

## A Semiotic Analysis of Marketing Communication in Advertising Film: The Case of Riri Riza's Work for OPPO Indonesia

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### Abstract

This research examines the advertising film produced for OPPO Indonesia's marketing communication, focusing on the OPPO Find X3 Pro 5G smartphone. The study aims to explore the relationship between semiotic signs, their meanings, and the success of OPPO's marketing strategies. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the research analyzes denotative, connotative, and myth-ideology signs represented in the advertising film. The findings reveal denotative signs such as the pillow, a photo of a depressed woman, the gate (ivory arch), a red *kebaya* (traditional women's dress), a washing machine, a blue wall, a man at the south gate, and a painting of a woman. These signs reflect the role and position of women in the domestic sphere of Javanese households. The gate, specifically the *plengkung gading* (ivory arch), is legitimized as the back gate of the *Ngayogyakarta* (Jogjakarta) palace. Connotatively, these signs represent the struggles and inner turmoil of Javanese women as they navigate their roles in domestic spaces and seek freedom in the public sphere. This includes their opportunities to reinterpret leadership within the social structure of Javanese society. The director's strategy, combined with OPPO Indonesia's marketing efforts, successfully reinterprets the role of Javanese women in both the social system and marketing objectives, particularly targeting women as a homogeneous audience. This is achieved by dismantling the myth of women as dependent individuals within their cultural and environmental contexts.

**Keywords:** semiotic analysis, advertising film, marketing communication, Riri Riza, gender representation

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduce the Problem

The advertising film *You and Me in Low Angle* is a production by OPPO Indonesia that combines technology with creative features of its smartphone series. The film aims to stimulate sales of OPPO smartphones by encouraging Indonesian consumers to utilize the advanced camera features for creative purposes. This marketing strategy positions smartphones not merely as accessories but as tools for creativity, particularly targeting young people and Generation Z in Indonesia. The consumption patterns of smartphones and the prevalence of video-based social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have transformed users into *prosumers*—individuals who are both producers and consumers of content (Stuppy et al., 2023). This trend aligns with OPPO Indonesia's strategy to collaborate with renowned Indonesian filmmakers such as Garin Nugroho (Oki & Ridwan, 2022), Riri Riza, and Jay Subiyakto. Garin Nugroho, for instance, is known for his transition from traditional film technology to digital cinematography, producing works like *Mata Tertutup* and *Opera Jawa* (Toni, 2019), which blend Javanese culture with modern film techniques. These collaborations highlight OPPO's commitment to integrating cultural narratives with technological innovation.

The strategy and production of advertising films by OPPO Indonesia serve as a marketing communication tool (Cronin et al., 2023), utilizing short advertising films (Barrett, 2022) to promote the OPPO Find X3 Pro 5G. This initiative was carried out in collaboration with Jay Subiyakto, a renowned artist specializing in performance arts, including concerts, theater, musicals, and video clips. Subiyakto's expertise in creating monumental music videos has expanded creative possibilities for OPPO Indonesia's consumers, offering them references for creativity in music, advertising, and related fields (Afifulloh & Wijayanti, 2023). This approach enables the development of creative patterns through the production of engaging content for social media platforms (Heřmanová, 2023). Riri Riza, who directed the strategy and production of these advertising films, plays a pivotal role in shaping and stimulating creativity among OPPO Indonesia's consumers to produce short films. Riza is a director deeply connected to the lives of children and teenagers, as evidenced by his

works such as *Laskar Pelangi*, *Sherina's Adventure*, *Gie*, and *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta* (Khalil, 2017). His ability to capture the ideas and interests of young people and Generation Z in Indonesia allows him to produce creative content with fresh and relevant themes. Through his work, Riza encourages young Indonesians to develop innovative ideas and create content for their social media platforms. These three Indonesian directors and filmmakers specialize in creating advertising films to promote and market OPPO Indonesia's products. The three advertising films they produced include:

Table 1. Director Short Film OPPO Indonesia

| Film                    | Sutradara     |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Siklus                  | Garin Nugroho |
| Dedari                  | Jay Subiyakto |
| You and Me in Low Angle | Riri Riza     |

Source: Data Collection, 2024

They have produced three short films (table. 1), utilizing OPPO's latest products during the shooting process. This approach aims to bridge the gap between filmmakers and consumers by demonstrating that the same technology used by renowned Indonesian filmmakers Garin Nugroho, Jay Subiyakto, and Riri Riza is accessible to OPPO Indonesia's consumers. This strategy seeks to enhance consumer understanding and confidence in creating their own digital content, emphasizing that the tools used by these filmmakers are also available to them.

