

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF ROLAND BARTHES ON THE POSTER OF THE *FILM WOMEN FROM ROTE ISLAND*

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 20-05-2026

Revised : 07-06-2026

Accepted : 30-07-2026

KEYWORDS

Film Poster;
Roland Barthes;
Semiotics;
Visual meaning;
Women from Rote Island;

ABSTRACT

This study analysis the visual meaning of the film poster of *Women from Rote Island* by Jeremias Nyangoen using Roland Barthes semiotics, framing it as a political paratext representing the social experiences of women facing structural violence. Employing a qualitative method, a critical analysis of denotation, connotation, and myth is applied to the poster's visual and verbal elements, including the shackled female figure, dominant dark colours, wounded typography, festival awards, and credit titles. The results indicate that the poster constructs powerful imagery of the female body bound by violence, trauma, and unequal power relations. At the level of myth, the analysis reveals how the poster ideologically deconstructs patriarchal myths that normalize sexual violence as a fatalistic destiny or a domestic disgrace to be silenced. Simultaneously, it articulates a new myth regarding commercial cinema as a locus of collective witnessing that demands mass accountability. The unique contribution of this study lies in its theoretical proof of compressing macro-structural critique into a single, static graphic space ethically, without falling into pornographic exploitation or over-victimization. Ultimately, it demonstrates how a position-conscious poster integrates commercial-paratextual elements to elevate the personal trauma of peripheral groups into a legitimate visual advocacy movement within the public sphere.

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INTRODUCTION

A movie poster can be understood as a form of visual communication medium specifically designed to inform and persuade audiences to watch a film (Waltz & Prameswari, 2025). Rather than merely serving as a promotional complement, a poster functions as the face of the film, establishing the initial interaction with potential viewers (Guzel, 2023). Through a combination of visual elements such as illustration, photography, colour, typography, and composition, a poster attempts to arouse curiosity while conveying the genre, mood, and a brief glimpse of the storyline without revealing the entirety of the film (Chowdhury, 2021).

Within the context of visual communication design, a poster is understood as a medium that blends elements of imagery, lines, colours, and text, deliberately structured to attract attention while delivering messages in a concise, dense, and memorable manner (Islamudin et al., 2024). The primary characteristic of an effective poster is its ability to "shout"

amidst visual clutter, whether in physical public spaces or within digital spaces such as social media. Consequently, a movie poster must operate within a matter of seconds; upon a single glance, core information such as the film title, genre, mood, and release date must be immediately grasped by the audience.

As a visual medium, a poster possesses an essential communicative function in conveying messages directly and capturing public attention. In the context of film, a poster serves as an initial representation that frames the narrative and shapes audience expectations regarding the issues raised. The transition from a general discussion of poster functions to the specificities of the film *Women from Rote Island* must be bridged by an argument as to why the issue of sexual violence in peripheral regions like East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) requires a visual medium to be voiced.

Peripheral regions such as NTT face limited access to information and minimal dissemination of legal awareness to the public (Bait et al., 2024). Many people in NTT still exhibit antipathy toward cases of sexual violence and human trafficking (Nenohai, 2021). Cases of sexual violence in NTT surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching 564 cases in 2020 (Hale et al., 2022), while prevention efforts through socialization and education remain highly limited (Irfan et al., 2023). Visual media, including films and posters, become strategic instruments to overcome literacy and geographical barriers in peripheral regions while simultaneously building a collective awareness of the reality of violence experienced by women.

NTT is a province facing multidimensional issues regarding violence against women. The province is recorded as the third poorest province in Indonesia, with the population's average length of schooling being only 7.82 years, meaning it is still dominated by primary school graduates (Bait et al., 2024). This structural poverty and low human resource capacity create layered vulnerabilities for women. Data shows that cases of violence against women in NTT are generally closely linked to cultural traditions, such as the *belis* (bride price) tradition, which recorded 1,580 cases of violence against women (Mataradja, 2021). Sexual violence constitutes the most severe form of violence experienced by women, and its victims span all ages, from children to adult women (Baitanu et al., 2023). NTT Province also ranks as one of the regions with the highest human trafficking (TPPO) offenses in Indonesia (Angelie & Wahyudi, 2023), where women and children are the primary victims of sexual exploitation.

Consequently, the film *Women from Rote Island* does not merely serve as a cinematic work, but also as an advocacy medium that visualizes the traumatic experiences of female victims of sexual violence on a remote island. This movie poster becomes the first point of contact that must be capable of representing the urgency and sensitivity of this issue to the broader public.

Movie posters play a strategic role in shaping potential viewers' perceptions and interest toward a film. Indirectly, a poster can influence moviegoer decisions to watch or skip a particular title, as it serves as the first visual contact they encounter (Kusumadewi & Mulatsih, 2021). As a promotional medium, a movie poster typically contains informative elements such as the film title, names of the lead actors, release date, director's name, and credit titles that include the production team. This information is organized within a visual composition designed not only to convey data, but also to construct a specific image and atmosphere that represents the film.

