations of women. Both the obverse and reverse sides of the flyers, which respectively emphasized visual and textual representation, were considered. Two major overlapping trends in the representation of women's bodies in these flyers were identified: the Sexual Woman and the Sensual Woman.

Narrating Women's Bodies

From an early age, human beings learn to differentiate between male and female bodies. Infants learn quickly that men do not produce milk—and can thus not feed them in the same manner their mother can—and as time passes young boys and young girls learn that they have different genitals, that women lack a penis and that men lack a vagina. The distinction between men and women's bodies is continuously reinforced as they develop. They learn that men grow facial hair; women grow breasts; men have deep voices; women have soft voices; men have short hair; and women have long hair. These differences are continuously normalized and appear natural and immutable.

However, the human body, be it male or female, is not a simple biological entity limited purely by its physical characteristics. It is not simply a clearly delineated collection of bones, sinews, muscles, fluids, and tendons occupying a specific space and perfectly meeting fixed criteria. Rather, it is a complex and often poorly delineated form given meaning and constructed by individuals and societies. It is a site of inscribed representations of difference and identity, where the possibilities of the physical human body are limited by the wielders of power. It is a site of contestation, of assertion, of subjugation. A site where men and women are differentiated. A figure to which masculinities and femininities can be attributed and embedded (Millet,

1968).

Through this social element, the body becomes "a territory and the key to maintaining successful control" (Upstone, 2009: 148) for those in power; the body's potential for fluidity is overwritten with a clearly delineated order so that it may be controlled. This has held particularly true for women's bodies, which have generally been narrated by men. Biologically and socially differentiated from men, women are frequently positioned as "the Second Sex" (Beauvoir, 1989), as the "exotic Other" (Said, 1993). They are narrated as being desirable, but nonetheless different and inferior. In the media, women have been narrated as objects, undergoing what Tuchman (1978) terms symbolic annihilation, while their own narratives are frequently silenced through social and institutional systems, giving said narratives no legitimacy (Friedan, 2001: 57).

The Sexual Woman

The most common depiction of the female body in the flyers surveyed, accounting for nearly 40% of the women depicted, is the Sexual Woman. This depiction is marked by the use of images and linguistic units (words, phrases, and sentences) which emphasize Woman's sexuality. Such representations are generally found in flyers for comedies, thrillers, and exploitation films, though they could also be found in advertisements for horror movies.

The central trait of the Sexual Woman, for which she is named, is her portrayal as a sexual being. She is consistently depicted in minimal clothing (frequently a bikini, though clothing such as bras and tube tops which expose her mid-riff are also found), posed in a position which offers her body for the viewer's inspection and is located within a "frame"—taking a variety of forms (see Figure 1)—which separates her from the remainder of the flyer. Be she seated (as in *Inem Pelayan Sexy* [*Inem the Sexy Maid*; 1976] above) or standing, facing forward (as in *Darah Daging* [*Flesh and Blood*; 1977]) or backwards (as in *Tuan, Nyonya, dan Pelayan* [*The Master, the Mistress, and the Maid*; 1977]), she usually has her upper arms and upper thighs (though not extending to the genitals) exposed. When facing forward, she may be seen making direct eye contact with the viewer, leaning forward and emphasizing her breasts and cleavage, or standing straight and exposing her navel. Her



Figure 1: *Inem Pelayan Sexy* (1976), *Darah Daging* (1977), and *Tuan, Nyonya, dan Pelayan* (1977)

Credits: PT Candi Dewi Film and PT Suptan Film, PT Balu Jaya Film, and PT Parkit Film.

erogenous zones, including her nipples and vaginal area, are not shown; they are generally covered by clothing, but may also be obscured by an arm (as in *Anggur Perkawinan* [The Wine of Marriage; 1994]) or shadows (as in *Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan* [Lady Terminator; 1988]).

This sexualized imagery is reinforced through sexually-charged language which refers specifically to the Sexual Woman. Flyers are given taglines such as "hot in bed, devoted in duty" (*Cewek-Cewek Pelaut* [Woman Sailors; 1984]) or "With her Sexy Body she tempts and plays at Love with every Man" (*Ranjang Pemikat* [Bed of Temptation; 1993]). Adjectives such as *sexy*, *panas* ('hot'), *menggairahkan* ('exciting'), *merangsang* ('titillating'), and *binal* ('wild') were frequently used to discuss the films' contents or actresses. Other terms, such as *montok* ('buxom') were used less commonly but for the same purpose.

The Sexual Woman need not only be displayed for audiences. She may also be depicted as a spectacle, with multiple voyeurs (generally, but not always, male) viewing her with interest (Figure 2). The object

of these spectators' desire—the Sexual Woman—may be shown passively standing in revealing clothing (such as the bikini worn in *Permainan Tabu* [Taboo Game; 1984]) or actively undressing as others watch (as in *Tahu Diri Dong* [Be Self-Aware, 1984]). Generally the distance between the spectators and the Sexual Woman is not bridged; these images, being amalgamations of different photographs or scenes from the films, do not lend themselves to interactions between the characters. The spectators remain spectators, drawing pleasure from the Sexual Woman without interacting with her—without the possibility of rejection.

