

Signs of Sexual Violence: A Semiotic Analysis of Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa!

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ABSTRACT: This study explores how signs of sexual violence against women are represented in the Indonesian feature film *Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa!*, directed by Hanung Bramantyo and written by Ifan Ismail. Utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, the research analyzes the film as a structured system of signs that communicates the narrative and emotional dimensions of sexual violence. It further investigates the portrayal of female characters who, despite being deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, are depicted as navigating morally complex choices under systemic pressure. Through scene-based sampling, the study focuses on key visual and narrative elements that signify violence and illustrate the internal conflict of women striving to resist the social and ideological forces surrounding them. The findings underscore how cinematic semiotics can function not only as narrative devices but also as a medium for critiquing gendered power structures and enhancing social awareness regarding violence against women.

KEYWORDS: sexual violence, semiotics, Roland Barthes, gender representation, Indonesian cinema, power structures

INTRODUCTION

In early 2024, acclaimed Indonesian director Hanung Bramantyo released the film *Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa* ("God, Permit Me to Sin"), adapted from the novel *Tuhan Izinkan Aku Menjadi Pelacur* ("God, Permit Me to Be a Prostitute"). The film centers around a young woman named Kiran, who grows up in a devout Islamic environment. Despite being a dedicated student in an Islamic boarding school, Kiran experiences various forms of physical and emotional violence from individuals who, in theory, should serve as moral and spiritual role models. This hypocrisy compels her to rebel against the oppressive structures she once trusted. Kiran's transformation—from a pious student into a sex worker—serves as a critical statement exposing how so-called religious figures can themselves perpetuate abuse and moral failure.

According to Himawan Pratista in *Memahami Film*, Edisi 2, film is a multidimensional product, encompassing social, psychological, and aesthetic phenomena. Film utilizes language, music, and images to deliver messages, making it a complex medium for communication. As a form of visual social discourse, film conveys meaning through a system of signs. Therefore, this research employs a semiotic approach to examine how the film constructs representations of women and sexual violence.

The study adopts Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as its analytical framework, focusing on how the film represents women and sexual violence through structured sign systems. Semiotics in this context refers to logical reasoning through signs, where human understanding is mediated by both tangible and discursive markers. Barthes categorizes meaning into three levels: denotation, connotation, and myth (metalanguage), which offer critical tools to decode the social ideologies embedded in cultural texts.

By applying Barthes' framework, this research investigates the film's semiotic landscape to uncover the deeper social messages encoded within its narrative. The study aims to reveal how the film communicates representations of women who are frequently misinterpreted or marginalized, leading to experiences of sexual violence and systemic oppression—even within a modern context. Ultimately, this research seeks to assess how the film's semiotic constructions influence audience perception and contribute to broader gender discourse within media studies.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of symbols in semiotics plays a vital role in conveying both implicit and explicit meanings. As noted by Hartoko and Rahmanto in Alex Sobur's work (2009, p.155), the term "symbol" derives etymologically from the Greek word *symballein*, meaning "to throw together." A symbol refers to an object or action associated with a particular idea through metonymic or metaphoric relationships. For example, a pink ribbon is widely recognized as a symbol of cervical cancer awareness. In communication systems, symbols offer richer, more layered meanings than conventional signs, allowing for deeper audience

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interpretation.

According to Budiono Herusatoto (Sobur, 2009, p.160), symbols, signs, and gestures possess fundamental distinctions within communication systems. While signs typically carry fixed meanings, symbols are more complex, evolving through their cultural and social contexts. Both serve as bridges between communicator and communicant, enhancing message delivery and emotional resonance.

Roland Barthes (Sobur, 2009, p.15) positions semiotics as the study of sign systems and how humans assign meaning through objects and symbols. Building on Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of the signifier and signified, Barthes expands the scope of meaning beyond the literal—introducing layered levels of interpretation. Saussure focuses on **denotation**, which refers to the literal meaning of a sign. Barthes complements this by adding **connotation**, describing meanings influenced by cultural, emotional, and ideological factors.

In the context of visual communication, Joseph V. Maschelli (Maarif, 2005, p.27) argues that film operates as a communicative system constructed through shots, scenes, and sequences. Each cinematic element relies on careful camera positioning to establish perspective, transforming visual sequences into coherent narratives. In Barthes' semiotic framework, these images are not purely aesthetic—they are ideological artifacts that communicate values and social commentary.

