

## **Representation of sexual violence on women in the 27 steps of may**

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**Abstract** Sexual violence against women is a crucial issue today. Sexual assault on gender results in physical injury, fear, psychological trauma, loss of confidence and even death. Through the film 27 Steps Of May, it is known how sexual violence against women has been constructed in a visual and is part of social reality. This study aims to determine the representation of victims of sexual violence in 27 Steps Of May. This study uses Stuart Hall's representation which is descriptive qualitative in nature and is analyzed using Roland Barthes's semiotic research technique in syntagmatic (denotational) studies, paradigmatic (connotative stage) and reading of the five codes with the aim of uncovering myths in films. The results of this study indicate the existence of elements of sexual violence and patriarchal culture through gestures, facial expressions, environments and costumes where sexual violence is based on the existence of patriarchal culture.

**Keywords:** Sexual Violence, Representation, Cinema, Semiotics Roland Barthes

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sexual violence against women is a crucial case that has existed for a long time, even in the modern era when cases of sexual violence are rife. Sexual violence is a form of gender-based violence that attacks a person's sexuality by using physical force and force, threats or actions directed specifically at women and/or children without the consent of the victim resulting in physical injury, fear, psychological trauma, loss of self-confidence even death (Perempuan, 2021). Sexual violence is included in the scope of limiting sexuality, which connotes and leads to sexual matters which are carried out unilaterally without the consent of the target party, causing reactions of anger, shame, hatred, embarrassment, depression, feeling unsafe and comfortable (Retyaningtyas, 2017). Sexual violence is not only violence related to sex, but also in the form of verbal, psychological and financial. For example, uploading photos or videos and then commenting with words that related to sex.

There is a transformation of the times, human life in the past did not know social media and only socialized practically face to face. Likewise, what society consumes materially, and knowledge only captures it through the realities of everyday life. In addition, people are also still adapting eastern culture which is thick with courtesy (Nainggolan, 2019), friendliness and gentleness (Butsi, 2019). The social values prevailing in society at that time determined how a man should behave and how a woman should behave, each of them has a responsibility to obey the unwritten rules in society. Sexual violence doesn't mean it doesn't happen, it's just that it's not as widespread now. Especially when people start to become familiar with the internet and social media, the negative content that is spread makes the perpetrators of violence imagine widely and try to make this imagination come true in real life. Perpetrators often seek revenge on potential victims, even regardless of the good status of children, adults and even members of the perpetrator's own family. Reported by CATAHU (Annual Note) Perempuan 2022 in a period of 10 years (Perempuan, 2021), namely 2012-2021, there was an increase of 50% in the number of cases of Gender

Based Violence (KBG) in 2021, namely 338,496 cases compared to 2020. In fact, this figure is higher than BEC numbers before the 2019 Covid pandemic (Komnas Perempuan: Indonesia 2022).

The phenomenon of sexual violence often occurs to children and women. This is because perpetrators tend to think of children and women as weak and innocent, making it easier for perpetrators to commit acts that deviate from victims. Sexual violence can happen to anyone, anywhere and anytime. Therefore, it is important for us to know the various types of sexual violence. According to Komnas Perempuan (Dini, 2019), there are 15 forms of sexual violence, including (Komnas Perempuan, 2022):

1) Rape

Rape is a sexual act committed by the perpetrator against the victim on the basis of coercion and accompanied by threats by inserting his genitals or foreign objects or fingers into the vagina, anus and mouth.

2) Sexual Intimidation

Sexual intimidation includes threats or sexual attempts that could create fear in the victim. Intimidation was carried out directly or indirectly, such as by telephone, SMS, e-mail, social media and so on.

3) Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is carried out physically or non-physically and leads to sexual organs or sexuality of the victim. The harassment took the form of catcalling, whistling, glances, comments, showing pictures such as pornographic photos or videos that made a person feel uncomfortable and feel belittled.

4) Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation includes many things such as abuse of trust or power for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification. For example, taking advantage of someone's poverty to enter into the world of prostitution and marrying women with the intention of only satisfying sexual desires and then abandoned (Navarro, 2018).

5) Trafficking in Women

Recruiting, accommodating and employing women to serve someone sexually. There are even violence, confinement, fraud and abuse of power.

6) Forced Prostitution

Deception, threats or coercion of women to become sex workers.

7) Sexual Slavery

In contrast to prostitution and sexual trafficking, sexual slavery makes perpetrators feel as "owners" and have full rights over sexual victims. Victims are required to fulfill the perpetrator's sexual needs by coercion and threats.

8) Forced Marriage

There are still many marriages that are against the will of the child and are based on coercion from parents or family, one of the forms of sexual violence. In addition, forced marriages are caused by acts of rape, forcing women to live under unwanted household pressure.

9) Forced Pregnancy

The coercion in question is when women as victims of rape are forced to continue unwanted pregnancies. Husbands who forbid their wives to have sex without using contraception so they cannot manage the spacing of pregnancies are also considered sexual violence.

10) Forced Abortion

An abortion is carried out due to pressure, threats or coercion from other parties.