Exceptions to this lack of interaction, however, can be found. On the reverse for *Asal Tahu Saja* (Just So You Know, 1984), a man in a sailor suit is shown reaching for the Sexual Woman's right buttock, which obstructs his fingers. He is depicted with his mouth agape and his tongue jutting out, seemingly aroused by the Sexual Woman's bikini-covered body. Text on a nearby image featuring the two, written in speech bubbles to give the impression of dialogue, confirms



Figure 2: *Permainan Tabu* (1984), *Tahu Diri Dong* (1984), and *Asal Tahu Saja* (1984)

Credits: PT Soraya Intercine Film, PT Parkit Film, and PT Ganesha Film



Figure 3: *Roro Mendut* (1982), *Makin Lama, Makin Asyik* (1987), and *Gadis Malam* (1993)
Credits: PT Gramedia Film et al., PT Soraya Intercine Film, and PT Bola Dunia Film.

a sexually charged interaction: the Sexual Woman is given the dialogue “Want a peek, do you?”, to which the voyeur appears to respond “A biiit... just so I know”. A similar technique is used for *Tahu Diri Dong*, though no physical interaction between the two occur: a dotted line is drawn from the male voyeur’s eyes to the Sexual Woman’s buttocks, suggesting that he is looking at a commonly fetishized body part. He is given the dialogue “Gosh, don’t! I can see it even like this;” the Sexual Woman is depicted as responding salaciously, with “Kasino dear,... I’ll take it off now....!”

As that final line of “dialogue” above suggests, the Sexual Woman is not necessarily depicted as taking a passive role in the sexual act. In multiple flyers (Figure 3), she is paired with a phallic symbol which, through its shape, connotations, and interactions with the Sexual Woman, are suggestive of sexual intercourse. In *Roro Mendut* (1982) this phallic symbol is a cigarette, representative of a vice considered by Indonesian society to be acceptable for men but unacceptable for women (Ng, Weinehall, and Öhman, 2007: 799). In the image, this cigarette is held at mouth-level while the Sexual Woman appears to look suggestively at the viewer. Should viewers miss the implication of fellatio, the advertisement’s reverse reminds them “the shorter the butt, the closer it’s been to her lips, the pricier it is!” Implied manual stimulation of the penis is present

in *Makin Lama, Makin Asyik* (The Longer, The Better; 1987), which depicts a smiling Sexual Woman with a firm banana—known as an aphrodisiac which enhance male sexual performance (Hill, 2011) and held by some to increase penile size (Waluyani, 2012)—in each hand. Two men are shown with faces of exertion, whereas a third stares out of the flyer, grinning and cross-eyed, seemingly post-orgasmic. In a third example, *Gadis Malam* (Woman of the Night; 1993), a phallic symbol is positioned as if ready to penetrate the Sexual Woman’s vagina or anus; unlike the above-mentioned cigarette and bananas, the symbol—an open tube of lipstick—is generally associated with female sexuality. This may further emphasize the uniting of man and woman, of the normatively masculine and feminine, inherent to the act of heterosexual sexual penetration.

Though these flyers do not explicitly depict the act of penetration itself, they do depict acts of intimacy connoting sexual intercourse and concealed acts of penetration (Figure 4). *Prahara* (Tempest; 1974) implies a threesome by depicting the Sexual Woman in a bed, her body covered by a blanket save for her bare shoulders, upper chest, and head. She shares the bed with a man whose bare chest hangs over her as his lower body is hidden behind the blanket; part of another man’s chest is on her other side. One of the six panels on the reverse



Figure 4: *Prahara* (1974), *Cewek-Cewek Pelaut* (1984), and *Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan* (1988)
Credits: PT Tuti Mutia Film, PT Budiana Film, PT Soraya Intercine Film



Figure 5: *Napsu Gila* (1973), *Perawan Malam* (1974), and *Buaya Putih* (1987)

Credits: PT Tidar Jaya Film, PT Tuty Jaya Film, and PT Pan Asiatic Film.

of *Cewek-Cewek Pelaut* (1984), meanwhile, portrays the Sexual Woman giving a massage to a face-down, clothed man. She is shown leaning forward, dressed only in a black *négligée* which hangs loosely on her body, its shoulder strap slipping down her arm as her cleavage is clearly shown. The implication that this massage is sexual in nature is emphasized by the Sexual Woman being alone with the massage recipient, and the deliberateness of this depiction marked by the (imperfect) removal of an object or person behind them. Another representation of the Sexual Woman, found in *Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan* (1986), shows her gazing seductively at a half-nude man and pulling him in with her legs. The sexual nature of their encounter is underscored by her outfit; she is dressed in a black top and draping transparent skirt which exposes most of her legs (though her genitals are obstructed by opaque fabric). In the above cases, the implied intercourse is consensual, and the Sexual Woman seems to assume a position of apparent control.