Denotation

Denotation represents the first level of meaning within Barthes' semiotic system. It is the direct, literal meaning of a sign, understood in its basic form without social or emotional layers. For example, the word "dog" refers to a four-legged, barking animal; a "rose" refers to a colorful flower with thorns. In Barthes' view, denotation provides the foundational structure upon which connotation is built. He argues that denotation does not stand alone, but acts as a gateway to deeper, culturally enriched interpretations.

Connotation

Connotation is the second tier of meaning, shaped by cultural norms, experiences, and emotional associations. It allows a sign to carry broader ideological significance. For instance, the red-and-white flag of Indonesia may be denotatively described as a two-colored horizontal cloth—but connotatively, it evokes patriotism, national pride, and historical struggle. Connotation introduces personal and collective emotional depth to signs, enabling them to reflect values and ideologies embedded within social discourse.

Myth

Barthes identifies myth as a secondary system of meaning where signs participate in the formation and reinforcement of dominant ideologies. Myth is not only a vehicle for transmitting information—it embeds cultural narratives and values that are widely accepted, often without question. For example, Barthes cites the image of a Black colonial soldier saluting the French flag. While the denotation indicates a soldier in uniform, the mythic level suggests loyalty to colonialism, subtly framing it as honorable and just. In this way, myth functions to naturalize ideologies, shaping collective perceptions as if they are universal truths.

Understanding Barthes' triadic system—denotation, connotation, and myth—enables researchers to uncover how meaning is constructed, transmitted, and ideologically framed within cultural products like film. This study applies Barthes' semiotic method to analyze representations of women and sexual violence in *Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa!* By decoding the signs embedded in its narrative and visual language, the research aims to illuminate how media constructs gender discourse and influences societal perceptions of violence against women.

II. METHODS

This research does not aim to analyze every scene of the film in detail, but rather focuses on selected sequences that explicitly or implicitly depict elements of sexual violence against the main character. These scenes serve as the core material for semiotic analysis.

The study employs a qualitative descriptive method to investigate the representation of women and sexual violence in *Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa!* through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. As stated by Kriyanto (2006, p. 69), descriptive research aims to portray phenomena as they are by utilizing qualitative data such as written or spoken words and behavioral observations, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the research object.

The primary object of this research is the feature film *Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa!*, directed by Hanung Bramantyo. The film was chosen for its complex representation of women and its critical engagement with the issue of sexual violence within its visual and narrative structure. The analysis focuses on specific scenes that reveal signs of sexual violence—both overt and subtle—in order to examine how meaning is constructed and communicated to audiences.

This study applies Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to decode the representation of women and sexual violence in the film. Barthes categorizes signification into three levels: **denotation**, referring to the literal meaning of a sign; **connotation**, which reflects deeper cultural and social interpretations; and **myth**, where signs function ideologically to shape collective beliefs and societal perceptions. In analyzing the selected scenes, attention is given to visual cues, dialogue, and narrative progression to

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uncover how these signs construct particular discourses related to gender and violence.

Data collection involves purposive sampling of scenes that contain implicit or explicit representations of sexual violence against the protagonist. These scenes are then examined using Barthes' semiotic framework, distinguishing their literal (denotative) meanings, deeper cultural and emotional (connotative) interpretations, and the ideological narratives (myth) they promote. Through this technique, the study aims to reveal how filmic media articulates gendered social discourse and contributes to shaping audience perception of sexual violence and women's roles within society.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 RESULT

Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa! tells the story of Kiran, a devout young woman dedicated to religious preaching and practicing the principles of Islamic Sharia in her daily life. She passionately advocates for the establishment of a Khilafah system, which she believes aligns with Islamic teachings. Kiran is portrayed as an academically accomplished university student who comes from an economically disadvantaged family. Her father, despite being ill, continues sending money to support her education, while her mother is a homemaker. Amid these challenges, Kiran remains committed to her religious pursuits and to honoring her parents. Her journey takes a dark turn when her father's health deteriorates and she becomes entangled with individuals who exploit religion for personal gain. A prominent cleric proposes marriage, offering financial stability. Driven by her family's economic hardship, Kiran accepts. However, she soon uncovers the truth: the cleric already has two legal wives. This revelation drastically shifts Kiran's trajectory, transforming her from a celebrated religious figure into a fugitive accused of dishonoring a revered ulama.

The film opens with a striking visual sequence: a woman floating motionless in a swimming pool, framed in silhouette from beneath. The accompanying monologue suggests a spiritual plea, as the woman appears to be speaking directly to God. This scene sets the emotional tone for the narrative and foreshadows the moral and psychological weight carried by the protagonist throughout the film.