### 1.2 Importance of the Problem

The collaboration between OPPO Indonesia and renowned filmmakers marks the introduction of *Cinefinders* in Indonesia, a series of advertising films designed as a marketing communication tool. These films aim to inspire young Indonesians to leverage smartphone technology for creative expression (Bull, 2024), particularly using OPPO's advanced features. The three *Cinefinders* productions, available on OPPO Indonesia's YouTube channel, include works by Garin Nugroho, Jay Subiyakto, and Riri Riza. Garin Nugroho's (Toni, 2016) film employs a vertical camera format to tell the story of a dancing girl encountering mysterious objects (Weiß, 2024), blending choreography with cinematic innovation. Jay Subiyakto's work highlights Balinese culture through the *Sanghyang Dedari* dance, a sacred ritual believed to ward off misfortune. Meanwhile, Riri Riza's film explores the perspective of a girl who views the world from a low angle, symbolizing a unique narrative approach.

### 1.3 Literature Review

Previous studies provide a foundation for this research, including semiotic analyses of cigarette posters (Ramadhani & Dewi, 2023) and poetry as a representation of social context (Adudu & Husain, 2019). Feminist representation in films, such as *Samjin Company English Class*, explores the intersection of feminism and conflict through character struggles (Hutauruk & Saragih, 2023). Similarly, the film *Selesai* addresses infidelity, mental health, and marital conflicts exacerbated by COVID-19 in Indonesia (Halim & Yulius, 2023). Another study on *Agak Laen* examines social dynamics and cultural identity through humor (Ubaidillah & Patriansah, 2024). This research applies Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, focusing on three key elements: denotative signs (literal meanings) (Cheng et al., 2023), connotative signs (implied meanings), and myths (cultural ideologies embedded in sig Advertising films and representation are intrinsically linked to social dynamics (Ahmad et al., 2024), as advertising films serve as a medium that encapsulates and conveys various social aspects (Ruiz, 2023). Representation, in this context, refers to the portrayal of social situations and conditions depicted in these films (I Inci et al., 2023). This representation is manifested through signs within the film's content, where signs act as symbols that represent something beyond their literal meaning (Neiger et al., 2023). Signs can be understood in two ways: denotative signs, which convey the literal or true meaning, and connotative signs, which are constructed through associations with other signs that lack a direct relationship to the denotative meaning (Keller et al., 2023). Connotative signs are shaped by prevailing cultural assumptions and values, leading to a shared understanding that may be misleading or inaccurate (Hasanah et al., 2020). This misrepresentation can result in the propagation of false truths (Pogrebna et al., 2024), which are then accepted as general truths within the social system. When connotative signs are misinterpreted or misused to judge reality, they give rise to myths. Myths are false truths that are widely accepted as valid, often perpetuating harm or marginalization within societal structures.

This explanation offers insight into the critical paradigm that underpins the understanding of how signs are used to dominate others (Depounti et al., 2023). Domination, in this context, refers to the exercise of power by individuals, groups, or collectives over others (Heiselberg & Raun, 2024). This dynamic highlight the significance of signs in social interactions, where their meanings become particularly crucial due to the presence of hegemony in their usage (Mowri & Bailey, 2023). Hegemony within the sign system functions as a tool to perpetuate power, suppress opposing groups, and reinforce the authority of dominant groups. Signs in communication extend beyond written text; they are

manifested in various forms, including idioms (Wibisono, 2023), colors, audio, visual and audiovisual elements, glyphs, shapes, buildings, landscapes, and more (Adyani et al., 2023). The study of signs in communication is evident across multiple media, including interpersonal communication (Arendt et al., 2023), group communication, organizational communication, public communication, and mass communication (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2019). In this research, the focus is on signs found in mass media, particularly films. As a form of mass media, films serve not only to entertain, educate, and inform audiences (Barli et al., 2017), but also to provide representations of signs that audiences interpret and reference in their social lives.