However, the Sexual Woman's sexual interactions are not always consensual. She can also be represented as the victim of sexual violence, even when she appears to have agency (Figure 5). In *Napsu Gila* (Crazy Desire; 1973), for instance, the Sexual Woman is shown violently holding a man to the ground, an umbrella to his throat. The illusion of control is, however, shattered by the crazed look in her eyes—she has lost control of her mind. Her status as a victim is underscored by text on the reverse of the flyer: "a **buxom** woman forced to live among **crazy, sadistic, sex-crazed** old people in an

isolated **lodging**" (emphasis in original).

The violence against the Sexual Woman may even include the viewer: in *Perawan Malam* [Virgin of the Night; 1974], the Sexual Woman is shown sitting against a red spatter pattern akin to blood and giving a terrified side look; her legs are spread and facing the viewer, who is drawn by the positioning of the title to look at the Sexual Woman's (covered) genitals and thus symbolically violate her. More directly, in *Buaya Putih* (White Crocodile; 1987), the Sexual Woman is depicted lying limp, wearing in a torn red tank top, while she is mounted by a white crocodile. The act of penetration itself is hidden behind a long, trailing, yet parted dress. The violent nature of the act is emphasized on the reverse of the flyer, in which the crocodile's penis is deemed a weapon equal to its teeth and tail: "the most dangerous part of a crocodile, aside from its bite and tail, there is something more powerful, namely its penis".

The Sensual Woman

Another common representation of the female body in the flyers surveyed is the Sensual Woman. This depiction is marked by the use of images and linguistic units (words and phrases) which emphasize the depicted woman's romantic and emotional state. This depiction was most common in flyers for romances and domestic dramas.

Though the Sensual Woman may be presented with exposed skin and (frequently) Westernized clothing, her erogenous zones are either neither shown nor emphasized (Figure 6). In the illustration for *Putri Solo* [Woman of Solo, 1974], for instance, the

Figure 6: *Putri Solo* (1974), *Buah Terlarang* (1979), and *Kidung Cinta* (1985)

Credits: PT Agasam Film, PT Garuda Film, and PT Virgo Putra Film.

Sensual Woman is depicted in a form-fitting blazer and shirt which would, in a photograph, expose the cleavage of her breasts. Though this fact is hinted at with a golden necklace, the skin tones are flat, without any lines to delineate the shape of her breasts (contrast *Napsu Gila*). Meanwhile, in *Buah Terlarang* (Forbidden Fruit, 1979) and *Kidung Cinta* (Love Song, 1985), the Sensual Woman is depicted as wearing stereotypically feminine garb—a formless V-necked blouse and a skirt which reaches slightly below (in the first) or slightly below (in the second) the knees. In neither case are her upper thighs or breasts exposed to the viewer.

In a stark contrast to the Sexual Woman, the Sensual Woman is not shown making direct eye contact with the viewer. Rather, she is consistently shown looking elsewhere, be it towards her male companion (as in *Putri Solo* and *Kecupan Pertama* [First Kiss, 1979], below), at an object in her hands (see Figure 8), or off the edge of the flyer (as in *Buah Terlarang* and *Kidung Cinta*). Never does she appear to offer herself to the viewer through a frank gaze; she is instead presented as only having eyes for her male partner and thus being incapable of committing the cardinal sin of (symbolic) adultery.

Indeed, the Sensual Woman is presented as finding joy in the company of men—more specifically, a man with whom she is in a romantic relationship. She is shown

as smiling in his presence as they walk hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm. She may look into his eyes as she holds him tight, or hold his body close to hers, or give him some distance. The Sensual Woman and her partner may even be shown sharing a kiss. The romance of their relationship is underscored textually on the flyers' reverses, through continued use of such terms as *cinta* ("love"), *mesra* ("intimate"), *berkesan* ("touching"). Their oneness, meanwhile, is shown through the ubiquitous use of terms such as *sepasang* and *pasangan* (both "a pair"); two parts, but one whole.

