

## Representation of Virginity Value in the Surprised Marriage Series (Roland Barthes Semiotics Analysis)

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### Abstract

*Film has a great influence in shaping people's mindsets. The message or value contained in the film is certainly able to influence the audience both cognitively, affectively and conatively. Webseries Shocked Marriage is a series that tells the story of Lalita who is considered to have lost her virginity due to an accident. By using a qualitative approach with the perspective of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to understand the denotative, connotative meanings, and myths of virginity contained in the Kaget Nikah webseries. The research data collection technique was obtained from the Shocked Marriage series by taking screenshots of images as primary sources and then classifying categories and linking them with Barthes' semiotic analysis. And secondary sources are obtained from books, printed and electronic articles, scientific journals and theses related to this research. The results show that the concept of virginity circulating in the community is interpreted the same way in the Shocked Marriage webseries. the membrane of blood and blood that comes out on the first night is interpreted as a symbol of female virginity. The blood membrane is used as a benchmark for a woman's virginity status with various characteristics, forms, causes, and others. The public perception of the integrity of the blood membrane that has been constructed is just a myth that appears and develops in people's lives.*

### Keywords

virginity; hymen; woman; representation; semiotics; webseries shocked by marriage



## I. Introduction

In today's era, information and information technology is developing very rapidly. All information and phenomena that occur around the world can be accessed easily and quickly without restrictions. However, every change and development that occurs will definitely have a good or bad impact. Advances in technology and informatics have had a major impact on the development of the media. Media itself is a secondary human need, without us realizing it, the media is able to manifest and become a liaison to convey phenomena or the reality of society through creative elements that can be easily understood by all levels of society, namely in the form of films. Film is one of the effective media in delivering messages. Film is an audio-visual medium that is a mass communication medium that is packaged into a story to the public with creative elements that are entertaining and in accordance with the message flow to be conveyed to the public.

The message in the film is able to influence the audience both cognitively, affectively and conatively. Even the film is able to attract the feelings of the audience, thus allowing the audience to be involved and feel what is told in the film (Vivian, 2008). Film, socially can be a means of social criticism through its power in representing social reality. Films are able to convey or provide an assessment of film writers for a group or issue to

the formation of stereotypes (Perdana, 2014). According to Graeme Turnen, the film is not only a reflection of reality, which only transfers reality to the screen without changing reality. However, film is also a representation of the reality of society in which films shape and re-present reality based on the codes, conventions and ideologies of culture (Sobur 2006:127).

Films that are slowly starting to develop and are brought to the surface show feminism-themed storylines, but it is undeniable that there are still many films made that represent women in a weak position and make women as objects, both objects of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and not having an independent personality. Physical appearance is always prioritized because it can increase profits and can shape people's perceptions of women. This is able to make the public or the audience as spectators can think stereotypically to the female figure. Women are essentially a message that is being communicated in a patriarchal culture.

In a film usually depicted the relationship between women and men, but most films make men become more dominant, this shows a patriarchal culture that is still very embedded in the minds of the community or audience, which places men as the highest power holders in roles. leadership whether in social, political or domination.

The patriarchal culture itself is still very difficult to be abandoned or forgotten, especially in developing countries with eastern customs that are still very strong, this patriarchal culture is still strongly held by most individuals with different social, character and geographical conditions.

Patriarchy has been entrenched for centuries in the social life of society. A culture that is based on the difference in the biological facts of men and women, places women as an inferior party dominated by men. The female body is like a moral guardian for men. Women should be secretive, not drink alcohol, and not have sex before marriage. Patriarchal norms, require a chastity or purity of a woman to be presented to her husband when married later.

According to Michel Foucault, the discourse of power is closely related to sex and power. Virginity is a form of mastery over the female body. In the virginitas discourse, women become the cornered party. In 2018 on AshrafAriff's Curiouscat.live account there was an anonymous person who said that he had just been divorced by his husband because no blood came out when they had sex. Even in Indonesia some time ago virginity tests were also held for prospective military and police registrants. However, the virginity test has now been abolished by the TNI since June 14, 2021 in Juknis Number B/1372/VI/2021 regarding the improvement of technical guidelines. However, socially, virginity is still a sensitive social norm for women. Such a social phenomenon is evidence of a close relationship between power and institutionalized sexuality.

Based on the urgency of the problem above, the theme that will be studied in this research is the discourse on the value of virginity or virginity value which is included in gender studies. As for the media used, I chose webseries which cinematically belongs to the realm of film studies. chosen webseries is Shocked Marriage which broadly raises the issue of sexuality regarding the value of virginity.