1. Scene Analysis: Kiran Floating in Water

Denotation: A young woman is shown floating motionlessly in water, captured from a low angle beneath the surface.

Connotation: The scene conveys emotional paralysis and helplessness. The underwater perspective emphasizes passivity, while water—often symbolic of purity or renewal—is here reframed as a medium of isolation and emotional suppression.

Myth: This sequence echoes broader narratives of despair and existential detachment, often experienced by women who face betrayal and systemic silencing. The image mythologizes suffering as quiet and invisible, particularly for victims whose voices are marginalized.

2. Scene Analysis: Kiran Walking Through the Corridor (Minute 1:34–1:40) Denotation:

Kiran is shown walking through a corridor alongside a group of other women. She wears a bright red garment, while the others are dressed uniformly in black.

Connotation:

The deliberate use of color in this scene serves as a visual code to highlight Kiran's distinctiveness from her environment. Red is often associated with courage, resistance, or rebellion, whereas black signifies uniformity, conformity, or even social confinement. The contrast visually reinforces Kiran as a figure who challenges prevailing norms—a woman whose presence disrupts the visual and ideological homogeneity around her.

Myth:

This scene reflects a broader social myth concerning individuals who dissent from mainstream values. Those who express differing views are frequently perceived as threats to established systems, and are subject to exclusion or social punishment. In this context, Kiran's red garment becomes a

symbolic act of defiance, suggesting a personal journey marked by integrity and resistance in the face of societal pressure. Her positioning within the corridor metaphorically represents a passage—a transition from conformity toward self-definition and ideological emancipation.

3. Scene Analysis: The Lecturer and the Wine Denotation:

A male lecturer approaches Kiran and invites her to drink wine. While she is unaware, he discreetly pours a white powder into her glass.

Connotation:

The lecturer's actions are a clear symbol of manipulation and sexual coercion. The presence of wine and an addictive substance operates as a visual cue for control—transforming a seemingly casual or intellectual encounter into a calculated act of exploitation. This scene reflects the imbalance of power between men and women in social spaces, especially where authority and status are weaponized to influence or violate vulnerable individuals.

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Myth:

This portrayal underscores a persistent myth embedded in patriarchal structures: that figures of authority—particularly men in respected positions—can exercise control without consequence, often cloaked within respectable environments. The use of intoxicating substances in such contexts is a recurring trope in media narratives, reinforcing how violence against women may occur under the guise of civility or professionalism. Moreover, the scene serves as a critique of how patriarchal ideologies normalize exploitation through subtle mechanisms, leaving victims unaware until after harm has been inflicted.

4. Scene Analysis: Ideological Conflict Between Kiran and the Music Group (Minute 11:21–12:13)

Denotation:

A verbal dispute occurs between Kiran and her religious preaching group and a group of musicians. The conflict centers around claiming access to a shared room for their respective activities.

Connotation:

This scene portrays a clash of ideologies and perspectives—two communities with opposing values confronting one another in a contested space. Kiran is depicted as a committed religious figure, advocating for her beliefs through her da'wah group, while the musicians represent a more liberal, expressive lifestyle. The tension emphasizes conflicting views on how faith and self-expression are navigated within public and social environments. The spatial disagreement becomes a metaphor for the broader negotiation of cultural identity and personal freedom.

Myth:

The scene reinforces a cultural myth surrounding religious groups, particularly da'wah communities, which are often stereotyped as radical or oppositional to liberal ideals. Such representations contribute to the societal stigmatization of religious activism, where members are perceived as threats to creative or expressive freedom. This mythologization fosters polarization between spiritual collectives and more secular or liberal communities, deepening ideological divides and reinforcing narratives of mutual exclusion.

5. Scene Analysis: Marriage Proposal and Individual Freedom (Minute 19:15–20:21) Denotation:

Kiran is summoned to the home of a prominent religious figure who formally proposes marriage, offering her the promise of a more secure life. In a subsequent moment at 20:21, she meets Pak Tomo, who advises her not to marry young and instead focus on her academic pursuits.

Connotation:

These two scenes highlight Kiran's internal conflict, presenting her with two starkly different paths: accepting the marriage proposal to achieve economic stability, or pursuing her intellectual ambitions as an autonomous woman. The tension illustrates the social consequences women face when making life-defining choices—particularly regarding economic status and societal expectations that women must be guided by men in shaping their futures.