Therefore, the design of a movie poster cannot be created arbitrarily. The poster must be able to provide an initial overview of the genre, conflict, and emotional nuances offered to the audience (Pawitan & Fetrianggi, 2021). At this point, aesthetic aspects and visual communication strategies become highly decisive. One key element is the choice of colour. Colour functions not merely to enhance the visual appearance, but also carries specific psychological meanings and associations that can reinforce the film's message (Rabbah, 2024). The use of dark colours, for instance, is often associated with tension or mystery (Yildirim et al., 2011) while bright colours are identical with joy or adventure (Jonauskaite et al., 2019; Konno et al., 2024). Consequently, designers are required to possess high sensitivity in managing colour harmony, contrast, and balance so that all visual elements can effectively encapsulate the film's core message and be easily grasped by the audience. Thus, the quality of a movie poster is ultimately determined by the successful integration of informative content and mutually supportive visual design decisions.

Women from Rote Island film is directed by Jeremias Nyangoen. This fictional drama film tells the story of Orpa and her two daughters living on Rote Island, focusing primarily on Martha, an illegal migrant worker who returns to her hometown after her father's death, carrying profound trauma from the sexual violence she experienced in Malaysia as an Indonesian Migrant Worker (Wahju et al., 2025). The strong story setting, the issue of sexual violence, and the socio-cultural context of women in Eastern Indonesia imbue this film with a sharp social critique that is highly relevant to contemporary issues.

The *Women from Rote Island* film poster, which serves as the object of this study, is the official poster used for the film's promotion at festivals and theatrical releases. This poster functions not only as a marker of the film's release but also as a visual gateway to understanding the major themes presented. Compositionally, the poster highlights female figures, specifically Martha, who is depicted in a tense emotional state laden with psychological burden. The body gestures, facial expressions, and relationships between the characters in the poster provide strong indications regarding the themes of trauma, female solidarity, and the social pressures they face.

The uniqueness of the *Women from Rote Island* poster lies in its visual approach of combining realism with symbolism. The colour palette, which tends to be gloomy and heavily utilizes earth tones, reinforces the nuances of grief, wounds, and discomfort (Garrido et al., 2024)). Behind an appearance that seems simple at first glance, the poster harbors multiple possibilities for interpretation, ranging from the representation of sexual violence victims and power relations within the family and society, to a critique of the patriarchal culture that silences women's voices. These hidden elements subsequently open up a space for a deeper theoretical reading of the poster as a visual text laden with meaning, rather than merely a promotional tool for the film.

Studies on gender representation and sexual violence in visual media have been conducted by several researchers, serving as crucial epistemological foundations for this study. In the realm of visual communication media analysis, specifically posters, a study by Neng mariam et al. (2026) titled "*Representasi Identitas Perempuan dalam Poster Film Yuni (2021): Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes*" published in JURNAL Dasarrupa: Desain dan Seni Rupa, examines how static visual elements such as colour, expression, and typography shape the social construction of women shackled by patriarchal culture. A similar approach was applied by Arystia (2024) in a study titled "*Kajian Semiotika terhadap Poster Film Like & Share menggunakan Teori Roland Barthes*", published through the Universitas Negeri Malang repository, where the analytical focus is directed at the symbolization of two female teenagers as sexual violence survivors within a two-dimensional graphic space. Both studies demonstrate that movie posters are not merely promotional materials, but rather cultural artifacts laden with hidden ideological transmissions.

On the other hand, the discourse on gender-based violence has also been explored through non-static media and physical installations to dissect victim-blaming myths. A study by Zulfani (2023) titled "*Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes pada Pameran Pakaian Penyintas Kekerasan Seksual*" published in KOMUNIKA BANGSA: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, successfully deconstructs societal stigma surrounding victims clothing through a connotative reading of apparel objects. Meanwhile, a specific focus on the cinematic object *Women from Rote Island* film has been explored by Karomah & Juariyah (2025) in their article "*Upaya Pencegahan Pelecehan Seksual; Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes Film Women from Rote Island*" released by Jurnal PIKMA: Publikasi Ilmu Komunikasi Media Dan Cinema. This study emphasizes the audio-visual analysis of film scenes to capture the impact of depression and skewed power relations. Complementing this perspective, Oktarina et al. (2025) through their work titled "*dari Pelecehan menjadi Stigma: Normalisasi Kekerasan Patriarki dalam Women from Rote Island*" in Alamtara: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam, expose how customary institutions and social structures in Eastern Indonesia legitimize the subordination of women through a narrative analysis of the script and plot.

Those previous research reveals a distinct separation in methodology and material objects: on one hand, studies on static visual posters have been conducted on urban-themed films such as *Yuni* and *Like & Share*; on the other hand, studies on *Women from Rote Island* film have so far been limited to the analysis of moving media (audio-visual) such as overall scenes, scripts, and cinematography. Not a single study has specifically isolated the movie poster of *Women from Rote Island* as the primary object of observation.