Webseries Shocked Marriage begins with a young girl celebrating her 19th birthday in Alaska, United States. However, this plan failed due to his sister's divorce. Lalita's sister was divorced because she was deemed not to meet the criteria for the son-in-law of her husband's family because she was not a virgin. After the incident, Lalita's parents became more protective and had to always have her blood membrane checked, for fear that Lalita would lose her virginity like her sister. Until a heartbreaking incident that had to be experienced by Lalita who was considered to have lost her virginity due to the tearing of

the blood membrane caused by an accident she experienced and was forced to marry Andre, the young man who helped her.

In summary, webseries has unwittingly represented virginity as a problem in society. shows how the virginity of women as sacred and a condition in a marriage. This was then fostered by protective family rules in taking care of their daughters. This phenomenon has become the interest of researchers in seeing how the value of virginity is represented in the webseries Shocked MarriageThe objectives of this study include: To explore the representation of the value of female virginity based on Roland Barthe's Semiotics theory, by denotation, connotation and myth in the film Kaget Nikah. Therefore, it is hoped that it can enrich the study of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and provide knowledge about the meaning of the concept of virginity in social construction.

## II. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Concept of Virginity

Virginity is a universally shared concept, referring to the absence of involvement in sexual relations. The term virginity is associated with women. According to Asri Supatmiati, virginity is the condition of a woman who has never had sex before marriage, where the membranes of the blood are still intact and not torn until the woman has sexual relations with a legal partner.

Clarissa W. Atkinson (qt. in Driver, 2004), There are two approaches to virginity: some people see virginity as a biological state and virginity is given to someone who has never had sexual intercourse and some people also believe that virginity is a moral or spiritual state - purity or humility.

In the life of patriarchal culture, virginity is associated with the integrity of the hymen, which will rupture and bleed at the first sexual intercourse. This hymen is a representation for the honor of chastity, so every woman is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the hymen until she gets married. Most of the society regards virginity as a virtue associated with purity, honor and morality. With the tearing of the hymen which signifies virginity, the honor of the family is also seen as destroyed.

In a 1998 article, "Commodifying Honor in Female Sexuality: Honor Killings in Palestine," Suzanne Ruggi wrote, Family status depends heavily on honor. , which is largely determined by the honor of her daughter, which can be irreparably damaged by the perceived abuse of their sexual orientation."

Women are required to always guard the hymen before their wedding night, as in Arab culture (El Kak, El Salibi , Yasmine, and Ghandour).Because the intact hymen symbolizes the purity and chastity of the woman, and to maintain family honor and and strengthen her marriage later (El Kak et al 155).But

basically and in fact virginity is only a social, cultural construction. and religion., is not a medical condition that can be proven by checking the hymen or more commonly known as a virginity test. Because basically virginity does not have a definite medical and scientific definition. This certainly shows that there is no specific definition describing the meaning of virginity. Because this is the meaning or meaning and value of virginity is different for everyone.

### 2.2 Semiotics

Semiotics is a science or analytical method to study a sign. Semiology is etymologically derived from the Greek semeion which means sign. In the world of

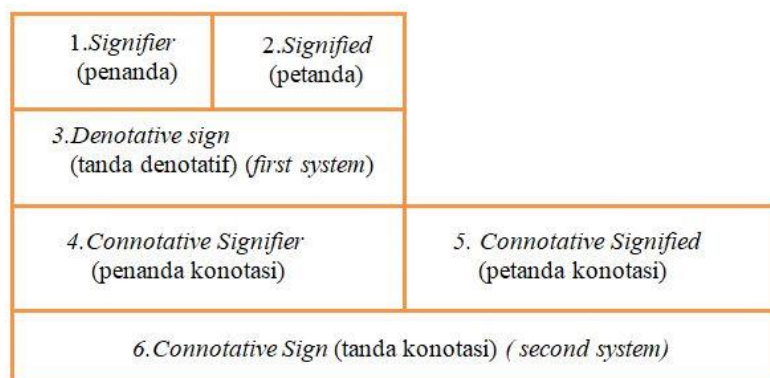
semiotics, Ferdinand Saussure played an important role in the birth of structuralism and introduced the concept of semiotics (*sémiologie*; Saussure, 1972: 33). According to Saussure in Suprpto (2009), a sign consists of a signifier and a signified. Markers are things that are said, written, or read. And a signified is a thought or concept (mental picture).

In its development, semiotics is one that was developed by Roland Barthes, who explained the theory of semiotics in detail. Roland Barthes is an important figure in the development of semiotics. Barthes is known as a structuralist figure who likes to practice language models and the successor of Ferdinand de Saussure in the field of semiotics.