Figure 7: Six views of a kiss, from *Kecupan Pertama* (1979)
Credit: PT Tiga Cakra Film



Figure 8: *Karmila* (1974), *Laila Majenun* (1975), and *Kembang Padang Kelabu* (1980)

Credits: PT Citra Indah Film and PT Madu Segara Film, PT Matari Film and PT Artis Jaya Film, and PT Cipta Permai Indah Film

Though at times her relationships may not be societally acceptable, never is the Sensual Woman presented as unmarriageable or overly sexual. She is never shown in the act of sexual intercourse, and when depicted as kissing (as in *Kecupan Pertama*, Figure 7), she maintains distance. Her partner may be shown as kissing her on the forehead or on the cheek, or their lips may be depicted as touching lightly; more physically intimate forms of kissing, such as French kissing or the exchange of saliva, are absent. Other skin-to-skin contact is also reduced. The Sensual Woman often is shown holding her partner's covered arm. Even when they are shown holding hands, the partners' palms never meet; this taboo against touching palms, previously noted in Indonesian cinema by Heider (1991: 67), minimizes skin contact and ensures that a safe distance is maintained. She follows, at least on the surface, what the Suharto government termed *kodrat wanita*: women's nature, the state-sponsored normative femininity.

When the Sensual Woman is not shown with a man, she is neither seen with a smile nor depicted as offering herself to the viewer. Rather, she is portrayed as melancholic, as tearful, as undergoing emotional distress. In *Perisai Kasih yang Terkoyak* (Love's Shattered Shield; 1986), for instance, the central image is of a woman crying, partnerless, her disheveled hair carried on the wind as she holds a handkerchief to her face. Commonly, as in Figure 8, the lone Sensual Woman is shown with her eyes closed, looking towards a flower in her hands—flowers being a common symbol of womanhood in Indonesia, connoting fragility and beauty and frequently being used as both a name and pseudonym. The type of flower varies; in *Karmila* (1974), it is a white edelweiss, a symbol of devotion; in *Laila Majenun* (1975), it is a pink rose, a symbol of

romantic love. In *Kembang Padang Kelabu* (A Flower in a Grey Field; 1980), meanwhile, the depicted flower—more specifically, a raceme—coincides with the title. No matter what the flower, however, the implication is clear: the Sensual Woman is a woman of fragility and beauty, one suffering in her lonesomeness.

The Sensual Woman's emotionality is a further manifestation of the normative femininity (the *kodrat wanita*) attached to her. Rather than be rational, she is expected by her very nature to be emotional (Brenner, 1999: 28), at least in her romantic and domestic life. The contrast between the stereotypically feminine emotionality and the stereotypically rational masculinity can be observed in Figure 9. Though both flyers depict a person running, their manner in doing so differs significantly. In *Badai Pasti Berlalu* (The Storm Will Pass; 1977), the Sensual Woman is shown running with her mouth agape, screaming into the heavens. As she runs, her left arm is seemingly thrown from her body, while her right arm trails behind her. In contrast, the male runner of *Mencari Cinta* (1979) is depicted with a



Figure 9: *Badai Pasti Berlalu* (1977) and *Mencari Cinta* (1979)

Credits: PT Suptan Film, PT Elang Perkasa Film and PT Garuda Film

stoic face, his mouth a taught line as he looks straight forward. His arms are closer to his body, allowing him a more effective pumping motion. He is shown to maintain control, despite facing great obstacles; the Sensual Woman, meanwhile, is controlled by her emotions, being “instinctive and emotional” as demanded by her *kodrat*.

Woman: Determining the Representation

What, then, determines how women are represented in these flyers? As mentioned above, the Sexual Woman and Sensual Woman are most prominent in advertisements for films of different genres: the Sexual Woman is most frequently presented in flyers for comedies, thrillers, and sexploitation films, whereas the Sensual Woman is more commonly found in flyers for films of romance and family drama. At the surface, the different genres appears to provide sufficient explanation for these differentiated representations of women: thrillers and sexploitation films are stereotypically viewed by males, whereas romance films are stereotypically watched by women. Different genres, different audiences, different messages.

However, such conjecture is belied by the flyers. If the genre of the film being advertised were, in and of itself, the key factor determining whether the Sexual Woman or Sensual Woman is used in advertising, this would imply that all advertisements for an individual film must use the same representation. As seen in Figure 10 below, this is not true. Two advertisements for the 1980 film *Gadis* (Girl) use different representations. The first (left) depicts a Sensual Woman, framed by a white box, lying in the arms of a young man. Both are fully clothed in Javanese costumes. They are seen to hold hands as the Sensual Woman looks off into the distance. No sexual relations between the two are suggested through the picture, and the tagline promises “A grand love story... behind the walls of the tyranny of the nobility, collapsing from age”. In the second (right), however, this romance is lost, replaced by

sexuality. Though the Sexual Woman here shows less skin than the one in *Inem Pelayan Sexy* (reproduced on this flyer, surrounded by a yellow ring), she is shown actively kissing a man, giving a half-naked man a massage, and branded the “sexy maid” (*genduk sexy*). The reverse of the flyer offers her as “a small, delicate maid who is captivating & exciting” and portrays her holding her (covered) buttocks as a man looks on. The image of the Sensual Woman holding hands with a man, though present, is no longer positioned front and center: it is instead relegated to the left side of the advertisement and the reverse. The more sexually charged images are given priority, positioned on the viewer’s left side—where the eyes viewer’s eyes fall as they begin reading the flyer.