The novelty of this study lies in this methodological integration, namely testing how a static, two-dimensional marketing medium can encapsulate, condense, or even obscure the complexities of multi-layered trauma, customary stigma, and gender discrimination set against the cultural backdrop of Eastern Indonesia, which form the core of the film. This study is particularly compelling because it positions the movie poster as the frontline or the initial point of contact that shapes the audience's preliminary impression before they watch the film in its entirety. In the context of the sensitive issue of sexual violence, the poster bears a contradictory double burden: it must serve as an industry commercial tool to attract market interest, while simultaneously carrying the responsibility of representing the humanity of the survivors.

Through the analytical lens of Roland Barthes semiotics, this study offers critical acuity to dismantle this visual tension. At the denotative level, the movie poster of *Women from Rote Island* might exploit the exoticism of Rote's natural landscapes or traditional attire for mainstream marketing aesthetics. However, at the level of connotation and myth, this research will dissect whether these static visual elements successfully articulate a radical critique against patriarchal

structures, or if they unwittingly fall into reproducing the “male gaze” discourse that objectifies women’s suffering for industrial interests.

The formulation of the problem in this study focuses on how the visual and verbal signs contained within the film poster of *Women from Rote Island* by Jeremias Nyangoen construct meaning regarding women’s experiences, sexual violence, and the injustices they endure. This research seeks to answer how the poster represents the figure of Rote women-particularly Martha, a migrant worker who is a victim of violence, and how design elements such as character composition, facial expressions, visual backgrounds, and colour choices present a social critique of patriarchal culture and unequal power relations.

The objective of this research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the *Women from Rote Island* film poster using a semiotic approach to excavate the explicit and implicit meanings behind it. Through the reading of signs and symbols presented in the poster, this study attempts to reveal how the poster functions not only as a film promotional medium but also as a medium representing the social reality of women in Eastern Indonesia, the voices of sexual violence victims, and a form of resistance against the social structures that silence their experiences and trauma. Accordingly, this research is expected to contribute to visual communication studies, gender studies, and the analysis of women’s representation in Indonesian film media.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research utilizes a semiotic analysis method with a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was selected to describe and explain in depth the underlying meanings operating within the film poster of *Women from Rote Island* by Jeremias Nyangoen, focusing on the representation of women, sexual violence, and the social reality in Rote Island, East Nusa Tenggara.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in Roland Barthes semiotics. Barthes divides signification into two levels: denotation (direct/literal meaning) and connotation (cultural meaning linked to values, ideology, and culture), which subsequently intertwine in the formation of myths-meaning systems that naturalize a specific perspective within society (Putri et al., 2023). Through this framework, the film poster of *Women from Rote Island* is treated as a visual text that harbors ideology, social critique, and narratives of women’s experiences, rather than merely an arrangement of images and text.

The selection of Roland Barthes semiotic theory as the analytical lens in this study is based on the need to dismantle the multi-layered ideological meanings hidden behind the visual aesthetics of the *Women from Rote Island* film poster. When compared to Ferdinand de Saussure’s classical structuralist approach, Saussurean semiotics is deemed too restrictive for this analysis due to its circular nature and its focus on the binary relationship between the signifier and the signified within a static linguistic domain (Natasha et al., 2023). Saussure’s approach does not provide sufficient space to dissect how a visual sign is influenced by the cultural, political, and gender-biased contexts surrounding the poster’s production. Meanwhile, Charles Sanders Peirce’s triadic model, although highly powerful in classifying signs into icons, indices, and symbols through a dynamic process of semiosis-leans more toward a logical-philosophical categorization of how a sign refers to its object. Peirce is less operational in tracing hidden agendas or social critiques deliberately constructed by commercial mass media creators to instantly influence public emotion.

Herein lies the relevance and theoretical superiority of Roland Barthes semiotics, which offers a staggered system of signification through the concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth. The film poster of *Women from Rote Island* is not a blank space devoid of messages, but rather a dense cultural text designed to convey sensitive issues such as sexual violence, trauma, and women’s resistance within a single visual frame. Through the first level of signification (denotation), this study can objectively and literally describe the poster’s visual elements, such as character layout, colour choices, title typography, and lighting. Subsequently, at the second level (connotation), the analysis delves deeper to capture the emotional weight, cultural values, and metaphors of suffering and gender resistance implied behind these visual elements. Ultimately, Barthes concept of myth becomes the most crucial instrument as it is capable of exposing how these connotative signs work collectively to naturalize or, conversely, challenge the patriarchal ideology and social stigma faced by Rote women. Through Barthes analytical framework, this movie poster is no longer seen merely as a commercial promotional tool, but as a cultural manifestation that actively produces and reproduces myths of gender inequality and visual advocacy in the public sphere.

The data collection process is conducted sequentially, beginning with an in-depth observation of the official theatrical release poster of *Women from Rote Island* to identify its visual elements, such as characters, colours,

composition, typography, and symbols as well as its verbal elements, including the title, credits, and screening information. This observation is then complemented by a contextual exploration involving film screenings and a thorough literature review of the synopsis, production background, themes, and raised issues, which serves to strengthen the interpretive foundation. Finally, visual documentation is gathered through poster image captures to provide the material for further detailed analysis.