This research also emphasizes gender and feminist issues (Dilli et al., 2019), exploring the relationship between the film's themes and the portrayal of women's behavior as central to its narrative (Baer, 2016). Specifically, the film focuses on Javanese women as the main characters (Arnold et al., 2024), depicting their struggles with competition against men and their complex relationship with male hegemony (Hegarty, 2024). These struggles reflect the inner turmoil Javanese women face in defining their roles within the social fabric of Javanese society (Kornawati & Rahim, 2024). The representation of Javanese women and culture is a compelling topic in film production (Rianto et al., 2023), as women's social challenges continue to attract the attention of Indonesian filmmakers, often serving as a central theme in their works. Women's roles in the social system illustrate the interplay between their societal functions and their relationships with men, the environment, and cultural norms (Dahl, 2023). Traditionally, women are often perceived as weak, confined to the domestic sphere, and excluded from public and political activities. In contrast, men are viewed as strong, dominant figures who occupy public spaces and hold leadership roles in the social system. From a feminist perspective, this dichotomy represents a flawed understanding of gender roles, as it is constructed around the perceived functions of women rather than promoting equality in social roles and responsibilities.

#### *1.4 Research Design*

Thus, the relationship between men and women, within the context of gender, reflects a societal understanding that places women primarily in domestic roles while positioning men in the public domain (Hegarty, 2024) both men and women are equal as creations of God, their differences lie in gender and reproductive roles (Rohrbach et al., 2023). However, in the social system, men and women should ideally share equal roles (Sent & Staveren, 2018), working together to foster harmony in various social behaviors. For instance, in husband-wife relationships, both partners should have equal roles in interpersonal communication. Similarly, in education, employment, and political participation, men and women should have equal opportunities and responsibilities. The primary focus of this research is on the signs present in Riri Riza's short film *You and Me in Low Angle*. By uncovering the denotative signs, connotative signs, and myths within the film, this study applies Barthes' semiotic theory alongside feminist theory, film theory, and related concepts. These frameworks serve as the main references for determining the units of analysis, enabling a comprehensive and thorough perspective throughout the analytical process.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Semiotic Analysis*

This research employs a qualitative approach, focusing on text analysis through semiotic methods. Semiotics, as a method of text analysis (Adudu & Husain, 2019), involves unpacking signs within interpretative communication texts (Damayanti & Toni, 2018). The core of semiotic analysis lies in interpreting signs within their situational and contextual frameworks (Arnesson, 2023), ensuring that the relationship between signs and their interpretations remains precise and focused. Semiotics serves as a valuable tool for researchers to holistically analyze film elements, including dialogue, settings, storylines, props, costumes, and characterizations. In this study, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is applied to uncover denotative signs (Maiorani et al., 2022), connotative signs, and the myths derived from these signs. Barthes defines semiotics as the relationship between the signifier (the physical form of the sign), the signified (the mental concept it represents), and the sign itself (the combination of signifier and signified). This framework helps reveal how hegemony is embedded and exercised by dominant groups over subordinate groups through signs.

### *2.2 Data Collection*

The primary data collection method involves obtaining permission to use digital data from the film director. The film is then subjected to a thorough reading process, which includes repeated viewings to map both denotative and connotative signs (Jayanti et al., 2021). After this process, the signs are categorized for analysis. Secondary data includes production-related information from the OPPO Indonesia website, reviews in mass media, and other written or audio-visual materials. The units of analysis are derived from both primary and secondary data.

Table 2. Element of Analysis

| <b>Semiotic Analysis</b> | <b>Element of movie</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Denotation sign          | Dialogue                |
|                          | Camera techniques       |
|                          | Property                |
|                          | Place/ time settings    |
|                          | Lighting                |
| Connotations sign        | Representation          |

Source: researcher analysis, 2024

The visual elements (table. 2) selected for the analysis of the advertising film are based on cinematographic elements, including audiovisual components, dialogue, lighting, and props within the setting. Cinematographic elements containing semiotic signs are captured through image cropping, and these images are used as primary data sources in the form of screenshots. The criteria for selecting images containing signs prioritize the interpretation of feminist signs. Signs suspected of carrying denotative and connotative meanings are analyzed accordingly. If a sign carries a meaning beyond the main topic, it is interpreted following semiotic principles. Alternative interpretations are considered in relation to the socio-political context of the identified signs. Interpretations of sign representations are conducted to uncover the relationships between signs in the analytical process.

### 2.3 Analysis Technique

The analysis focuses on camera techniques, props, and settings, with dialogue, color, and lighting serving as supporting elements. The data analysis process involves five steps: (1) categorizing and analyzing denotative signs (Ramadhani & Dewi, 2023), (2) categorizing and analyzing connotative signs (Sari, 2021), (3) connecting these signs to the socio-political context of Javanese women and the surrounding hegemony, (4) conducting a comprehensive analysis using feminist theory, and (5) drawing conclusions and recommendations.