Figure 10: Two different flyers for *Gadis* (1980), with different emphasis
Credits: PT Inem Film

The sharp differences between the two flyers for *Gadis*, a film which Kristanto (2007) lists as a drama, show that genre is not sufficient to determine which representation of Woman is used in advertising. Rather, there is a conscious decision by advertisers to present films in a way which they think will draw desired audiences. Advertisers targeting a film at women could thus present films as stories of love, using the Sensual Woman archetype and reproducing the State’s gender positioning. Meanwhile, advertisers targeting male audiences could emphasize the Sexual Woman and draw on related tropes, taking advantage of society’s acceptance of men’s sexual transgressions. This decision, it would seem, rested not with the advertisers within the studios themselves, but rather local advertisers working with distributors and cinema owners; local variants of flyers are attested with *Terminal Cinta Terakhir* (Love Terminal; 1977) and *Serangan Fajar* (Dawn Attack; 1982).

Sexual Bodies, Sensual Bodies: Positioning Women through Advertisements

The designers of these flyers are generally unknown—the main exception being “Herry”, the man responsible for such flyers as *Putri Solo* (1974) and *Mencari Cinta* (1979)—and thus their genders are difficult to ascertain. However, the capital holders and creative professionals in the industry were generally men; Swestin (2012: 103) writes that “very few women were in positions of control in the administrative and artistic spheres of the film industry”, an industry which saw only four women directors (“all of them … also actresses and related to prominent male figures in the Indonesian cinema”) between 1926 and 1998. The male domination during this period (which includes Suharto regime) meant that the narration of women and of women’s bodies was dominated by men. This implies that the archetypes of the Sexual and Sensual Woman were created by men and thus served to further the purposes of the patriarchal structure which was dominant during the Suharto regime.

Importantly, although neither the Sexual Woman nor the Sensual Woman archetype was used exclusively—as mentioned above, *Gadis* (1980) offers both in different flyers, and several of the flyers examined included imagery of both a Sexual Woman and Sensual Woman—they were not equal. The Sexual Woman, even in images where she is alone, is a victim. Her denuded body and a taste of her sexuality is offered freely—both in a *libre* and a *gratis* sense¹¹—to (implicitly male) viewers.¹² Her very humanity is denied through the flyers’ continued use of words such as *binal* (wild), *betina* (female animal), and *gila* (insane). Under the Suharto government, “immoral behavior” for women … usually refer[red] to their sexual activities outside of marriage” (Brenner, 1999: 30–35). As such, the very features which draw the male gaze confirm the Otherness of the Sexual Woman: she becomes the *exotic other*, a being who, though desirable and tempting, is of a different group than the Self and thus of lower worth, unworthy of emulation. Men are free to own her, to consume the image of her body, but women must be certain to never become her.

This double standard—men being both allowed and offered the opportunity to lust after women, while overly sexual women are condemned—was common in the Suharto period. One contemporary

article in *Tiara* magazine (quoted in Brenner, 1999: 30–35) declared “it is indeed part of men’s character to want to have intimate relations with many women”, and when men’s extramarital affairs were discovered, the response was frequently “boys will be boys” and that a husband’s affairs were none of his wife’s concerns. Such a creed was untenable for women; in cases of adultery, even lusting after a Sexual Woman, “despite the fact that men as well as women are implicated in the sexual activities being discussed, the greatest outcry is directed at women’s rather than men’s licentious behavior” (Brenner, 1999: 30–35).

The Sensual Woman, meanwhile, which featured predominantly on flyers for films targeted at women, was more in-line with the *kodrat wanita* and thus more likely to be accepted by the normative narrative of femininity as an example to emulate. Though her sexuality may not be entirely erased—she is, after all, capable of public displays of affection such as kissing—never is her sexuality presented in a manner which threatens an improper affair, a violation of the trust between the Sensual Woman and her romantic partner. She is not, unlike the Sexual Woman, presented as “the picture of uncontrollable women—wantonly sexual; reversing the “proper” order of things by dominating males instead of being dominated by them; shirking their “natural” roles as wives and mothers” feared by the Suharto government (Brenner, 1999: 37).

Rather, she is presented as demure, as offering her love while still maintaining sufficient distance to prevent improper sexual conduct. Even where improper relations are implied textually, they are not depicted visually; as such, any transgressions attributed to the Sensual Woman have less of an impact on viewers and are more easily forgiven. The sensual woman offers a supporting hand, or a strong, loving gaze, finding joy in her relationship with her male partner and pain when such a relationship is lacking in her life. Though she may not be married at the time she is depicted, there is no doubt that, in the end, the Sensual Woman will marry and be willing to carry out what Sunindyo (1993: 135) terms the Panca Dharma Wanita, or five duties of women: to “support her husband, provide offspring, care for and rear the children, be a good housekeeper, and be the guardian of the community”.