With this design, the research not only deconstructs the poster's design elements but also interprets how the poster functions as a medium of visual communication that represents social reality and the position of women within the context of gender-based violence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of the Work

Women from Rote Island is a feature film directed by Jeremias Nyangoen, produced by *Bintang Cahaya Sinema* and *Langit Terang Sinema*. This film tells the story of women from Rote Island who face violence, injustice, and social wounds that are often hidden. The official poster of *Women from Rote Island*, used as the object of this study, is the cinema release poster, which includes the text "22 February 2024 in Cinemas" at the bottom.



Figure 1. Poster of the film *Women from Rote Island*
Source: Instagram/womenfromroteisland

In terms of composition, the poster features the figure of a woman curled up on the floor, her body covered in wounds and dirt, with her legs chained. This female figure becomes the focal point of the poster, placed in a dark space resembling a closed room or a warehouse. At the center, the film's title, *WOMEN FROM ROTE ISLAND*, is displayed in large, prominent letters, while above it are the names of the main cast and a row of festival and award logos, indicating the film's participation in various international events. This layout emphasizes that the film is not just a personal drama of a single character but also a work that has received recognition in the broader cinema world.

Thus, the *Women from Rote Island* film poster not only serves as an indicator of the film's screening schedule in cinemas but also as an initial representation of the film's central theme, the female body bound by violence, fear, and social structures that confine it.

Formal Analysis

Several important visual elements in the *Women from Rote Island* film poster can be seen in the use of colour and typography.



Figure 2. The colours on the poster

The colour palette of the poster is dominated by dark tones: black, dark gray, and earthy brown. The background appears to resemble a dull wooden or concrete wall and floor, creating an atmosphere of a damp, enclosed, and unsafe space. The dominance of dark colours builds a somber, oppressive, and threatening impression, in line with the theme of violence against women portrayed in the film (çakici et al, 2023).

The pale, dirt-streaked skin of the female figure contrasts with the dark background, making her body appear illuminated yet isolated in the midst of darkness. The traditional patterned fabric she wears adds a touch of reddish-brown colour and ethnic motifs, suggesting regional identity and the cultural context of Rote Island. The iron chain wrapped around her legs subtly gleams silver amidst the shadows, emphasizing the symbolism of bondage, oppression, and powerlessness.

The use of white in the title “WOMEN FROM ROTE ISLAND” creates a strong contrast against the black and gray background. White here is not just a neutral colour, but can be interpreted as a symbol of hope, a highlight, and an emphasis that women are both the core of the issue and the central narrative of the film. The combination of dominant dark colours with accents of white and brick red creates a visual tension between injury, violence, and the hope for liberation (Garrido et al., 2024).

The typography of the title “WOMEN FROM ROTE ISLAND” uses bold capital letters in a sans-serif style with a scratched or weathered texture effect. The solid yet worn appearance of the letters gives a harsh, rough, and untidy impression, as if printed on a decaying surface. Visually, this font style aligns with the themes of violence, suffering, and the harsh realities that the female characters in the film face.

Below the title, there is the text “A FILM BY JEREMIAS NYANGOEN” in a smaller size, still using a sans-serif font family, but without the textured effect as strongly as the title. This placement emphasizes the director’s name as an important element, but it remains subordinate to the film’s title.

The names of the main cast are displayed at the top of the poster in a thinner, neater sans-serif typeface, marking their presence as key actors without detracting from the main image and film title. A row of festival and award logos use the respective typographic and graphic styles of each institution, collectively lending a sense of credibility and prestige to the film.

At the bottom, the information “22 FEBRUARI 2024 DI BIOSKOP” is arranged in white sans-serif typography that is clear and legible despite being relatively small in size. Its placement at the bottom suggests an informative function, serving as a time and screening medium indicator, while also confirming that the film is officially released in cinema networks.

Overall, the combination of intense dark colours with bold, high-contrast sans-serif typography makes the *Women from Rote Island* poster a powerful visual text. It not only promotes a film but also hints at the dark reality experienced by women, inviting the audience to watch, understand, and reflect on the meaning behind it.

Interpretation of Semiotic Analysis

The semiotic analysis of the *Women from Rote Island* film poster focuses on reading the visual signs using Roland Barthes framework, which includes denotation, connotation, and myth. The section of the poster chosen for analysis is the image of a woman curled up on the floor, her body covered in wounds and her legs bound by chains (see image segment). This object was selected because it is considered to represent the film’s central theme: violence against women, the entrapment of the body, and the layered wounds, both physical and psychological.

Table 1. Woman Curled on the Floor with Leg Chained



Denotation: A woman lies on the wooden floor in a dark room, her body curled up, wearing traditional fabric typical of East Nusa Tenggara. Her skin appears dirty with bruises. Both legs are stretched out to the side, bound by iron chains wrapped around her ankles.