Roland Barthes' semiotic theory developed from the theory put forward by Ferdinand Saussure, which discusses the formation and form of sentences that can determine meaning, but does not discuss the differences in meaning for each person according to situations and conditions (Sobur, 2009).

Like Ferdinand Saussure's point of view, Roland Barthes also ensures that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is not formed naturally, so Barthes perfects connotative semiotics, because Saussure only emphasizes meaning at the denotative level. He sees language as a sign system that reflects the assumptions of a particular society at a certain time (Sobur, 2013:63).

Roland Barthes developed two concepts of semiotics. The first is the concept of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, and the second concept is denotation and connotation (Hoed, 2011: 9-11). Barthes made a map of how signs work (Cobley & Jansz in Sobur, 2006: 69).



Source: Sobur, 2013:69

**Figure 1.** Roland Barthes Marker Map

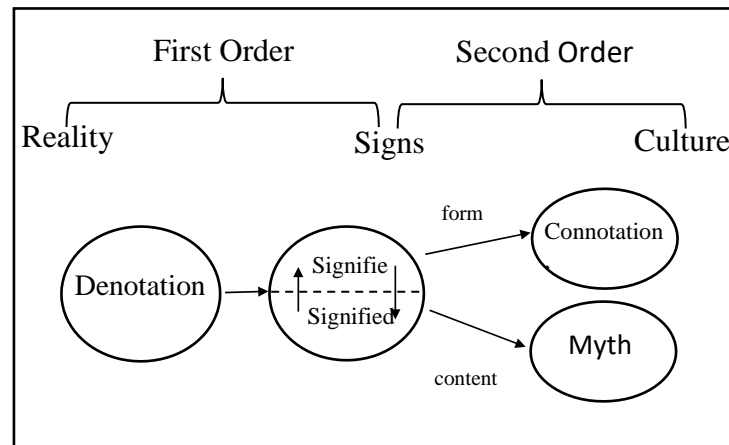
As can be seen from the picture above, (3) denotative meaning consists of (1) signifier and (2) signified. At the same time, the denotative sign becomes a connotative sign or the connotative meaning is determined by the denotative. In other words, this is a material element in Barthes' concept, a connotative sign not only has an additional meaning but also contains both parts of a denotative sign that support its existence.

Roland Barthes not only understands the process of marking, but also sees marking from another aspect, in the form of myths that mark a society. Myth is the term used by Barthe for ideology. In the concept map of the first stage of Barthes' semiotics, the elements contained in myth as semiotic are not visible, but this is only seen in the meaning of the second stage.

Roland Barthes' concept is called the Two Order of Signification or two-stage signification. Barthes' semiotic studies are simply described as denotation, connotation, and myth. In general, denotation is understood as the literal meaning or the real meaning. And connotation, synonymous with ideological operations, or words that have figurative

meanings or are not actual words, is also known as a myth, which serves to provide an expression or justification for dominant values that prevail in a certain period.

Barthes' perspective on myth is a hallmark of his semiology which provides a new realm in semiology, namely a deeper dig from signification to reach myths that work in people's daily realities. For Roland Barthes, the concept of myth in a general sense is language, he believes that myth is a system of communication and messages. In his description, he sees myth in a special sense as the development of connotations in which connotations formed in society have long been myths.



**Figure 2.** Two-stage significance Roland Barthes  
Source: Sobur, 2001:12

Figure 2 explains the significance in the first stage, namely the relationship between the signifier and the signified is denotation. And the second stage is connotation, which means subjective or at least intersubjective meaning (Fiske 1990:88 in Sobur, 2012: 128). This meaning is related to the content of signs that function through myth (Nawiroh Vera, 2014:30).

### III. Research Method

The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research which aims to describe a phenomenon in depth and comprehensively. By using the perspective of Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory using a two-stage significance model. The reason for choosing Roland Barthes' semiotics is because the three levels of meaning in Roland Barthes' semiotics are considered relevant to the myth of virginity that develops in society. Later, this study will explore each sign or symbol through scenes, characters and dialogues that include representations of virginity values contained in the *webseries* Kaget Nikah

The research data collection techniques were obtained from the Shocked Marriage series, taking screenshots of images as primary sources and secondary sources obtained from books, printed and electronic articles, scientific journals and theses related to this research.



#### IV. Result and Discussion

The *Kaget Nikah* series tells the story of Lalita who is considered to have lost her virginity due to a tear in her blood membrane caused by an accident and is forced to marry Andre, the young man who helps her.