11) Forced Contraception and Sterilization

The installation of contraceptive devices and sterilization measures were carried out without the consent of the woman, as a result of ignorance of information. For now, cases of forced contraception and sterilization are common in women living with HIV/AIDS in order to prevent the birth of babies with HIV/AIDS. Likewise for people with mental disabilities, where a person is unable to make decisions for himself.

12) Sexual Abuse

Attacks on sexual organs that are carried out intentionally causing pain and even damage to vital organs.

### 13) Inhuman and Sexual Punishment

Punishment that causes extreme suffering, fear, pain or shame. Punishment that is humiliating or degrading to human dignity as a result of accusations of violating the norms of decency.

### 14) Practices of Harmful and Sexual Nuances

Discrimination against Women (Kriyantono, 2021).

Traditions adopted by the community have sexual nuances and can cause physical, psychological and sexual injury to women.

### 15) Sexual Control, Including Through Reasonable Discriminatory Rules Morality and Religion

The mindset developed in society places women as symbols of community morality, distinguishing between 'good women' and 'bad women'. Sexual control is carried out through rules that include mandatory dress, curfews, restrictions on being in certain places and prohibitions on being with the opposite sex in certain places and situations. The regulation contains discrimination against freedom of expression for women, where violations of this rule are subject to warnings, fines, imprisonment and other corporal punishment (Darma, 2022; Febriana, 2020).

News about sexual violence spreads through print and electronic media. Widespread access to information and communication makes it easy for people to find out about various forms of sexual violence that occur in real life. In fact, not a few novelists and filmmakers have created works that adapt the phenomenon of sexual violence. There are hidden messages and meanings that the audience wants to know, either in a frank or implied way. The film itself has an impact on its audience, both positive and negative, depending on how the audience absorbs it. Apart from being seen as a reflection of life, film is also seen as a vehicle for conveying the reality of many and varied people's lives (Rochmach, 2019).

Through the film 27 Steps Of May, which was directed by Ravi Bharwani, Rayya Makarim, and Wilza Lubis, the character May is a victim of sexual violence who is raped by a group of unknown people, as well as the character of the father who is the parent of May who is also experiencing the effects of sexual violence. that befell his son. In this case, it encourages researchers to analyze a victim and the closest person who is also indirectly a victim of sexual violence. This is represented in the film 27 Steps Of May.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the study of semiotics, representation is a process of physically recording ideas, knowledge or messages. Representation according to Stuart Hall is an important process in which a meaning or interaction between members of a culture, the process involves language, signs and images that can represent something (Hall, 2012, p. 7). According to Hall 2012 through a book entitled Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices says that "Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of culture." Through representation a meaning is produced and exchanged between members of society or simply production meaning through language (Hall, 2012, p. 15). Two components that correlate with each other in the process of representation, namely thought and language, start from something that is in the mind that makes a person know the meaning and language is used as a medium for understanding. Therefore, a meaning cannot be communicated without language (Hall, 1997)e.

In Hall 2012 representation there is also the term two system representation, which is a process of representation. First, mental representation is the meaning that appears for the first time which is different for everyone, depending on the image system that is formed in a person's mind because the representation process is interpreted by a system of

thoughts that already exists and is embedded in memory. Everyone has a concept map that is different from one another, so the resulting meaning is also not the same. Even though there are differences in each person's understanding and thoughts, in terms of communication it can still work because they have the same concept but with a different way of understanding (Rujakat, 2020; Sudarto et al., 2015). It is this culture that makes everyone have a variety of interpretations in almost the same way, in terms of complementing one another, language is needed as a medium to represent existing concepts (Ismail, 2021). Second, language is the second part of the representation process which generally uses images, sounds and words that can represent a sign. The role of a sign is used to represent or describe a concept that is embedded in the mind and ends up forming a culture, so that language as a means of communicating thoughts and expressing meaning goes according to its function. The concept of language in this context is comprehensive in the form of actual meaning, music, images, gestures, expressions.

#### ➤ **Social Construction Concept**

Humans, in many ways, are free to act outside the social structures and institutions from which they originate. Humans develop actively and creatively in response to stimuli in the cognitive world. But in reality, the presence of social reality is accompanied by the presence of individuals both outside and within that reality. The meaning of social reality is subjectively constructed and interpreted by other individuals objectively, so that in social institutions an individual constructs social reality and implements it in the world of reality based on the subjectivity of other individuals (Santoso, 2016) (Dewantari, 2020).

According to Berger & Luckman (1996) in his book entitled *The Social Construction of Reality*, a Treatise in the Sociological of Knowledge describes the experiences of each individual which progresses slowly and then accumulated can have an impact on other people in an environment (Santoso, 2016). Humans as individuals are creators of social reality that tend to be free in their social environment, while social reality is facts and realities that occur in society, in other words reality is a social construction created by individuals. This makes social construction so that each individual can validly develop a stimulus and response to a social reality, a truth that is considered relative. The basic theory of constructivism is not something single, but has two main ideas that are the same according to Burning, Scraw, Norby, & Ronning (2004), namely a person is active in constructing his own knowledge and the construction of knowledge comes from social interaction (Supardan, 2016).