Connotation: The crouched body position does not merely indicate a physical gesture, but rather implies profound trauma, fear, psychological exhaustion, as well as the victim's instinct to protect herself from massive external threats. The use of traditional Rote patterned fabric functions as a cultural anchor, asserting that the violence experienced by this female subject does not occur in a vacuum, but is instead closely intertwined with the specific socio-cultural context of the local community. Meanwhile, the iron chain wrapped around the ankle serves as a concrete connotation of absolute confinement, the deprivation of human rights, and the loss of freedom of movement imposed by those in power. This impression of confinement is reinforced by the visualization of a dirty and dark wooden floor, which connotes an unsafe domestic or isolated space-a marginal locus where crimes are deliberately hidden from public scrutiny and intervention.

Myth: This movie poster operates ideologically not to perpetuate, but rather to deconstruct and critique the patriarchal myth that has long normalized the female body as a subordinate object, deemed legitimate to be controlled, harmed, and silenced. The presence of the chain on the ankle challenges the fatalistic cultural myth which assumes that the oppression of women within the domestic sphere is a matter of destiny or a family disgrace considered taboo to be brought to the surface. The curled-up body gesture on the dark floor is utilized by this poster to expose the myth of the silent victim, doing so by manifesting such profound psychological suffering into a provocative visual strike for the audience. Through the articulation of this myth, the poster transforms from a mere promotional tool into a visual-political text, asserting that violence against women is not merely a particular, individual tragedy, but rather a systemic product of unequal power relations reproduced by an established patriarchal structure.

Analytically, this poster fragment positions the female body as an autonomous center of the visual narrative through the literal depiction of a woman chained to a wooden floor at the denotative level. However, this sharp visual deconstruction through the connotative and mythical levels creates a dynamic academic dialogue with previous literature on the same film. These findings significantly expand upon the Roland Barthes semiotic analysis previously conducted by Karomah & Juariyah (2025); while their study decoded the systemic trauma, depression, and skewed power relations through the temporal dynamics of audio-visual scenes within the film, this poster proves that the exact same ideological weight can be articulated instantly through the compression of densely meaningful static iconography.

Furthermore, the dismantling of the subordination myth within this claustrophobic visual space (the dark floor and chains) resonates strongly with the structural arguments identified by Oktarina et al. (2025) While exposed how customary

institutions and social structures in Eastern Indonesia legitimize the subordination and normalization of patriarchal violence through a narrative analysis of the film's script and plot, this poster serves as the immediate visual vanguard of that critique. It condenses the walls of silencing and social stigma faced by female victims into a single, striking graphic frame, disrupting the comfort of the patriarchal order before the audience even watches the narrative unfold in its entirety.

Ultimately, by pulling the grim reality of violence out of the temporal cinematography and into the public communication sphere, this poster acts as a concentrated medium of ethical advocacy. It translates the broader socio-cultural critiques observed into an instant visual defiance, raising critical questions that challenge who actually hold power over women's bodies and defying the social systems that allow this cycle of trauma to continuously repeat.

Table 2. List of Cast Names, Award Laurel, and Festival Logos



Denotation: A group of texts featuring the names of the cast members (Linda Adoe, Irma Rihi, Sallum Ratu Ke, Van Jhoov, Yuel Bani, Willyam Wolfgang, Boy Leonard) written in white capital letters, lined up at the top. Below them, several white laurel icons flank the award category texts such as Best Feature Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, and so on. Further down, various logos of international film festivals and award events appear in graphic symbol and text form.

Connotation: The placement of the actor names using bold capital letters at the very top of the poster does not merely serve as supplementary information; rather, it asserts the dominance of a solid, professional local ensemble cast that is highly worthy of appreciation. The presence of the row of laurel symbols, universally recognized as an emblem of victory-connotes premium aesthetic quality and a guarantee that this work has passed a rigorous and prestigious curation process. This connotation is reinforced by the embedding of international festival logos, implying that the local story of Rote Island women has successfully “transcended its island of origin,” transforming into a serious, high-quality cinematic work that has earned a respectable and credible position within the global cinema space.

Myth: At the level of myth, these award elements perform an ideological function that is both dualistic and critical of the cultural industry structure. On the one hand, the rows of laurels and festival logos reproduce the hegemonic myth that the validity of a humanitarian issue and the aesthetic quality of a work are only considered “legitimate” and of universal value once they have been validated by the stamp of global institutions. However, on the other hand, this poster radically subverts this myth to launch a sharp structural critique; by positioning the names of local Rote actors parallel beneath the logos of world festivals, the poster deconstructs the myth of the invisible subaltern or the powerlessness of peripheral communities. Ideologically, this poster demands public recognition that the tragedy of women's oppression on a small island is not merely an exotic, marginal domestic issue, but rather a universal humanitarian crisis that deserves to occupy the highest echelon in cultural discourse. Through the reversal of this myth, the victim's suffering is no longer positioned as a resigned commercial spectacle, but as a