Conclusion

In the flyers examined, the dominant representations of women through the archetypes of the Sexual Woman and Sensual Woman are presented by a predominantly male industry in a manner which reproduces the Suharto government's positioning of women. Through the Sexual Woman archetype, a realization of the advertising motto "sex sells", male viewers are drawn in through a female sexuality that is simultaneously depicted as alluring and yet undesirable; the Sexual Woman is shown as being animalistic or insane, rather than as a rational person with agency. Through the Sensual Woman archetype, meanwhile, advertisers reproduced the narrative of the "good" woman by depicting happy women as those being in romantic relationships with men, without excessive or extra-marital sexual contact.

However, the possibility of transition between the Sensual Woman and Sexual Woman (and vice versa)—as shown by *Gadis*—attests to the fact that these representations are simply artificial constructions, attempts at enforcing order upon women's ultimately fluid bodies in the interest of the patriarchy. Ultimately, these constructions fail, and the true fluidity of women and women's bodies can be seen. The ability to transition, this fluidity, emphasizes that women need not be—and are not—as defined by the state, nor must they—or do they—fit a specific model. They are dynamic beings with the potential for transformation and change, for breaking out of the molds which society attempts to force upon them. The fluidity of the body cannot be fully constrained, even in highly codified flyer designs—or in a society as restrictive as that of Indonesia under Suharto.

Bibliography

Flyers

- PPFN. 1981. *Serangan Fajar*.
- PT Agasam Film. 1974. *Putri Solo*.
- PT Balu Jaya Film. 1977. *Darah Daging*.
- PT Bola Dunia Film. 1993. *Gadis Malam*.
- PT Budiana Film. 1984. *Cewek-Cewek Pelaut*
- PT Central Graha Utama Film. 1986. *Perisai Kasih yang Terkoyak*.
- PT Candi Dewi Film and PT Suptan Film. 1976. *Inem Pelayan Sexy*.
- PT Cipta Permai Indah Film. 1980. *Kembang Padang Kelabu*.
- PT Citra Indah Film and PT Madu Segara Film. 1974. *Karmila*.
- PT Elang Perkasa Film and PT Garuda Film. 1979. *Mencari Cinta*.
- PT Ganesha Film. 1984. *Asal Tahu Saja*.
- PT Garuda Film. 1979. *Buah Terlarang*.
- PT Gramedia Film, PT Sanggar Film, and PT Elang Perkasa Film. 1982. *Roro Mendut*.
- PT Inem Film. 1980a. *Gadis*.
- PT Inem Film. 1980b. *Gadis*.
- PT Inem Film. 1994. *Anggur Perkawinan*.
- PT Kanta Indah Film and PT Ekapraya Film. 1986. *Tjoet Nja' Dhien*.
- PT Matari Artis Jaya Film. 1979. *Kabut Sutra Ungu*.
- PT Matari Film and PT Artis Jaya Film. 1975. *Laila Majenun*.
- PT Nusantara Film. 1977a. *Terminal Cinta*.
- PT Nusantara Film. 1977b. *Terminal Cinta*.
- PT Nusantara Film. 1982. *R.A. Kartini*.
- PT Pan Asiatic Film. 1982. *Buaya Putih*.
- PT Parkit Film. 1979. *Tuan, Nyonya dan Pelayan*.
- PT Parkit Film. 1984. *Tahu Diri Dong*.
- PT Purnama Santosa Film. 1993. *Ranjang Pemikat*.
- PT Satria Perkasa Esthetika Film and PT Sufin. 1986. *Ibunda*.
- PT Soraya Intercine Film. 1984a. *Permainan Tabu*.

- PT Soraya Intercine Film. 1984b. *Makin Lama, Makin Asyik*.
PT Soraya Intercine Film. 1988. *Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan*.
PT Suptan Film. 1977. *Badai Pasti Berlalu*.
PT Tiga Cakra Film. 1979. *Kecupan Pertama*.
PT Tuti Mutia Film. 1974. *Prahara (Betinanya Seorang Perempuan)*.
PT Tuty Jaya Film. 1974. *Perawan Malam*.
PT Virgo Putra Film. 1985. *Kidung Cinta*.
Uncredited. 1969. *Laki-Laki Tak Bernama*.