#### ➤ **Film**

Film is one of the mass media tools in the form of audio and visual, conveying messages, communicating ideas and ideas that are effective besides books. The message content and meaning of the reality of human life is depicted through a scene. Film creates aesthetic works that also function as an information tool, educational tool, entertainment tool, political tool and on the other hand plays a role in spreading new cultural values. According to Hafied (Sudarto, 2015) film is a work of art born from a creative process that demands freedom in creativity (Panuju Redi, 2019).

Film functions as a social reflection, namely as a means to see oneself. There are different sides in a film, the first is that the film depicts reality paradoxically or contrary to reality, the second is that films are an idea that should help improve reality (Panuju, 2019). As the creativity of filmmakers develops, films are used as a platform to represent certain types of violence against women, which always depicts the status of women whose only place is at home, housewives and caregivers, dependent on men, unable to make important decisions and often even become sexual objects, fetish objects, patriarchal performance pattern objects, harassment and violence objects and always being the one to blame (Sari, 2022).

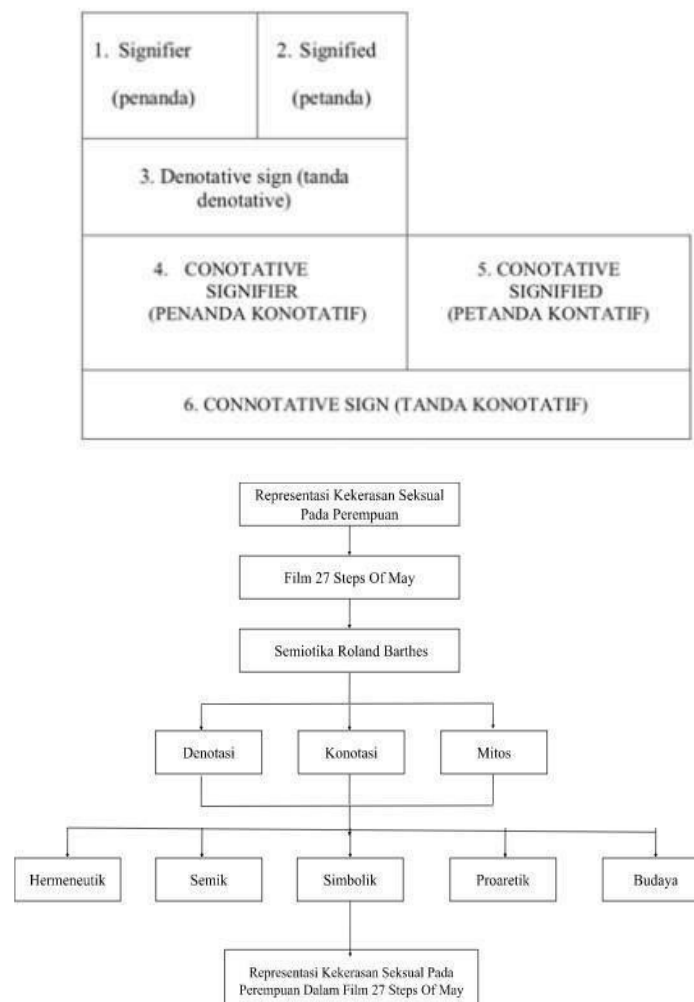
Movies burst into everyday life. Making a film is not as short as it is watched, it requires a long process and time. Contains the form of visualization and content, where there is a thought process in the form of ideas, ideas and stories that will be presented as well as

technical processes in the form of artistic skills to realize ideas and ideas so that they are worthy of being watched by the public. One of the films that raises social issues is 27 Steps Of May, a psychology drama genre that tries to present a real portrait of victims of sexual violence living in deep fear and trauma. Without understanding, this film is just an ordinary drama film (Giannetti, 2014).

### ➤ Semiotics of Roland Barthes

Art Van Zoest said that semiotics comes from the Greek "Semeion" which means sign, so semiotics is a study process in the form of signs. Likewise, according to Zoest, identifying semiotics is a branch of study of signs as well as those related to signs such as sign systems and processes for sign users (Lantowa et al., 2017, p. 1). The definition of a sign itself is a representation of something on the basis of social conventions that occurred before, for example an ambulance with a siren has a sign that there are patients or victims who need immediate help (Wahjuwibowo, 2018, p. 4).

Roland Barthes' concept of semiotics is an adaptation of Saussure, the concept of signifier and signified was developed by Barthes into denotative meanings that refer to words, sign relationships with references and connotative meanings refer to symbols that have more than the meaning of the reference (Dewantari, 2020). Barthes' contribution to semiotics in communication as a science that examines the process of creating meaning that originates from the human relationship to objects because of the relationship between signifiers and signifieds in the object (Vera, 2014, p. 26).



(Source: Researcher's own)

## METHODOLOGY

The analytical method in this study uses semiotics, according to Zoest in (Lantowa et al., 2017, p. 1) is a branch of science that is used to study signs and everything related to signs such as sign systems and processes that apply to sign users. This study uses the semiotic method of Roland Barthes to be able to show denotative meaning as a marker of first level significance which is objective and refers to objects. Meanwhile, the connotative meaning is a marker of the second level of significance which is subjective and varied in that the marker has openness or implicit and indirect meaning so that it has the possibility of a new interpretation (Vera, 2014). Semiotic research has the goal of knowing the hidden meaning in a message both verbally and non-verbally (Vera, 2014). Therefore, the researcher uses Roland Barthes' semiotics in order to explain the signs of sexual violence in the film 27 Steps Of May (Triary Hardy & Susilo, 2022).