### 2.4 Research Conduct

This research was conducted with the standard research procedures of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) with a letter number No:886/KE.01/SK/11/2024 ethical clearance approval on social studies and humanities research National Research and Innovation Agency (NRIA) Indonesian.

## 3. Result

The analysis of Riri Riza's advertising film *You and Me in Low Angle* reveals eight denotative and connotative signs. These signs highlight the director's emphasis on domestic settings and women's roles in social life, supported by the film's backdrop of Javanese houses, streets, residential alleys in the city of Jogjakarta, and the South Gate of the *Ngayogyakarta* (Jogjakarta) palace. These signs highlight the director's emphasis on domestic settings and women's roles in Javanese society, supported by the film's setting in Jogjakarta, including Javanese houses, streets, and the South Gate of the *Ngayogyakarta* palace. Below are the identified denotative and connotative signs in the film:

Table 3. Duration and Semiotic Sign

| <b>Duration (minute)</b> | <b>Denotation sign</b>            | <b>Connotation sign</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 00.00-00.19              | Pillow                            | Domestic space          |
| 00.00-01.03              | Photo (women)                     | Depression              |
| 00.00-01.26              | Arch/Plengkung Gading (Ivory Gate | Freedom                 |
| 00.00-01.59              | Red Kebaya                        | Resistance              |
| 00.00-02.27              | Washing/Laundry                   | Domestic space          |
| 00.00-11.24              | Blue wall                         | Limitations of freedom  |
| 00.00-13.11              | Male (gate)                       | Patriarchy              |
| 00.00-13.15              | Women's paintings                 | Male hegemony           |

Source: Researcher Analysis, 2024

The emotional state and characterization (table. 3) of the female protagonist, Laila—a name commonly used in Indonesia—are central to the narrative. Laila, a costume stylist, longs for her father, whom she has not seen for a long time and can only remember through a photograph. Her search for a paternal figure contributes to her feelings of insecurity in navigating everyday life. Below is a comparative chart depicting the emotional states of the female and male characters in the film.



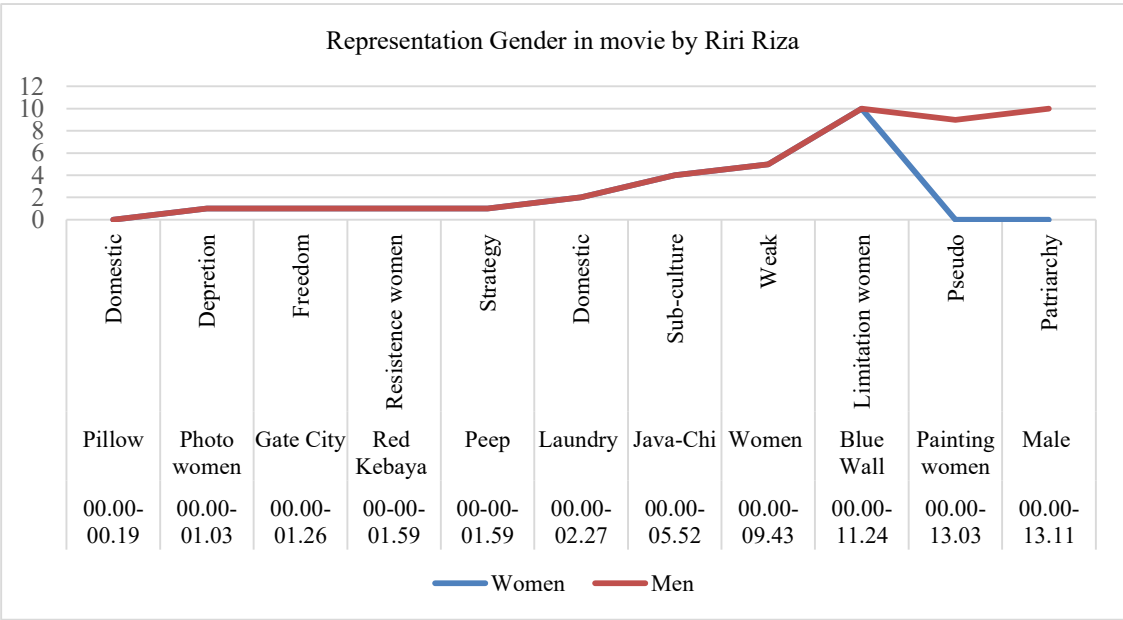


Figure 1. Representation gender in movie (Researcher data, 2024)

The narrative primarily focuses (fig. 1) on Laila's journey as she searches for her father figure. As the main female character, Laila is prominently featured from the beginning to the end of the story. In contrast, the male character (the painter) appears only in the final minutes, serving as the story's climax and connecting thread. Out of the film's 13-minute duration, 12 minutes are dedicated to the female character, while only 2 minutes focus on the male character. This distribution underscores the director's emotional investment in the female characters, highlighting their centrality to the narrative.