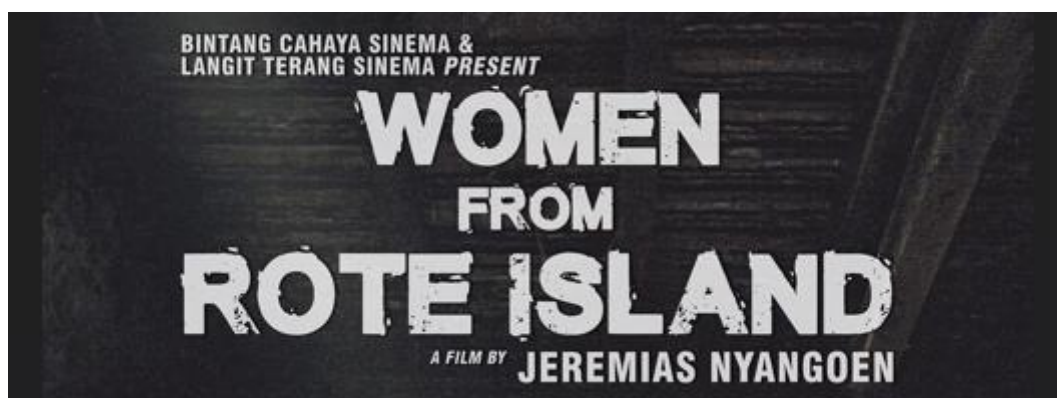
political text possessing high bargaining power to challenge the comfort of the global patriarchal order.

Analytically, the top section of this poster functions as a showcase of cultural legitimacy that connects artistic achievement with the gender advocacy movement, while simultaneously opening a dynamic academic dialogue with previous studies on the film. The construction of meaning within this award paratext expands upon the Roland Barthes semiotic analysis previously conducted by Karomah & Juariyah (2025) While their research decoded the myth of gender struggle and power imbalances strictly within the temporal progression of the film’s audio-visual narrative, the findings from this poster section prove that institutional and international recognition is deliberately deployed as a visual-ideological anchor. This strategic arrangement elevates the bargaining power of the film’s advocacy, establishing a framework of global validation before the audience even witnesses the narrative unfold in its entirety.

Furthermore, elevating the voices of marginalized women to the international stage via these prominent visual laurels serves as a tactical countermeasure against the local socio-cultural realities dissected by Oktarina et al. (2025). While they exposed how customary institutions and social structures in Eastern Indonesia legitimize and normalize patriarchal violence, the internationalization of this traumatic space on the poster aggressively pulls the localized issue out of geographic isolation and subjects it to global public moral scrutiny.

Ultimately, this global validation acts as a communication instrument that challenges the walls of silencing and the deep-seated social stigma on Rote Island identified in the narrative analysis. Simultaneously, it provides a new theoretical contribution to the visualization of feminist resistance; it demonstrates that advocacy is not merely confined to the internal cinematographic elements and scene dynamics but can be powerfully articulated through the outer, paratextual framing of the promotional media itself.

Table 3. Title Block “WOMEN FROM ROTE ISLAND”



Denotation: The text “BINTANG CAHAYA SINEMA & LANGIT TERANG SINEMA PRESENT” is written in small white capital letters at the top of the text block. Below it, the title “WOMEN FROM ROTE ISLAND” is written in large, bold, white capital letters with a texture that appears scratched or worn. Below the title, the phrase “A FILM BY JEREMIAS NYANGOEN” is written in a smaller size but still clearly legible. The entire text is placed on a dark background resembling a worn wooden surface or wall.

Connotation: The use of bold capital letters in the title block “WOMEN FROM ROTE ISLAND” asserts courage, firmness, and a visual articulation that peripheral women are no longer passive objects, but rather the primary subjects demanding full attention. The cracked, scratched, and seemingly shattered texture of the letters explicitly connotes profound wounds, physical and psychological trauma, as well as the systemic violence experienced by female bodies within the film’s narrative. The emergence of white text contrasting against the dark background provides a

symbolic connotation regarding the awakening of voices that have long been silenced and hidden from the public sphere.

Myth: At the level of myth, this typographical element operates ideologically as a sharp critique that deconstructs the patriarchal myth of the invisible subaltern, the view that women from peripheral regions possess no bargaining power in mainstream discourse. The design of the letters, which are cracked yet remain standing large, solid, and dominant in the center of the poster, ideologically shatters the myth that victims of sexual violence are depleted, destroyed figures who have lost their agency. This poster subverts that myth; the cracks instead become a symbol of persistent resistance. Through the spatial placement of the title block situated right in the center, flanked by international award symbols above and the shackled female body below, this poster breathes life into a new myth: that the personal suffering of Rote women has been elevated into a public collective narrative possessing both high aesthetic value and political legitimacy in the eyes of the world.