Data collection techniques in qualitative research can be reached by means of interviews, observation, documentation, and combination/triangulation (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). Film is a form of document in the form of a work with narration, the data collection technique used is document study. Document study is defined as a data collection technique that is carried out indirectly directly to research subjects in order to obtain data and information related to the object under study (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018).

To produce concrete data, researchers need to study documents to support research (Sugiyono, 2013). Document studies are divided into two types, namely primary data obtained directly from the events that occurred, in this case the researcher used the film 27 Steps Of May. Meanwhile, Secondary Data is obtained from a second party who rewrites the event without experiencing the event. In this case researchers use books, journals and websites as research supporting data (Vera, 2014).

This study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis technique to find representations in films, the concepts of denotation and connotation are fundamental in studying semiotics (Wahjuwibowo, 2018, p. 21). Through a simpler version, Barthes explains denotative as a primary sign, while connotative as a secondary sign.



(Source: Wahjuwibowo, 2018.)

The map above depicts a denotative sign consisting of 1 signifier and 2 signified, as well as a denotative sign or sign is a connotative marker or signifier (1). Meanwhile, in Roland Barthes' semiotics, connotative is not just an additional meaning but is contained as the two denotative parts that underlie its existence.

In this case, a sign must be able to present things that can be absorbed by the senses, have differences from each other and are not considered as signs. In order for a sign to be absorbed and run according to its function, it must meet these standards, this is what is called a code. The validity of a sign is influenced by a code, so there are five applied codes from Roland Barthes according to Sobur in (Darma, 2022), as follows:

1) Hermeneutic Code, are units that function to articulate a problem, solution, and various events that can formulate the problem.

2) Semik Code, a code that utilizes cues, clues, or "glimpses of meaning" generated by certain markers so that they can give connotations based on research studies conducted.

3) Symbolic Code, code "grouping" or configuration that is easily recognized because it appears regularly repeated through various textual means and means.

4) Proairetic code, is an action code based on the ability to rationally determine the results or consequences of an action which implies a logic of human behavior, in the form of actions that produce impacts, each of which has its own common name (Wahjuwibowo, 2018)

5) Cultural Code

Is a code that has a form resembling an anonymous and authoritative collective voice that originates from human experience based on something that is confirmed as generally accepted knowledge or wisdom.

## RESULTS

### A. Raihaanun as May



(Source: Nainggolan 2019)

May is the main character in this film, depicted as a victim of sexual violence who experiences mental and physical trauma. The incident started when May was heading home, she was confronted by a group of people who then raped her. May, who was previously a jovial figure, has now turned into a very introverted and withdrawn from outside life including her father. He goes through life with repetitive routines and with a blank stare. May is very afraid of making physical contact with other people, even if that person is the father.

## **B. Lukman Sardi as The Father**



(Source: Movieden, 2019)

Mr. May is a single parent and only lives alone with his daughter. The dark incident that happened to his daughter made the father disappointed and angry with himself because he was considered a failure to protect his daughter. Father's daily life is to help May make dolls to sell and become a boxer. Fighting in the boxing ring is not solely as a profession, but to vent his feelings of disappointment and guilt. The greater the feeling of disappointment, the fiercer the father fights in the boxing ring. The figure of the father is the opposite when at home, he is so gentle and caring to May.

## **C. Ario Bayu as The Magician**



(Source: Nainggolan, 2019)

The character of a magician in this film is one of the triggers for the main character to find a turning point as a victim of sexual violence. Through her magic tricks, May and magicians communicate with each other. This slowly allows the magician to enter into May's life and learn about the dark events that happened to her.



**D. Verdi Sulaiman as Courier**






The existence of a courier character gives a different picture. Apart from helping her father sell the dolls he made, he is a courier who is humorous and someone trusted by his father to help him so that May can recover from her trauma.

**E. Analysis of the Representation of Sexual Violence against Women in the Film 27 Steps of May**

**A. Syntagmatic Study of Scene 1 (Significance of First Stage)**

Table 4.2: Denotation Meaning of Scene 1

Visual	<div data-bbox="842 1234 1520 1563"></div> <div data-bbox="1121 1563 1230 1597">Frame 1</div> <div data-bbox="842 1630 1520 1921"></div> <div data-bbox="1121 1921 1230 1955">Frame 2</div>
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	 <p>Frame 3</p>
Audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "muffled scream" (1:50:11 - 1:50:05)</li> <li>- "crying"(1:50:03 - 1:50:00)</li> <li>- <i>May..May. Ada apa May?</i>(1:49:40 - 1:49:27)</li> </ul> <p>BGM : Instrumental</p>
Frame Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Long shot</i></li> <li>- <i>Medium close up</i></li> <li>- <i>Medium shot</i></li> </ul>

May was brutally raped by a group of thugs. However, May could only cry and whimper in fear. The background of the scene moves to the front of the house, the father who is surprised to see May walking in a tattered uniform then approaches him and asks in a worried tone, occasionally shaking his shoulder but May with a blank stare immediately runs away from the father (Sugiyono, 2010).