It all started with the tragedy that happened to her sister Carissa, in which Carissa, who had just married one night, was returned to her parents, because they were deemed not to fit the criteria of the son-in-law of her husband's family. This is because there were no bloodstains which were considered a sign of Carissa's virginity on the bridal bed on the first night after they were married.





This made Carissa depressed and as a result of the incident, Lalita was also affected. Lalita must always have her blood test done and face the fact that all her plans to celebrate her 19th birthday have failed, because Lalita's parents are afraid that she will enter into promiscuity where she could lose her blood membrane and will experience the same thing as her sister, Carissa.

Until a heartbreaking incident that must be experienced by Lalita, where she had an accident that was not accidental with the son of her father's business friend Andre. And because of this accident, both of them had to be forced into marriage by their parents, to avoid slander from local residents and prevent what happened to her sister from happening to Lalita again.

After watching this webseries as a whole, the writer chose 3 scenes as material for this research. By using Roland Barthes semiotic analysis. In this case, the writer looks for the meaning of denotation, connotation and myth that represents virginity in the webseries *Kaget Nikah*.

In this scene 1, the conversation between Carissa's family and her husband Abi is shown. Which Carissa was returned by her husband's family to her family after the first night because Carissa was deemed not to meet the criteria as the daughter-in-law of the Abi family. This is due to the tradition of carrying out a blood test on the bride's bed after the first night, which is considered a sign of releasing Carissa's virginity.

Table. 1


Scene 1. Tradition and signs of holiness	
 <p>Tapi memeriksa ranjang pengantin anak kami setelah malam pengantin mereka.</p>  <p>Iu suatu tradisi dalam keluarga.</p>  <p>Tidak ada darah di seprai putih yang sudah kami sedakan.</p>  <p>Artinya, Carrisa tidak memenuhi kriteria sebagai menantu kami.</p>	<p>Denotation</p> <p>Based on the markers shown in the dialogue, it is revealed that Carrisa does not meet the criteria as a daughter-in-law of the Abi family, because there is no blood on the white sheets that have been prepared, which is a tradition in the Abi family. because of this, the sign in this case is that the Abi family only accepts daughters-in-law according to their family traditions. The sign is that the Abi family is a family that prioritizes tradition.</p> <p>In Indonesia this tradition is called the Cengkung Tradition which in this tradition, newly married couples are required to have husband-wife relationship or the first night on a white cloth that has been prepared. And after the couple has done this, the family of the man will check whether there is any blood on the white cloth. If there are blood spots on the white cloth, then the groom's family will hit the cengkung (small gong) and vice versa if no blood spots are found, the cengkung will not be sounded. And if this happens then the man has the right to choose to continue the marriage or return the bride to her family. But nowadays this tradition is no longer an obligation and not all families carry out this tradition.</p>

Connotations The	<p>connotations that exist are shown in this scene, namely the blood on the white sheets after the first night, which is considered a sign of female virginity. Because the main requirement to be accepted as a daughter-in-law in the Abi family, must be a woman who is still a virgin.</p> <p>The value of a woman's virginity is a symbol of greatness that has been recognized for a long time as a symbol of the purity of a woman who is awake, and can be the difference between a good woman and a woman with bad morals. Women who are able to maintain their virginity are considered as women who maintain their own chastity and are able to give a good name for themselves and their families. (Al-Ghifari, 2003).</p>
Myth	<p>The myth found in this scene is the myth of blood after the first night which is used as a sign of proof that women are still virgins until they get married. This myth has been developed long ago and has become the belief of some people until now. But the fact is that the absence of blood when having sex for the first time is not a sign of a woman's virginity. Bleeding or not is also determined by the level of irritation that occurs in the vagina. The absence of blood when having sex for the first time can be caused by lubrication or vaginal discharge during optimal foreplay, accompanied by the opening of the vaginal cavity, so that the penetration of the penis into the vagina does not injure the blood membrane. Apart from this, the cause of not bleeding is due to the elastic blood membrane.</p>

In this 2nd scene, it is shown that Lolita is angry, because her parents continue to do virginity tests on Lolita. This was done with the reason that he did not want Lolita to experience the same thing as Carissa.