Myth:

This narrative reinforces a persistent myth in patriarchal cultures: that women are often positioned as objects within social transactions, where individuals in power feel entitled to "acquire" a partner through status or material offerings. Such ideology obscures the reality that women possess agency, ambition, and the right to determine their own futures. The film critically interrogates this dichotomy—challenging the notion that freedom and stability cannot coexist for women—and advocating for a reevaluation of how society frames female autonomy and aspiration.

6. Scene Analysis: Accusation and Absolute Power – Ustad Darda's Allegations Against Kiran (Minute 23:51, 25:27, 26:37, 26:40)

Denotation:

Kiran is summoned once again to Ustad Darda's residence, where he expresses his intention to marry her as a third wife. Kiran protests, noting that she had previously only been offered a non-official (siri) marriage. In response, Ustad Darda accuses her of lying, and all members present—including other women—join in condemning her without seeking the truth.

Connotation:

This scene starkly depicts institutional injustice toward women, particularly when those in positions of religious authority manipulate public perception to tarnish a woman's reputation. The absence of defense—even from fellow women in the room—reflects the internalized patriarchy within social structures, where women may be socially conditioned to uphold male dominance, even at the expense of solidarity. The passivity of the community amplifies an imbalanced social hierarchy in which power overrides truth, and silence becomes complicit in violence.

Myth:

The scenario embodies a cultural myth of unquestioned trust in religious leaders—a myth deeply rooted in Indonesian society. Such figures often wield unchecked authority, shaping narratives that discourage scrutiny, even when ethical violations are

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evident. This blind faith enables the preservation of dominance without accountability, leaving victims—especially women—struggling for justice. The scene critiques how spiritual leadership can be used not as a moral compass but as an instrument of control, reinforcing systemic oppression under the guise of religious propriety.

7. Scene Analysis: Violence and Power Relations – Kiran Slapped by Pak Tomo (Present Timeline) (Minute 27:45–27:50)

Denotation:

In a present-day scene, Kiran—now depicted as a sex worker—is slapped by Pak Tomo after refusing to serve a customer. Pak Tomo acts as an intermediary in the transactional encounter.

Connotation:

This scene reveals the persistent nature of violence against women, highlighting how patterns of abuse transcend time. Kiran remains trapped in a cycle of control and domination, where male figures continue to exercise authority over her body and decisions. The slap signifies a rupture of agency, portraying Kiran not as a person with autonomy but as an object subjected to disciplinary force within a deeply patriarchal system.

Myth:

The scene reinforces societal myths that normalize male power over women's bodies, especially within transactional or marginalized contexts. Such normalization operates invisibly—embedded within social attitudes that legitimize physical and psychological violence when women are perceived as subservient or deviant. Pak Tomo's action echoes a broader cultural tendency to silence and punish women who defy expected roles, thus maintaining structural inequalities that go largely unchallenged.

8. Scene Analysis: Trust and the Symbol of Hope – Kiran Meets Darul (Minute 37:16)

Denotation:

Kiran opens herself to assistance from Darul, a man from her community who believes in her honesty and offers to help prove her innocence. In the scene, Kiran is dressed in yellow clothing.

Connotation:

The color yellow worn by Kiran serves as a visual symbol of hope, illumination, and emotional resilience. Despite being subjected to immense societal and religious pressure, she chooses to place trust in someone and preserve her sense of determination. The scene suggests a rekindling of optimism and a quiet act of emotional endurance.

Myth:

This moment revisits a familiar social myth: the portrayal of women as emotionally vulnerable figures who require a male “savior” during times of crisis. On one hand, the scene may reinforce the traditional narrative that female protagonists seek protection or validation through male figures. On the other, it can also be interpreted as Kiran's agency in seeking emotional safety and solidarity amid oppressive conditions. Her trust in Darul is not a surrender—it is a strategic attempt to reclaim power through connection, forming a subtle critique of systemic isolation.

9. Scene Analysis: Defamation and Persecution – Ustad Darda and the Community Pursue Kiran (Minute 38:35)

Denotation:

Ustad Darda, accompanied by a mob, chases after Kiran, aggressively pounding on doors in search of her hiding place while rallying others to capture her.

Connotation:

This scene illustrates a potent form of persecution directed toward women, where the community is mobilized as an extension of institutional power to enact slander and punishment. Kiran is denied any opportunity to speak or defend herself, becoming the object of collective hostility. The atmosphere reflects a deep social imbalance in which truth is subordinate to public pressure, and the individual is sacrificed to uphold a façade of moral consensus.