Table 4.3: Denotation Meaning of Scene 1



<i>Signified</i> (Penanda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May di dekap oleh seseorang dari arah belakangsambil membungkuk.</li> <li>- May menangis dengan keadaan badantertelungkup.</li> <li>- May dengan tatapan kosong dan bapak yangmemegang lengan May menggunakan keduatangannya.</li> </ul>
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<i>Signifier</i> (Petanda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May diseret kearah belakang dan mencobamemberikan beban dengan cara membungkuk.</li> <li>- May berada dalam situasi menakutkan dan lemah.</li> <li>- Bapak berusaha menyadarkan May dari tatapankosongnya.</li> </ul>
Makna Denotasi	May sebagai perempuan memiliki kelemahan dari sisi fisik dan tenaga dibanding dengan laki-laki, akibatnya kerap menjadi sasaran aksi kekerasan. Datang dengan penampilan yang kacau , bapak sebagai pihak orangtuamerasa cemas dengan kondisi anaknya.

Based on the meaning of denotation or the significance of the first stage in the three frames above, there is a weak side that women have, namely physically and physically, especially if there is more than one opponent. This is seen from a cultural perspective, women tend to be positioned as inferior (Purwanti. S. H, 2021, p. 7). It is this weakness and powerlessness that becomes an opening for men to commit violence. The violence shown in the scene is sexual violence, seen when there is a physical touch that is too close between a woman and a man by smothering them from behind. Sexual violence is part of the violence that generally occurs in various ways.

#### **B. Syntagmatic Study Scene 2 (Significance of First Stage)**

Table 4.4: Denotation Meaning of Scene 2

Visual	<div data-bbox="820 230 1485 600">  </div> <p data-bbox="1091 600 1198 629">Frame 1</p> <div data-bbox="809 667 1497 1048">  </div> <p data-bbox="1091 1048 1198 1077">Frame 2</p> <div data-bbox="809 1115 1497 1473">  </div> <p data-bbox="1091 1514 1198 1543">Frame 3</p>
Audio	<ul data-bbox="802 1599 1430 1733" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>"Kamu punya rahasia apa? kamu bisa cerita sama saya"</i>(23:27 – 23:23)</li> <li>- (20:49 - 20:44)</li> <li>- (21:40 - 21:37)</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="756 1733 1007 1762">BGM : Instrumental</p>

Frame Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Medium close up</i></li> <li>- <i>Medium shot</i></li> <li>- <i>Grup Shot</i></li> </ul>
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At that time, May and the magician were dancing and telling a little about May's secret. The atmosphere turned tense, when the magician suddenly kissed him on the cheek area. Suddenly May remembered the dark events in her past and left the place with an angry face. This incident flashes back scene after scene about the physical and mental torture she received at that time, such as the body being placed on the table to be stared at with a look full of desire, feeding May food forcefully and roughly, and burning the still-lit cigarette at her wrist. may.

Table 4.5: Denotation Meaning of Scene 2

<i>Signified</i> (Penanda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Terlihat pesulap mendekatkan wajahnya ke arahwajah May.</li> <li>- Terlihat tiga orang laki-laki telanjang sedang mengerubungi May yang berada di posisi tengah.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sundutan rokok yang mendarat dipergelangan tangan May.</li> </ul>
<i>Signifier</i> (Petanda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pesulap tersebut mencium May pada area pipi.</li> <li>- Tiga laki-laki tersebut sedang mencabuli May.</li> <li>- May mendapat siksaan fisik.</li> </ul>
<i>Makna Denotasi</i>	May sebagai korban kekerasan seksual harus kembali teringat oleh peristiwa yang mengerikan dan mencekam. Akibat dari sang pesulap yang secara tiba-tiba mencium pipi May, ia kembali mengingat adegan dimana tiga laki-laki tersebut mencabuli dan menyerangnya secara fisik.

- Medium Close Up is found in the magician who is kissing May's cheek area. In addition, Medium Close Up also focuses on May's expression when she is crying, so that the audience can see emotions, behavior and body language when conveying a meaning (Brown, 2016)

- Medium Shot when May walks with an empty stare, while the father asks while holding May's arm as well as an act of sexual violence where

e the three men molested and physically assaulted her.

- Group Shot shows May's hand (bottom) being physically tortured by the perpetrator (top) burning a lit cigarette (Musnan, 2016).

## 2) Shooting Angle

It can be seen that the shooting in this scene is an eye level that lasts from minutes 1:50:11 - 1:49:27 and 23:27 - 23:23. In addition, there is a high angle technique which shows the position of May's hands (below), while the position of the perpetrator's hand (above). That matter describes loneliness, weakness and helplessness (Baskin, 2013).

## 3) Lighting Techniques

Lighting uses a low key lighting technique that lasts from the beginning to the end of the scene. It depicts a dramatic impression and is used for intimate, mysterious, gloomy and gripping scenes (Landau, 2014).