Table.2

Scene 2. Virginity Test	
	
Denotation	<p>The marker in scene 2 is seen from the dialogue where Lolita states that it has been 3 months, her mother took her to the doctor to check her virginity. The sign in this scene Lolita is angry because her parents keep checking her virginity. It's a sign that Lolita's parents are afraid that Lolita will experience the same thing as Carissa.</p>
Connotation	<p>The connotation shown in this scene is the Virginity Test. This virginity test has developed in society for a long time, even in Indonesia itself, a virginity test is often used as a requirement in several agencies. The virginity test procedure is done by a pelvic exam or vaginal exam. This is done by checking the integrity of the blood membrane which is a sign of a woman's virginity. Reporting from <i>the International Society for Sexual Medicine</i>, the method of The virginity test that is often done is the "two finger" method. This method is done by inserting two fingers into the vaginal opening to check for blood membranes.</p>
Myths	<p>Myths about Virginity Tests have been around for a long time in society. People believe that a person's virginity can be seen or tested medically. But basically a woman's virginity cannot be seen or tested either medically or not. Basically the virginity test cannot provide information about a woman's virginity. In fact, gynecologists cannot know a woman's virginity. Because women's blood membranes have different structures and elasticity, and can change</p>

	<p>with age. According to WHO, the virginity test is an act of violation of human rights and is not scientific. Even this test has never actually been recognized and health workers should not do this virginity test. This is explained in the WHO handbook “Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence. This book also emphasizes that every physical examination can be carried out if there is consent and the human rights and comfort of a woman must be prioritized.</p>
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In the 3rd scene, it shows where Lalita's parents think that Lalita has lost her virginity because of the tearing of the blood membrane. And the tearing of Lalita's blood membrane became a big problem, which was the beginning of Lalita and Andre's marriage.

<b>Scene 3. Symbol of Virginity</b>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	
Denotation	<p>The marker that is shown is based on the dialogue in scene 3, where Lalita's parents are arguing because Lalita lost her girly symbol. It is a sign that Lalita's parents, especially her mother, are very shocked because Lalita has lost a very important symbol of virginity. The sign with the loss of the symbol of Lalita's virginity, means that Lalita is no longer a virgin.</p>
Connotation	<p>The connotation in this scene is a symbol of virginity. The blood membrane is a tissue located in the vagina. Usually, in society, the blood membrane is a symbol of virginity. When the blood membrane of a woman is torn, then the woman is considered no longer a virgin and vice versa if the membrane is not torn, it means that the woman is still a virgin. Though there are many factors that cause</p>

	the blood membrane to be damaged or torn.
Myth The	<p>myth of the blood membrane as a symbol of virginity has been a public belief for a long time. This myth has harmed many women. The fact is that blood membranes are actually not related to a woman's virginity.</p> <p>The blood membrane is a thin and elastic tissue. Every woman has a different shape, size, appearance and thickness. This changes as women get older. Not even all women have blood membranes. The blood membrane itself can tear due to strenuous activity and tearing the blood membrane does not always cause pain or bleeding.</p>

In the series, it actually tells the love journey of Lalita and Andre, which started because of the problem of virginity. This webseries presents virginity as a social construct which is something that has been decided as a cultural tradition. In this webseries, the shock of marriage, represents that the membranes of blood and blood that come out on the first night are interpreted as a symbol of female virginity. Although there is a scene where the doctor explains that the blood membrane is not a parameter for a woman to be a virgin or not.

Basically, tearing the hymen is not only caused by sexual intercourse but can also be caused by an injury, masturbation, frequent cycling, riding, using tampons, doing excessive sports, or having had medical procedures and so on. And the public perception of bleeding during sex the first time is just a myth of virginity. The truth is that every woman has a different form of blood membrane, there are even women who do not have a blood membrane. A woman who does not have a hymen from birth is due to the fact that during the process in the womb, the formation of the early fetus did not occur perfectly, which resulted in a woman being born without a blood membrane until the process of complete tissue division in the womb.

## V. Conclusion

The concept of virginity in Indonesia is something that has a high value. Virginity is used as a symbol to distinguish the chastity of a woman. When a woman releases her virginity before marriage, it is considered to have violated the values and norms of society. The concept of virginity of each individual is certainly different, but this cannot be separated from the perception of society that has been passed down from generation to generation. The concept of virginity circulating in the community is interpreted the same way in the Shocked Marriage webseries. Blood membranes are often used as a benchmark for a woman's virginity status with various characteristics, forms, causes, and others. People's perception of the integrity of the blood membrane that has been constructed is just a myth that appears and develops in people's lives.

Basically, is a woman's property or property that has been owned since birth, so it is a woman herself who has the right to give her virginity to whoever she chooses, without

any interference from the construction of patriarchal culture. And virginity also can not be symbolized from the membrane of blood or blood that comes out during intercourse on the first night. And virginity can not be associated with the morals or values of women.

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