3.1 Denotative Sign Analysis

The denotative signs represented in the film include the pillow and bed, a photo of a woman, the South Gate (*kidul*) or the 'ivory arch,' a *kebaya* (traditional women's dress), washing machines (laundry), walls, and paintings of women. These signs symbolically reference the activities and roles of women within the domestic sphere. Specifically, the pillow, bed, washing machine, *kebaya*, and paintings of women illustrate the traditional roles and positions of women in domestic settings. Meanwhile, the gate and wall symbols represent the constraints on women's freedom, reflecting the limitations imposed by their environment, particularly within Javanese culture, which is deeply rooted in male power and patriarchal structures.

Table 4. Domestic sign I

| Symbolic    | Denotative sign | Analysis Domestic sign   |
|-------------|-----------------|--|
| Pillow      | Bed             | <div>- Objects used for sleeping</div> <div>- Objects in room</div>                      |
| Photo women | Angry emotion   | <div>- Self image</div> <div>- Angry at the situation and conditions (environment)</div> |
| Kebaya      | Women's clothes | <div>- Typical Javanese women's clothes</div> <div>- Batik</div>                         |
| Washing     | Washing tools   | <div>- Washing technology</div> <div>- Womens work</div>                                 |
| Painting    | Women painting  | <div>- Depiction of women's roles</div> <div>- Wome's freedom</div>                      |

Source: Researcher Analysis, 2024

The four symbolic signs (table. 4) described above illustrate the roles and positions of Javanese women within the domestic sphere. Traditionally, Javanese women's activities revolve around the bed, symbolizing their role in pleasing and serving their husbands. Emotionally, women are portrayed as angry, stressed, depressed, and confused as they navigate the outside world. The *kebaya* (traditional women's dress) and the washing machine further emphasize women's domestic roles, highlighting their responsibilities in meeting the needs of their husbands and children. However, the film also depicts women as experiencing a paradoxical sense of freedom, one marked by confusion and uncertainty, as they struggle to reconcile their desires with an environment dominated by men.

Table 5. Domestic sign II

| Symbolic | Denotative sign                 | Analysis domestic sign  |
|----------|---------------------------------|---|
| Gate     | Pelengkung gading (in Javanese) | - Entrance to a city (Yogyakarta)<br>- Entrance to the Ngayogyakarta palace |
| Wall     | Blue wall                       | - The role of women is hindered by culture and environment                  |

Source: researcher analysis, 2024

Symbolic denotative signs (table. 5) depicted through *Gerbang* (Ivory arch) and blue wall explain the freedom of women who are still hindered by culture and environment in this case the role and function of women in the Javanese cultural structure is still in the domestic area.

### 3.2 Analysis of Connotative Signs

The first symbolic sign is the pillow. The pillow in the interpretation of connotative signs is a reference sign used to designate the role and position of women as a marginalized group that runs life based on male power as the head of the household. Women as a complement in their husbands' lives and are seen as reproductive machines that can give birth to their husband's children.



Figure 2. Pillow sign (OPPO Indonesia, 2024)

The pillow serves as a connotative sign (fig.2), symbolizing women's roles as reproductive machines. This is accompanied by the emotional expressions of female characters in the advertising film, who are depicted as confused, sad, and angry, often with empty eyes. Through this portrayal, the director illustrates the dynamics of power relations between men and women within the household structure. While women dominate the screen time, they are portrayed as emotionally unstable, reflecting their internal turmoil. Their hesitation symbolizes their resistance to the environmental conditions and societal roles imposed upon them. The second symbolic connotative sign is represented through photographs of women in a state of depression. These images depict women as vulnerable and emotionally overwhelmed, emphasizing their emotional struggles over logical reasoning. The depiction of depression highlights the pressures women face due to the demands of male-dominated power structures, which are legitimized by the surrounding cultural norms.