## 4) Non-Verbal Messages

### a. facial

- You can see May wrinkling the wrinkled forehead area accompanied by teary eyes and an open mouth because she let out a groan can give the meaning that she is in a situation of tension, anxiety and doubt (Navarro, 2018)

- May's face was flat with a blank stare. Body language is present spontaneously so it is unlikely to be able to lie about the current situation (Musman, 2016). As did May with a flat face and blank stare is interpreted as a problem.

### b. gesture

- May bent her body aiming to give a burden to those who pulled her.

- May's hand tightly gripped the edge of the table.

- Your father's finger gripped May's shoulder. Touch can be loving, sensual, gentle, or caring. A touch can be loaded with various meanings (Navarro, 2018). Likewise, the father's tight grip on May's shoulder is interpreted as a concern.

### c. Environment

- Room. The hallways are quiet and dim. Lonely and dark places are often used as grounds for committing crimes. The setting where the conversation takes place and a building is a process of nonverbal communication (Musman, 2016).

### d. Costume

- May's clothes are tattered and father's plain clothes tend to be dark in color.

## **B. Paradigmatic Study (Second Stage Significance)**

In the paradigmatic study stage it is carried out to find connotative meanings, where previously researchers have found denotative meanings in syntagmatic studies. Paradigmatics aims to determine the connotation signs which are analyzed through Roland Barthes' five codes, as follows:

### 1) Hermeneutic Code

The Hermeneutic Code addresses the practice of sexual violence, in this film showing May receiving acts of sexual violence from a group of unknown men. Sexual violence includes rape committed by one party without the consent of the other party.

Supported by the scene of May being held from behind and then dragging her somewhere, one can see how women are treated and seen as physically weak (Purwanti, 2021). The occurrence of this phenomenon is based on the assumption of the dominant party, namely men who tend to position women as inferior (Purwanti. S. H, 2021, p. 7). In the midst of today's modern era, the practice of sexual violence is still rife. In general, sexual violence is closely related to acts of violence against women (Mundakir, 2022). Sexual violence is an act of assault that is both physical and non-physical. In this film, May's character gets raped which leads to the area of her sexuality and the physical violence she gets by lighting a cigarette into May's hand. In addition, the abuse that May got when the magician suddenly kissed May's cheek and that was without her consent (Lantowa et al., 2017). Without the will or consent of the other party, this is included in the category of sexual violence, because there are two important elements, namely the element of coercion and the element of the victim being unable or unable to give consent (Mundakir, 2022).

## 2) Semik Code

Connotative code that utilizes the clues and meanings generated by certain markers. Using the *mise en scene* technique, it is explained as follows:

### a. Image Capturing Techniques

The long shot technique is taken through camera movements that display everything from head to toe, this aims to emphasize the delivery of the dynamics of interrelated character placement relationships (Gianetti, 2017). Seen in minutes (1:50:11 - 1:50:05), it shows that there is a relationship between perpetrators of sexual violence and victims of sexual violence. In this case, the long shot technique is used to convey the deep sadness felt by the subject (Akurifai, 2013).

The medium close up technique is also used in this film which aims to clearly show the dominating characters and emotions (Gianetti, 2017). In the minute (1:50:03 - 1:50:00) the focus is on describing the ongoing situation of sexual violence, May's crying shows that she is in a bad condition. Likewise, at the minute (23:27 – 23:23) when the magician suddenly kisses May's cheek. The audience can see emotions, behavior, body language when conveying a meaning (Brown, 2016).

The medium shot technique for describing the subject when conveying information (Gianetti, 2017) is found in minutes (1:49:40 - 1:49:27. Emphasizes the relationship between father and son. The father who found May in a daze and a blank stare indicated that May was in a bad condition. In addition, at the minute (20:49 – 20:44) where three men were seen torturing and surrounding May naked, this was a sign that May was involved in an act of sexual violence. Finally, the group shot technique at the minute (21:40-21:37) shows May's hand as a victim of sexual violence (bottom) being physically abused by the perpetrator (top) by burning a lit cigarette. This technique is used to address interactions between one another (Gianetti, 2017)

### b. Shooting Angle

Based on observations, most eye level techniques were used from the first minute to the end of the study, namely 1:50:11-1:49:27 and 23:27- 20.44. Eye level is located in a position equivalent to the observer's height (Gianetti, 2017). Characters and situations are clearly described in those minutes.

### c. Lighting (Nurcahyo, 2019)

The lighting technique uses low key lighting during the research scene at minutes 1:50:11-1:49:27 and 23:27-20.44. Dark color tones give the impression of a tense, dramatic atmosphere and deep emotion to the subject (). In all the scenes observed, it is clear that

the gloomy and emotional impression of May who was a victim of sexual violence (Tempo.co et al., 2014).