Other Resources

- Beauvoir, Simone de. 1989. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books
- Biran, Misbach Yusa. 2009. *Sejarah Film 1900–1950: Bikin Film di Jawa*. Jakarta: Komunitas Bamboo working with the Jakarta Art Council.
- Brenner, Suzanne. 1999. "On the Public Intimacy of the New Order: Images of Women in the Popular Indonesian Print Media". *Indonesia* 67: 13–37.
- Friedan, Betty. 2001. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: WW Norton.
- Hidajadi, Miranti. 2000. "Tubuh: Sejarah Perkembangan dan Berbagai Masalahnya". *Jurnal Perempuan*. 15. 7–15
- Hill, Mark Douglas. 2011. *The Aphrodisiac Encyclopaedia: A Compendium of Culinary Come-ons*. London: Square Peg.
- Hughes-Freeland, Felicia. 2011. "Women's Creativity in Indonesian Cinema". *Indonesia and the Malay World*. 39:115. 417–444.
- Irawanto, Budi. 2015. Personal interview in his office at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, November.
- Kristanto, JB (ed). 2007. *Katalog Film Indonesia 1926–2007*. Jakarta: Nalar.
- Mangoensarkoro, Nji Sri. 1941. "Perempuan dan Film". *Pertjatoeran Doenia dan Film* 1.1: 44.
- Millett, Kate. 1970. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Doubleday.
- Ng, Ngawi, L. Weinehall, and A. Öhman. 2006. "'If I don't smoke, I'm not a real man'—Indonesian teenage boys' views about smoking". *Health Education Research*. 22.6: 794–804.
- Said, Edward. 1991. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books.
- Soh, Byungkuk. 2007. "In Search of 'Unity in Diversity': The Image of Women in New Order Indonesia". *International Area Studies Review September*. 10:2. 67–94.
- Saraswati Sunindyo. 1993. "Gender Discourse on Television," in Virginia Matheson Hooker (ed.) *Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. 134–148.
- Sulistiyowati, Hapsari Dwiningtyas. 2010. "The Construction of Women in Contemporary Indonesian Women's Cinema". in Krishna Sen and David Hill (eds.). *Politics and the Media in Twenty-First Century Indonesia: Decade of Democracy*. London: Routledge. 159–172.
- Suryakusuma, Julia. 2011. *State Ibuism*. Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu.
- Swestin, Grace. 2012. "In the Boys' Club: A Historical Perspective on the Roles of Women in The Indonesian Cinema 1926–May 1998". *Scriptura* 3:2. 103–111.
- Tuchman, Gaye. 1978. "Introduction: The Symbolic Annihilation of Women in the Mass Media". in Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benét (eds.). *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*. New York: Oxford University Press. 3–38.
- Upstone, Sarah. 2009. *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.
- Woodrich, Christopher. 2013. "Perempuan dan Negara: Kajian Feminis dalam Konteks Sosial 'BH' Karya Agus Noor" *Kawistara* 3.2: 186–197.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge his dissertation advisers, Dr. Ida Rochani Adi and Dr. Aprinus Salam, for their feedback on the subject and their input regarding the use of sociological approaches to research popular culture.

(Endnotes)