Figure 3. Photo women sign (OPPO Indonesia, 2024)

The portrayal of women (fig. 3) consistently places them within the domestic sphere of the household, often depicting them as experiencing depression or stress. This representation underscores their lack of agency, as they are shown to have no choice but to accept the roles assigned to them by men. The third symbolic sign is the gate, which serves as a connotative sign in the film. The director uses the gate to establish the setting and contextualize the storyline. Specifically, the Southern Gate of the *Ngayogyakarta* (Jogjakarta) Palace is explicitly depicted as a symbol of male power and ideology, reinforcing the patriarchal structures that dominate the narrative.



Figure 4. Gate sign/ Pelengkung Gading (OPPO Indonesia, 2024)

Male power in Javanese culture (fig. 4), particularly in Jogjakarta, is exemplified by the Sultan (King), who governs both culturally and democratically. Jogjakarta holds a unique status as a special region in Indonesia, with its leadership rooted in the monarchy of the Sultan. This privilege reflects the harmonious integration of the Sultan's authority with the democratic system in modern Indonesian society. This harmony is achieved by blending tradition, culture, customs, and the monarchy with democratic principles. The fourth connotative sign is represented through the *kebaya* (traditional women's dress), a garment closely associated with Javanese women. This sign symbolizes the evolving role and position of Javanese women in the modern era. In the advertising film, Javanese women are portrayed as dynamic, skilled, and hardworking individuals, yet they remain tied to traditional perspectives and roles in the public domain. Javanese tradition dictates that women accept their domestic responsibilities, returning to household duties as a demonstration of their commitment to their husbands.



Figure 5. Red kebaya sign (OPPO Indonesia, 2024)

On the other hand, the director uses the *kebaya* (traditional women's dress) as a symbol of women's resistance to cultural norms and male hegemony in the public sphere. This is exemplified by the mural of a *kebaya* adorning a public space in Jogjakarta, symbolizing women's defiance against traditional roles and responsibilities. The film portrays women demanding a reinterpretation of their roles and functions in both domestic and public spheres, aligning with the progress of democratization and the integration of modern democratic values. The fifth connotative sign (fig. 5) in the advertising film is the washing machine (laundry). This sign represents women's confinement to the domestic sphere, where they are expected to manage household chores and serve their husbands and children. Women are culturally conditioned to accept these roles, stereotyped as individuals responsible for meeting all household needs and interests. The stereotype of women as companions and comforters of men perpetuates a stigma that positions them as helpless and weak. As a result, women are denied the same freedoms as men and are compelled to accept their circumstances, often with full awareness of their constrained roles.





Figure 6. Blue wall sign (OPPO Indonesia, 2024)

The sixth connotative sign (fig 6), the blue wall, carries dual meanings. First, it represents the restricted freedom imposed on women by cultural norms, symbolizing the barriers that limit their mobility, opportunities, and autonomy. Second, the colour blue embodies hope and the possibility of freedom, reflecting women's aspirations despite societal constraints. This duality captures the tension between tradition and modernity, highlighting the obstacles women face and the resilience required to overcome them. Together, these symbols critique the societal expectations that confine women while also pointing to their determination to challenge these norms. The washing machine and blue wall illustrate the emotional and structural barriers women navigate daily, as well as their hope for a future where they can redefine their roles and achieve true equality. Through these symbols, the film invites reflection on the cultural norms shaping women's lives and envisions a transformative path toward empowerment and liberation.



Figure 7. Washing/Laundry sign (OPPO Indonesia, 2024)

The washing machine (fig. 7) in *You and Me in Low Angle* symbolizes the emotional suppression and societal constraints women face, confined to roles as complements to men's lives. It represents the repetitive, undervalued domestic labour women are expected to perform, reinforcing the expectation that they must serve their husbands and manage households, often at the cost of personal freedom. This appliance becomes a metaphor for the cyclical nature of domestic servitude, where women's contributions are essential yet overlooked, perpetuating their confinement to the private sphere. The barrier to freedom for Javanese women lies in the prevailing interpretation of their roles and positions within male-dominated structures. For women, this perspective requires reinterpretation to foster new understandings that promote equality in the social system. This shift is particularly relevant given the evolving social, economic, and political conditions, where traditional values are increasingly integrated with modern democratic systems. Such reinterpretation is crucial for positioning women as agents of change, enabling them to transform both their domestic roles and their public presence, where they can exercise rights and freedoms in expressing opinions, socializing, and participating in political power.