Myth:

The portrayal reflects a pervasive myth: religious leaders are granted near-absolute societal backing, even in the face of moral transgressions. This blind allegiance allows those in power to manipulate narratives without scrutiny, converting spiritual legitimacy into a tool for oppression. The scene critiques the instrumentalization of religion, exposing how authority cloaked in sanctity can perpetuate gendered violence while escaping accountability. It calls attention to the systemic danger of conflating moral leadership with immunity from justice.

10. Scene Analysis: Sexuality in a Vulnerable State – Kiran and Darul at the Motel (Minute 47:48–48:22)

Denotation:

Darul, who previously promised to accompany Kiran during her difficult times, invites her to a motel, where they engage in sexual intercourse.

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Connotation:

The scene portrays Kiran in a mentally fragile state, seeking warmth and reassurance from someone she believes she can trust. Emotionally depleted and lacking support, her decision to engage in physical intimacy appears shaped by psychological vulnerability rather than active empowerment. The setting—a confined, transactional space—visually underscores the tension between solace and resignation, presenting a complex emotional portrait of consent under duress.

Myth:

This moment reflects a broader myth within gendered discourse: that individuals in crisis are prone to emotional dependency and susceptible to manipulation—even from those positioned as protectors. The scene engages critically with the complexity of consent, emphasizing that psychological distress must be factored into assessing autonomy. Sexual violence, in this context, transcends physical force—it manifests through emotional pressure, blurred boundaries, and uneven relational dynamics. By depicting this interaction, the film interrogates how systemic structures normalize emotional exploitation and how vulnerability can be misread as consent.

11. Scene Analysis: Manipulation and Social Threat – Dialogue Between Kiran and Darul (Minute 50:21–51:50)

Denotation:

Kiran questions Darul about his sudden disappearance and emotional distance. She suspects his behavior shifted after he began campaigning for student leadership. In response, Darul accuses Kiran of leading him into religious transgression and dares her to disclose their past encounter, stating that the public would believe him over her—a woman already stigmatized for allegedly disrespecting a religious figure.

Connotation:

This scene reveals the dynamics of psychological manipulation and symbolic dominance in interpersonal communication. Darul tactically weaponizes his social status—as both a male and a respected community figure—to intimidate and silence Kiran. His rhetoric contains implicit threats: that a woman once branded with scandal lacks the social legitimacy to tell her side of the story. The interaction illustrates how patriarchal power structures suppress female voices and shift responsibility away from perpetrators.

Myth:

The moment reinforces a prevalent social myth: that men, especially those with elevated status, are deemed more trustworthy than women whose reputations are tarnished—regardless of the truth. This belief system marginalizes women's credibility and shields male authority figures from accountability. The film critiques how institutional and symbolic power perpetuate gendered silencing, casting doubt on victims while legitimizing domination through social consensus.

12. Scene Analysis: Sexual Violence by a Public Figure – Pak Alim and Kiran (Minute 1:02:29–1:06:12)

Denotation:

Kiran, portrayed in the role of a sex worker, serves a client named Pak Alim, a prominent government official publicly recognized for his religiosity and devotion to family. In this scene, Pak Alim suddenly assaults Kiran by striking her face repeatedly before engaging in intercourse. Her expression remains vacant, while tears silently stream down her face.

Connotation:

The visual and narrative components of this sequence expose a profound social irony—where a respected, morally upright public figure becomes the perpetrator of sexual violence. The stark contrast between Pak Alim's virtuous public image and his abusive private behavior reflects the disconnect between ethical ideals and real-world power. Kiran's silent expression and concealed tears powerfully symbolize the suppression of victims' voices and the inability to resist under overwhelming authority. The scene serves as a representation of how women's emotional and physical suffering is often obscured in environments shaped by status and control.

Myth:

This depiction reveals the societal myth surrounding public figures: that social status and institutional rank serve as shields for unethical behavior, with violence hidden behind polished reputations. Within patriarchal culture, men occupying elite roles frequently operate “behind closed doors” with full impunity, while female victims remain structurally unprotected. The film critically deconstructs the illusion of moral leadership and questions public trust in elite figures whose behavior often contradicts their image. In doing so, it challenges the viewer to reconsider whose narratives are validated and whose pain remains invisible.