Analytically, this title block acts as the visual heart of the poster, connecting commercial graphic aesthetics with macro social critique, while simultaneously opening a dynamic academic dialogue with previous studies. The compression of meaning through this typography expands upon the application of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory previously conducted by Mariam et al. (2026) on poster media. While they demonstrated how static typographic choices and visual layouts shape the social construction of women within patriarchal bounds, this poster analysis takes it a step further by showing that typography can explicitly materialize physical and psychological trauma. The boldness of the letters, contrasting sharply with their fractured, "wounded" texture, visually reinforces the survival of marginalized women, transforming a mere commercial title into an ideological signifier of resistance against systemic oppression.

Furthermore, the visualization of the "wounded" yet unyielding text serves as a graphic counter-narrative to the walls of silencing and cultural stigma on Rote Island, which were dissected in the narrative analysis by Oktarina et al. (2025) While they exposed how customary institutions and social structures in Eastern Indonesia legitimize the subordination and normalization of patriarchal violence through the film's script, the title block on the poster acts as its immediate visual confrontation. Standing upright and dominant directly above the graphic depiction of the shackled body, the typography visually highlights the lack of safe spaces for victims, turning a localized socio-cultural trauma into a prominent and unignorable graphic defiance within the public communication sphere.

Ultimately, the presence of the director's name, the production house, and film festival logos surrounding this title block asserts that the commercial and promotional elements of the poster are deliberately organized to strengthen the discourse of visual feminism. This finding bridges a crucial gap between poster-focused literature, such as the study by Arystia (2024) which established movie posters as ideologically laden cultural artifacts rather than mere marketing tools, and film-specific studies like that of Karomah & Juariyah (2025) which confined their semiotic exploration to internal audio-visual scenes and cinematography. By integrating these commercial paratexts around a fractured typography, the title block proves that marketing frameworks do not dilute the gravity of gender advocacy; instead, they serve as an external linguistic anchor that amplifies the voices of sexual violence victims before the audience even watches the narrative unfold.

Table 4. Credit Title and Release Date



Denotation: A series of small text arranged closely and extended, containing the names of the production company, producers, director, screenwriter, cinematographer, art director, editor, and

various other technical crew members. All are written in white capital letters. Below this series, there is the text “22 FEBRUARY 2024 IN CINEMAS” in a slightly larger size, still in white capital letters, placed at the center of the composition. The background remains the same dark surface as in the other parts of the poster.

Connotation: The arrangement of the small yet precise credit titles connotes that the articulation of this sexual violence issue is supported by collective work and the institutional involvement of a solid creative network, rather than merely a commodification of the issue by certain individuals. The assertion of the text “FEBRUARY 22, 2024, IN CINEMAS” does not merely inform the release agenda, but rather connotes a political invitation to shift the consumption of trauma from an isolated domestic-private sphere into a space of open public discourse. This connotation of urgency is provocatively reinforced by the visual element of the iron chain extending downward and cutting through the text to the very bottom edge, which connotes that the shackles of patriarchy and the urgency of this humanitarian issue are real, they do not stop when the cinema lights come on, but continue to flow and intervene in the social reality faced by the audience.

Myth: At the level of myth, the bottom section of this poster works ideologically to deconstruct the established myth of the cinema as a commercial entertainment space for capitalist commodities. The text “IN CINEMAS” is rearticulated into the myth of a space for collective witnessing, a cultural locus where the public is forced out of their escapist comfort to validate the suffering of marginalized women, which has long been hidden behind the myths of cultural resilience and family disgrace. The presence of the industry credit titles also affirms a new deconstructive myth: that the silenced voices of the peripheral community can only break through the hegemony of patriarchal culture if they are seriously consolidated through the legitimacy of the global cultural industry. Through the reversal of this myth, the poster asserts its ideological position that an individual’s traumatic story has transformed into a political-cultural event that demands mass public recognition and accountability.

Analytically, the bottom area of this poster acts as a material foundation that bridges the cinematic fictional text with the audience’s reality, while simultaneously opening a dynamic academic dialogue with previous studies. The signifying structure of these industrial paratextual elements expands the scope of Roland Barthes semiotic analysis conducted by Karomah & Juariyah (2025) While they viewed the myth of gender struggle as being limited to the temporal elements of audio-visual scenes and dialogue within the film, the findings from this poster prove that even commercial billing blocks are ideologically designed to mobilize mass awareness. The mobilization of a collective production network within these credit titles serves as a graphic embodiment of systemic institutional backing, mirroring the ideological weight found in poster-centric studies like Arystia (2024) which demonstrate that promotional media are cultural artifacts laden with collective resistance against gender-based power inequalities.

Furthermore, shifting the locus of trauma into the public cinema space directly addresses the normalization of patriarchal violence and the lack of safe spaces for women examined by Oktarina et al. (2025) doing so by pulling this sociological issue into a tangible mass visual advocacy agenda. The bottom section of this poster also functions as a tactical communication instrument to tear down the walls of silencing and the customary socio-cultural stigma on Rote Island. By utilizing the chain element that flows directly toward the audience’s reality, this poster asserts that this cycle of structural violence is a collective responsibility that must be broken together in the real world. This visual articulation provides a significant socio-political contribution to the visualization of feminist aspects, which in the study by Karomah & Juariyah (2025) was previously explored only within the limited boundaries of technical cinematography and internal scene progressions.