Figure 8. Painting women sign (OPPO Indonesia, 2024)

The seventh sign (fig. 8) in the advertising film is a painting of a woman. This connotative sign merges the main character with her painted representation, depicting her engagement in public sphere activities. This concept illustrates how men perceive women's roles in the public domain, reflecting an ideological perspective rooted in domination and subordination, power and control. The painting, created by a male artist, embodies men's perceptions of women, the realities imposed on them, and the emotions men project onto them. Essentially, the denotative sign of the painting portrays women as constructs shaped by men, denying them the autonomy to define their own realities. While women may appear to enjoy freedom on the surface, in practice, they face numerous obstacles that prevent them from fully shaping the meaning and value of freedom within modern democratic systems. The inherent reality of women's societal roles, deeply rooted in Javanese culture, forms the foundation for the main character's struggle to reinterpret womanhood. The film *You and Me in Low Angle* introduces a subculture of Javanese Chinese women, adding layers of cultural and social complexity. Their relationship with the Sultan's leadership in Jogjakarta is influenced by systems of ownership and land rights, further marginalizing women and complicating their social dynamics. This intersection of ethnicity, gender, and class highlights the multifaceted challenges women face in asserting their agency within a patriarchal system.



Figure 9. Male gate sign (OPPO Indonesia, 2024)

The eighth connotative sign (fig. 9) the man standing beside the *plengkung gading* (ivory arch) gate, searching for a subject to paint symbolizes male dominance in shaping women's realities. The gate, a metaphor for boundaries, reflects how women's freedom is constrained by male perspectives. The act of painting represents the construction of women's identities through the male gaze, leaving little room for self-expression. This imagery critiques how culture, norms, and traditions perpetuate patriarchal ideologies, dictating women's roles and identities. The film portrays the tension between women's lived experiences and societal expectations, emphasizing how women's identities are often shaped by external forces rather than their own aspirations. By including Javanese Chinese women, the narrative underscores the intersection of gender-based oppression with cultural and social marginalization. This layered approach invites reflection on the possibilities for redefining womanhood in a modern, democratic context.

Ultimately, the film challenges patriarchal structures and calls for a society where women are active participants in shaping their identities and futures. Through its rich symbolism and nuanced storytelling, it critiques the status quo while offering a hopeful vision of empowerment and liberation for Javanese women and beyond. At its core, the

connotative signs in the film *You and Me in Low Angle* serve as a powerful critique of the hegemony and power that men wield over women within Javanese society. These signs highlight the urgent need for a transformative perspective on women's realities, particularly within the evolving context of modern democratic social and cultural conditions. The film masterfully portrays the tension between men's and women's perspectives as they grapple with the reinterpretation of women's roles and positions within the Javanese cultural system. This tension is driven by conflicting interests: men, deeply entrenched in patriarchal ideology, seek to preserve their dominance and control over women's lives, while women, inspired by feminist ideals, strive to challenge these norms and assert their agency.

The patriarchal perspective, rooted in centuries-old traditions, views women primarily through the lens of domesticity and subservience. Men, as the custodians of cultural and familial authority, often resist changes that threaten their privileged positions. This resistance is evident in the film's portrayal of male characters who frame women's identities and roles according to their own expectations, perpetuating a cycle of control and marginalization. In contrast, the feminist perspective embraced by the film's female characters reflects a growing awareness of the need for equality and self-determination. Women are depicted as actively redefining their roles, not only within the household but also in the public sphere, where they seek to participate fully in social, economic, and political life. This clash of perspectives is emblematic of the broader struggle for gender equality in Indonesia, where traditional values often collide with the ideals of modern democratization. The film suggests that while democratic systems promise equality and freedom, their realization is hindered by deeply ingrained cultural norms that privilege male authority. By highlighting this tension, the film calls for a reimagining of women's roles—one that acknowledges their contributions, respects their autonomy, and empowers them to shape their own realities. This reimagining is not merely a rejection of patriarchal norms but also a celebration of women's resilience and agency in the face of systemic oppression. Ultimately, the film's exploration of these themes underscores the importance of fostering dialogue and understanding between men and women as they navigate the complexities of cultural change. It challenges viewers to reconsider the ways in which power and privilege are distributed within society and to envision a future where women's voices and experiences are valued equally. In doing so, the film not only critiques the status quo but also offers a hopeful vision of progress, where the principles of modern democracy can truly transform the lives of women in Javanese society and beyond.