3.2 DISCUSSIONS

This discussion chapter synthesizes fifteen key scenes from Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa! to examine how signs, symbols, and myths construct the film's representation of sexual violence, patriarchal control, and female agency. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework—denotation, connotation, and myth—the film reveals a layered critique of gendered power relations in religious, social, and political contexts.

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3.2.1 The Language of Silence and Emotional Despair

The opening scene of Kiran floating in water establishes a visual metaphor for emotional paralysis and spiritual detachment. Her passivity is not aesthetic, it's symbolic of powerlessness beneath a veneer of serenity. Similarly, the slapping incident with Pak Tomo echoes this motif: violence silences her body; tears substitute for voice. These visual codes denotatively depict action but connotatively evoke suppression—where myth renders women's suffering as unremarkable, normalized.

3.2.2 Conflict Between Selfhood and Conformity

Kiran's visual separation from her peers, dressed in red amid a sea of black, marks her ideological nonconformity. Her walk through the corridor becomes a metaphorical passage between compliance and disruption, with color functioning as a semiotic rupture. Later, her ideological clash with the music group literalizes this tension, the competition for space becomes a struggle for narrative legitimacy.

3.2.3 Authority, Violence, and Manipulation

The lecturer scene with wine introduces the theme of covert manipulation: physical control enacted through social status. This tactic deepens in the proposal scene, where spiritual leaders commodify women under religious justification. When Ustad Darda publicly accuses Kiran, myth is fully mobilized, his position allows him to construct narrative truth, and communal trust displaces factual scrutiny. The pursuit scene intensifies this dynamic: the crowd, mobilized by religious authority, becomes a tool of persecution.

Pak Alim's violent sexual encounter with Kiran underscores the gap between public image and private abuse. While his social mythology centers around piety and care, the visual narrative exposes him as a perpetrator. The myth of male moral authority functions here as both shield and sword: protecting elites, silencing victims.

3.2.4 Consent, Crisis, and Emotional Exploitation

The motel scene with Darul gestures toward emotional manipulation masquerading as intimacy. Kiran's trauma blurs the line between emotional consent and resignation, highlighting how sexual violence is not merely physical, but psychological. This is reinforced in their later dialogue, where Darul weaponizes his social capital to invalidate Kiran's voice. His threat—that society will believe him over her, reflects a mythic binary: male credibility vs. female stigma.

3.2.5 Subversion, Solidarity, and Hope

Not all moments in the film are coded in despair. Kiran's interaction with Darul when dressed in yellow introduces a symbol of hope. The color connotatively suggests resilience, emotional clarity, and the possibility of solidarity. Despite the eventual betrayal, the scene reflects Kiran's enduring search for safety and truth, a momentary escape from isolation.

3.2.6 Feminine Agency Under Siege

Across these fifteen scenes, Kiran's body, voice, and decisions are repeatedly contested. Each act of violence physical, symbolic, emotional is framed through a semiotic system that denies her subjectivity. Whether it is the slap, the wine, or the denial of credibility, patriarchal myths construct her as either dangerous or dispensable. Yet, in moments of silent resistance, visual symbolism (color, gaze, framing) positions her as an emblem of dissent.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa! presents a deeply layered narrative that interrogates the sociocultural landscape of sexual violence, religious authority, and female autonomy in Indonesian society. Through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotics denotation, connotation, and myth. This study has uncovered how the film constructs meaning not only through its plot and dialogue but also through its visual language and symbolic codes.

The fifteen scenes analyzed reveal recurring patterns of patriarchal control, ideological manipulation, and the suppression of women's voices. Kiran's journey reflects the systemic entrapment faced by women whether in religious communities, academic spaces, political structures, or personal relationships. Each interaction she experiences is embedded with signs that reinforce social myths: the glorification of male authority, the stigmatization of female dissent, and the normalization of emotional and physical violence. At the same time, the film offers glimpses of resistance and emotional endurance. Through moments of silence, color symbolism, and relational tension, Kiran emerges not merely as a victim—but as a symbolic figure of contested agency. Her body, speech, and gaze become terrains where meaning is negotiated and where audiences are invited to rethink accepted narratives.

This research demonstrates that semiotic analysis provides a powerful tool for unpacking media representations of gendered power. It challenges viewers to look beyond surface narratives and interrogate how film can serve both as a reflection of cultural myths and a medium for subversive critique. Ultimately, *Tuhan, Izinkan Aku Berdosa!* is not only a story about personal trauma—it is a cultural text that exposes and questions the ideological machinery behind injustice.

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