1. Original: “Wanita adalah tiang negara, jika wanitanya baik, baik pula negara itu, tapi jika kaum wanitanya rusak, maka akan rusak pula negara itu.” Quote in and translation by Brenner (1999: 33).
2. The use of visual representations of women in advertising has been found in the Indonesian cinema industry since 1926, when the first domestically produced feature film, *Loetoeng Kasaroeng*, was released; advertising materials for the film included a photograph of one of the actresses in costume (Biran, 2009: 65).
3. Swestin (2012), who focuses on the role of women in producing and directing films, being one major exception.
4. JB Kristanto’s *Katalog Film Indonesia* (2007, used for all release years mentioned in this paper) indicates that between 1966 and 1998 a total of 1,741 fiction films were produced; this represents almost 70% of the 2,488 films produced from 1926 to 2006 and almost 55% of the 3,186 films produced from 1926 to 2014.
5. These terms can be understood as similar to the Renaissance concepts of Venus Naturalis (the embodiment of physical love) and Venus Caelestis (the embodiment of romantic love, or love of the body and soul) (compare). However, they are distinct in that, unlike the Venus of the Renaissance, the Sexual Woman and Sensual Woman were never presented as representations of divine goddesses; both representations were consistently profane.
6. Other, less common, categories included the Mother (including *Kabut Sutra Ungu* [A Fog of Purple Silk; 1979] and *Ibunda* [Mother, 1986]) and the Fighting Woman (including *R.A. Kartini* [1982] and *Tjoet Nja’ Dhien* [1986]). As these categories were less prominent, they are not discussed here.
7. As the Sexual Woman and Sensual Woman are archetypes, rather than individual women, in this paper the identities of the actresses depicted are not considered. The traits which mark a Sexual or Sensual Woman are dependent on how she is depicted, rather than whether her model is (for instance) Meriam Bellina, Lydia Kandou, Enny Beatrice, Christine Hakim, Jenny Rachman, or Dewi Yul. However, it should be noted that certain actresses were typecast as “Sexual” or “Sensual” women; Meriam Bellina and Enny Beatrice, for instance, were considered sex bombs of the industry.
8. Both in physical and social attributes. There is no clear delineation of even basic organs such as genitalia: intersexuality (the possession of both male and female sex organs) is well documented.
9. These biological and social differences should not be understood as mutually exclusive. For instance, menstruation, a biological function, has frequently been a source of discriminatory practices owing to social taboos regarding it; as such, differentiation of women and men owing to menstruation, such as the statement “It is an indisputable fact that meat goes bad when touched by menstruating women” (in Beauvoir, 1989: 168, 170), has both biological and social aspects.
10. In this context, sexploitation films should be understood as the numerous films produced in Indonesia between 1970 and 1998 which attempted to exploit sex and sexuality to draw audiences. Titles of such films include *Permainan Tabu* (Forbidden Game; 1984), *Ranjang Pemikat* (Binding Bed; 1993), *Kenikmatan Tabu* (Forbidden Pleasure; 1994), and *Gairah Terlarang* (Forbidden Passion; 1995).
11. Original: “panas di atas ranjang, ganas dalam tugas.”
12. Original: “Dengan Tubuhnya yang Sexy ia mengoda dan bermain Cinta dengan setiap Pria.” (capitalization as in original)
13. The illustration for *Tahu Diri, Dong* (1984) is of particular note: it is a construct which combines the drawn bodies of three spectators (and a monkey) in a car together with photographs of the disrobing Sexual Woman and three photographs of the heads of the spectators. This technique is difficult to reproduce on film, making the constructed nature of the situation explicit.
14. Original (capitalization in the original):
Sexual Woman: “MAU NGINTIP YA?”
Voyeur: “DIKIIIT... ASAL TAHU SAJA”
15. Original (capitalization in the original):
Voyeur: “WADUUH JANGAN! BEGINI AJA KELIHATAN KOK!”
Sexual Woman: “KASINO SAYANG,... GUE BUKAIN DULU YA....!”
16. Ng, Weinehall, and Öhman (2007: 799) quote one respondent as stating “[For women], smoking is only common among hookers and bad girls.”
17. Original: “makin pendek puntungnya, makin dekat kebibir makin mahal harganya!”
18. This film was subtitled “Betinya Seorang Perempuan”. The term *betina* refers to a female animal; as such, the subtitle implied a (specifically female) animalism in the Sexual Woman.
19. Though the Sexual Woman may be depicted as having a degree of control, ultimately these implied sexual encounters are determined by other parties—the filmmakers and advertisement designers.
20. Original: “SEORANG PEREMPUAN MONTOK YANG TERPAKSA HIDUP DIANTARA ORANG2 TUA **GILA, SADIS, DAN GILA SEX** DISEBUAH WISMA YANG TERPENCIL” (capitalization and bolding in original).

21. Original: "Buaya paling bahaya selain gigitan dan ekornya tapi ada yang lebih hebat lagi yaitu tangkurnya buaya." The word *tangkur* (crocodile penis), aside from being the correct anatomical term, serves to mask the word "penis" and avoid potential censorship issues.
22. In *Buah Terlarang*, both the title and the tagline "the story of a pair of teens married by accident" ("*kisah sepasang remaja yang kawin celaka*") suggest taboo premarital sexual relations, whereas in *Kidung Cinta* the Sensual Woman's school uniform, tied hemline (a common form of resistance to school dress codes), and close physical proximity to an older man in formal clothes who is carrying a clipboard draw to mind a taboo relationship between teacher and student.
23. Original: "Kisah cinta yang agung.... dibalik tembok tirani kebangsawan yg mulai runtuh dimakan usia!"
24. Original: "Genduk kecil halus menawan & menggairahkan."
25. Flyers such as those discussed here were generally distributed by cinemas that were screening the films. Trucks would travel throughout the city and paid individuals would throw the flyers into the air to be carried on the wind. Meanwhile, a person with a loudspeaker advertised the film orally. Young boys would often chase after the trucks and try to collect the more sexually explicit flyers (such as *Buaya Putih*) for their personal use. Parents, however, were quick to discard these collections when they were discovered (Irawanto, interview).
26. Such use of sex and sexuality in marketing films is evidenced in Indonesia as early as 1969, when the poster for *Laki-laki Tak Bernama* (Man without a Name) proclaimed "the only National film that is the bravest and biggest . . . with SEX scenes which are explicit without pulling any punches" (Original: "satu2nya film Nasional terberani dan terbesar. . . dengan adegan2 SEX yg serba terang2an tanpa tedeng aling2") and presented images of the Sexual Woman in bed with a man, getting dressed, and kissing. It was, however, unlike later flyers, more explicit in targeting male viewers. The poster urged viewers to take their *pacar*, a word which, though able to denote either "boyfriend" or "girlfriend", would have been understood as "girlfriend" at the time. It would have been unseemly for a young woman to take a man on a date.