### **3) Symbolic Code**

The symbolic code is defined as the non-verbal messages contained in this film, including facials, gestures, environment, and costumes which are explained as follows (Kurniati, 2016):

#### **a. Facial (facial expression)**

Facial expressions appear when May moves the forehead area accompanied by an open mouth as a sign of shouting (1:50:03), the appearance of body movements, especially facial expressions, usually shows emotion, also known as affect display (Kurniati, 2016). When the incident of sexual assault took place, May cried and even screamed with all her might hoping the men would let her go, unfortunately they were indifferent to May's pleas. The disproportionate and selfish power of the perpetrators led May to be entangled in sexual violence which traumatized her for 8 year (Nurcahyo, 2019)s. After that, May was allowed to go home, she walked along the place of detention until she arrived home in a tense and dazed state, as illustrated by her straight face and blank stare (1:49:40). The above conditions mean that you are in a situation of tension, doubt and anxiety (Navarro, 2018).

#### **b. gesture**

The gesture in this film is shown when May bends when someone hugs her from behind (1:50:11), she tries to put a burden on him to make it difficult for the person to pull, but May's incomparable energy finally brings him into a tense situation. You can also see May's hand holding tightly to the edge of the table, the scene takes place when May tries to be raped (1:50:03), this action gives the meaning that there is a huge resistance (Kurniati, 2016). By adjusting body language, you can easily catch the meaning (Musman, 2016). Apart from that, the strong grip of the father's hand on May's arm because he found his child dressed disorganized and walking with an empty look, the worried father immediately came over and asked what was happened (1:49:40). Touch can be full of various meanings, in this case attention (Navarro, 2018).

#### **c. Environment**

The environment can show the situation when something happened, as a film that depicts the issue of sexual violence, it must be accompanied by a supportive environment so that it gives a distinct impression to the audience. Throughout the duration of the research, the environment was found to have quiet alleyways, rooms with minimal lighting and lots of piles of stuff. Dark and lonely situations often become grounds for committing crimes (Musman, 2016).

#### **d. Costume**

The use of a high school uniform indicates that May is a young girl generally 16-18 years old. This status shows that she is a young girl who is innocent and weak so that she is vulnerable to being the target of crime, in this case sexual violence. Supported by his tattered uniform is a sign there has been violence in the minute (1:49:40). Likewise with the father, wearing plain dark clothes, the way the father dresses interprets the chaotic situation, in this case his son who is a victim of sexual violence (Kurniati, 2016).

### **4) Proairetic Code**

The action depicted in the scene above is a patriarchal culture. The greater the dominance of men over women, the stronger the tendency for injustice to women to occur, which results in acts of violence, in this case sexual violence (You, 2021). Sexual violence includes rape committed by one party without the consent of the other party. Patriarchal



culture is shown where it places men as the dashing dominant party and tend to act arbitrarily to women (Ridwan & Adji, 2019). May is described as a victim of patriarchal culture, she is treated unfairly by being raped, these scenes are available at minutes 1:50:11, 1:50:03, 23:27, 20:49 and 21:40. The impact of the patriarchal actions that May experienced was loss of self-image, severe trauma such as being confined at home without any interaction from the outside world, self-harm behavior (self harassment). Not only was May the victim, but the father punished himself because he thought he had failed to provide protection.

#### 5) The Gnostic or Cultural Code

In the cut scene above, the culture implied in this film is acts of sexual violence based on patriarchal culture that is embedded in the social order. Shows how May was treated unfairly to the detriment of her image. Understanding of patriarchal culture brings men to act freely in treating women (Fuady, 2021; Wahjuwibowo, 2018). A patriarchal culture that places its ego over women, as illustrated in the scene when May is pulled to be held captive and then her body is exploited to satisfy the uncontrolled lust of men. May was forced to be willing to become their object by positioning her body face down on the table, May mustered up her ability to scream and cry but the helplessness of women in this scene was dominated by the ego of men. Apart from that, there is a scene where May is treated very roughly, the three men sit May on the porch holding her body in an open position, they stare at May's body as an objectification. Based on these scenes which show acts of sexual violence, this film represents patriarchal actions that dominate and oppress.

### DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research described in the previous sub-chapter, it was found that there were verbal, nonverbal and ideological signs that represented sexual violence against women. The existence of films provides an overview of messages and meanings regarding the reality of life in audio and visual form for each audience, films should help improve reality (Panuju, 2019).

The phenomenon of sexual violence is still taboo to be discussed by some people. Because film is a forum for reflection, the ideology of sexual violence is seen primarily from the rape of May as the main character in the film *27 Steps Of May*. Becoming a victim of sexual violence is not easy, apart from having to face many obstacles because you have to live through the trauma you also have to struggle to get back to a decent life.

Of all the scenes analyzed, nonverbal signs in the film *27 Steps Of May* are detailed using Roland Barthes' semiotics through two stages of significance including syntagmatic studies (Angelia & Susilo, 2023) and paradigmatic studies, and are supported by five codes consisting of hermeneutic, semiotic, symbolic, proairetic and gnostic or cultural. Other nonverbal signs are supported and strengthened through cinematographic glasses by applying shooting techniques, angles of view and lighting. These elements help present a better visual, as if the audience is also feeling the emotions played by the characters. The aim is to reveal the denotative, connotative and mythical meanings in the film *27 Steps of May* (Brown, 2016).