Based on a critical analysis of its overall visual articulation, the film poster of *Women from Rote Island* proves successful in containing strong layers of meaning that organically intertwine with the film’s overarching theme, particularly in representing the traumatic experiences of women who are victims of structural violence. The female figure lying curled up with her legs shackled in chains does not merely present a physical image of a suffering body, but rather a radical connotation of confinement, powerlessness, and a profound cycle of psychological trauma under the grip of

patriarchal power. This defensive gesture and spatial isolation within the dark space are not left to become an excessive form of passive victimization; the visual resignation of the material object is tactically balanced by the use of bold, assertive, and cracked typography for the title right in the center of the poster, which ideologically operates as a deconstruction of the myth of victim passivity into a form of symbolic resistance that refuses to submit.

At the same time, the presence of a row of international festival awards at the top, along with the assertion of industry credit titles and commercial release clauses at the bottom, further reinforces that this personal story of Rote women is deliberately elevated from a mere taboo private tragedy into a legitimate sociopolitical discourse. The anatomical arrangement of this poster completely re-evaluates the role of promotional media—from what was initially a mere tool for escapist mass attraction into an ethical, structured, and position-conscious instrument of visual advocacy communication in representing the voices of the marginalized.

Thus, the film poster of *Women from Rote Island* can be considered highly effective in compressing macro-structural critique into a single static graphic space, where the combination of its verbal and visual elements not only succeeds in inviting empathy and personal reflection from the audience, but also triggers critical mass awareness. Through this deliberate arrangement, the poster ultimately demonstrates how promotional media can transform the cinema from a passive commercial platform into a shared space of witnessing that challenges and breaks the cycle of gender-based violence in the real world.

CONCLUSION

Roland Barthes semiotic analysis of the film poster of *Women from Rote Island* by Jeremias Nyangoen empirically proves that this poster functions far beyond a mere commercial promotional tool to attract audiences; instead, it acts as a visual communication medium and a political paratext laden with ideological content. Through a consciously organized interplay of visual and verbal elements, ranging from the anatomy of the female body lying helplessly and in shackles, the dominance of a dark colour palette, and the bold, cracked typography of the title, to the inclusion of industrial achievements in the credit title, the poster tactically directs the audience's reading toward the structural trauma raised in the film. At the denotative level, the poster presents the literal reality of a woman confined and bound by iron chains on a silent wooden floor, which then, at the connotative level, expands into a deeper deconstruction of meaning regarding the depth of psychological trauma, helplessness, and the inequality of sociocultural power relations in the peripheral region of Rote Island, East Nusa Tenggara. Ultimately, at the level of myth, this poster works boldly to criticize and dismantle patriarchal myths that often normalize violence against women as a fatalistic destiny or a domestic disgrace to be silenced, while simultaneously transforming the myth of the cinema from an escapist entertainment space into a locus of collective witnessing that elevates the victim's personal tragedy into a public political discourse demanding mass accountability.

These findings bring significant theoretical implications to the realm of visual communication semiotic studies by proving the capacity to compress ideological myths within a static graphic medium. A single film poster frame is proven to possess a theoretical capacity as powerful as sequential audio-visual media or a complete film in articulating radical feminist discourse and structural critique, while simultaneously extending the scope of Roland Barthes theory, which has hitherto often been confined to dynamic cinematic scenes, into the realm of commercial-promotional graphic design anatomy. Practically, this study provides a tangible contribution to graphic designers and filmmakers regarding the importance of implementing gender-conscious design when packaging sensitive issues like sexual violence, where in a visual work is demanded to be capable of exploring pain and trauma ethically without falling into pornographic exploitation or over-victimization. For activists and advocacy organizations, the results of this analysis can be adopted as a tactical visual communication strategy on how to utilize the aesthetics of popular industry as a social campaign instrument to dismantle the walls of silence and sociocultural stigma in society.

Although offering a profound dissection of meaning, the validity of this study's findings has limitations, as it relies entirely on a qualitative approach and critical analysis that places the researcher as the primary instrument in conducting an immanent reading of the main official poster material. This study has not yet touched upon the aspect of real audience reception to test whether the deconstructive mythical meaning designed by the poster creator is received homogeneously or, conversely, triggers negotiation and rejection from a society with diverse cultural backgrounds. Therefore, future researchers are advised to step into the realm of reception analysis using Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding model or focus group discussion methods to explore how lay audiences and survivor communities interpret these connotative signs. Additionally, the development of this topic can be directed toward a visual comparative study comparing the *Women from*

Rote Island poster with other Indonesian social realism film posters to map the visualization trends of gender struggle within the contemporary cinema industry, or applying critical social semiotics and multimodality approaches to strip bare the power relations between film industry capitalism and the commodification of marginal issues in the public sphere.

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