Through the five codes of Roland Barthes found elements of sexual violence that occur in women. Sexual violence is shown by the character May who is held captive and then has sex with three unknown people. The scene cut above shows signs of sexual violence such as being held captive from behind, molested by several men, even received physical violence. Throughout the cut scenes, May is depicted as a depressed, anti-social and prolonged emotional person, this proves the impact that is felt is not only a physical matter, but a deep psychological one.

Based on the Hermeneutic code, the practice of sexual violence is often experienced by women. The selfish male side considers himself superior so that he easily dominates women's rights. The lack of humanity by minorities has deprived women of their rights to feel safe, protected and free in all fields. The rise of sexual violence is also caused by a value system that still positions women as weak and below, sexual violence against

women is also multifactorial. Sexual violence always coexists with physical violence. In this film, it is shown through a rape scene which is a sexual activity carried out by force by a group of men without involving consent from May's side. Not satisfied there, the group of men even physically tortured them by sticking a cigarette into May's wrist.

Furthermore, the semicoding code which shows the connotative meaning of the act of sexual violence presented in different shots, the shooting of May when she got the action in the technique of long shot, medium close up, medium shot and group shot. Variations of this technique present various points of view to give their own meaning to the audience (Gianetti 2017), shooting angles are assessed to position the audience as if they were in the storyline. In addition, the lighting was made low key, further emphasizing the gloomy conditions that occurred. Through the angle of shooting, acts of rape are carried out when the victim is in a situation of fear and is under threat.

Then, a symbolic code that shows a non-verbal message that every woman who has experienced sexual violence in her body and mind is certain there was such great resistance, that they resisted with all their might. In the scene above, May's resistance is to scream, the scream is muffled by a hand clutching her mouth. Followed by the post-rape scene, May's face tends to be flat and pale, showing deep fear and anxiety. Raising the issue of violence, the environment in this scene is made to seem empty and dramatic, while at the same time making the audience enter into that situation. Her status as a young girl is said to be innocent and weak and often becomes the target of crime by men in order to fulfill her sexual needs.

Patriarchal culture is found in proairetic codes, the existence of gender-based social practices often forms a social order that reflects patriarchal dominance, men dominating women by taking all matters both in domestic and social life (You, 2021). May is described as a victim of patriarchy which brings her into a frantic situation, this film sexual violence originates from male domination, but in its completion it also involves male characters (You, 2021). The scenes of sexual violence that are committed are based on what men are actually capable of, not what is based on a woman's point of view. Stereotypes regarding women's powerlessness and weakness are depicted in this film, on the other hand the potential for resistance that women should be able to do is then hidden due to highlighting male domination.

Sexual violence experienced by women is one of the results of a patriarchal culture that is deeply rooted in Indonesia. In the paradigm of radical feminism, patriarchy is the most basic domination by men over women and considers women as objects, in other words it is the duty of men to become objects of their sexual fantasies (Sari, 2022). As in the above cut scenes which tend to show more powerlessness of women. For example, May, who was brutally fucked by an unknown man, was not satisfied with only sexually assaulting her, May also get physically abused. The details of women's expressions of powerlessness also strengthen the point of view of objectification of women (Purtanti & Hendriyani, 2022).

The film 27 Steps of May has not yet presented a woman's point of view on how fair and acceptable social conditions should be. Women as victims of sexual violence are interpreted according to the prevailing stereotypes in society, namely weak and powerless over power, tend to sink and depend on the role of men around them. The social stigma regarding sexual violence is still very taboo to be discussed in society, so there are minimal reports of these acts because victims are often blamed and cornered for what happened to them, this is an indication of victim blaming (Sari, 2022).

In the film 27 Steps of May it is not just showing sexual violence, but showing the audience the reality of patriarchal culture which is still commonplace while the impact of this culture, in this case sexual violence, is still considered taboo (Brilio.net, 2019; Komnas Perempuan, 2021). It is considered a scourge so that many are not aware of and see the forms of sexual violence against women and the impacts they experience. Unfortunately, this film has not been able to show the character of women's empowerment in fighting oppression and other forms of domination. (Anindya et al., 2020)

## CONCLUSION

In general, films are a reflection of the reality that occurs in everyday life. This is the case with the film *27 Steps Of May*, which depicts sexual violence as occurring because of patriarchal attitudes that regard women as weak and powerless. However, in practice the phenomenon of sexual violence is still taboo to be discussed by some people. In the film *27 Steps of May*, women are depicted as helpless, weak and always need a role from men in their life. On the other hand, the image of patriarchal culture is depicted by men who are manly and have the freedom to intimidate.

Based on an analysis of the film *27 Steps of May* through Roland Barthes' five semiotic codes, it was found that this film represented sexual violence due to patriarchal culture which was described verbally and non-verbally using syntagmatic analysis to find denotative meanings, paradigmatic studies to find connotative meanings and reading the five codes. Among others: hermeneutic, semimic, symbolic, proairetic, gnomonic or cultural.

The results of the study show that there are scenes with elements of sexual violence and patriarchal culture, where sexual violence is based on the existence of patriarchal culture. This has resulted in the formation of certain stereotypes against women which causes sexual violence to occur, victim blaming is a form of environmental or societal discrimination against victims of events that have occurred.

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