### 3.3 Myths of Javanese Women in Ad-films

The connotative sign system in the film *You and Me in Low Angle* employs a rich tapestry of symbols to deconstruct and represent the myths surrounding Javanese women, offering a nuanced critique of their societal roles and struggles. The pillow, for instance, serves as a powerful symbol of women's confinement to domestic roles, evoking the idea of rest and comfort within the home but also implying a limitation to this private sphere. It underscores the expectation that women's primary responsibilities lie in maintaining the household, often at the expense of their personal aspirations. In contrast, the photograph of a depressed woman reflects the emotional toll of navigating a modern democratic system that promises equality but often fails to deliver. This image captures the tension between the ideals of modernity and the persistent realities of patriarchal oppression, highlighting the emotional insecurity many women experience as they strive to reconcile these conflicting forces. The *Gerbang* (ivory arch) is another potent symbol, representing both the possibility of women's freedom and the beginning of their arduous journey toward liberation. As a physical and metaphorical threshold, it signifies the transition from confinement to empowerment, yet it also serves as a reminder of the barriers that remain. Similarly, the *kebaya* (traditional women's dress) embodies the duality of women's roles in Javanese society. While it represents cultural heritage and identity, it also signifies the need for reinterpretation, as traditional garments often come with expectations of subservience and modesty. The washing machine further reinforces this theme, symbolizing women's domestic servitude and their role as caretakers and complements to men's lives. It reflects the repetitive, often invisible labour that women perform, which is essential yet undervalued in patriarchal systems.

The blue wall introduces a more abstract yet equally significant symbol, representing the obstacles and challenges women face in their pursuit of freedom. Its colour evokes a sense of calm and hope, but its presence as a barrier underscores the persistent limitations imposed by societal norms. The painting of a woman, created by a male artist, illustrates the reality imposed on women—a reality shaped by men's perspectives and expectations. This artwork serves as a metaphor for how women's identities and roles are often constructed and controlled by patriarchal narratives, leaving little room for self-definition. Finally, the man standing beside the gate symbolizes the pervasive male gaze and hegemony, framing women as objects to be observed and controlled rather than as autonomous individuals. Together, these symbols create a layered narrative that critiques the myths surrounding Javanese women while also offering a vision of resistance and reinterpretation.

The series of signs in the film depict the reality of women in the domestic sphere, where they are seen as *kanca wingking* (domestic companions) to men. The freedom ostensibly granted to women in various opportunities and political activities is revealed as a pseudo-freedom—a simulation constructed by male ideology (simulacra). The notion



of modern Javanese women achieving freedom within the democratization system is, in fact, a myth. This myth, particularly for Chinese-Javanese women, remains a rhetorical discourse rather than a tangible reality in modern democratic life. The dream of modern Javanese women attaining true freedom within Indonesia's democratization system remains unfulfilled, as the environment, particularly Javanese culture, fails to provide genuine space for women's freedom and leadership. Within Javanese cultural stigma, women are not viewed as leaders but are instead stereotyped as secondary supporters of men. Women's leadership is often dismissed as a theoretical concept within Javanese culture, making it difficult to realize or gain acceptance within the social system, norms, and customs. While men may rhetorically support women's leadership in practical political discourse, the pragmatic realities of power reveal a different story. Women face significant challenges in advancing through the democratization process to attain the highest levels of leadership in modern Indonesian democracy, as they often lack the necessary support from men. This situation is encapsulated in the Javanese phrase *diuculkan endase dicekeli buntute* (letting go of the head while holding the tail), which symbolizes the superficial granting of women's freedom in the political sphere. In practice, their actions and progress remain tightly controlled by men, reflecting a form of pseudo-freedom.

#### 4. Discussion

The role and position of Javanese women as *kanca wingking* (domestic companions) underscore their traditional confinement to the domestic sphere, where their primary responsibilities revolve around household duties and supporting their families. In contrast, access to public and political spaces remains predominantly controlled by men (Dilli et al., 2019), reflecting a deeply entrenched patriarchal ideology that has shaped Javanese culture for centuries. This ideology not only dictates the division of labor but also reinforces power dynamics that privilege men in decision-making processes, both within the household and in broader societal structures. The advertising film *You and Me in Low Angle* mirrors this reality, portraying women as subordinate to men, even as it attempts to engage with themes of modern democratization and gender equality. Despite its efforts to reinterpret women's roles, the film's narrative and visual language often perpetuate traditional gender norms, suggesting that the director's perspective remains influenced by prevailing cultural attitudes. This alignment with traditional norms is particularly evident in the film's setting, which is deeply rooted in the sociopolitical context of Jogjakarta. As a region known for its strong cultural heritage and adherence to Javanese traditions, Jogjakarta provides a fitting backdrop for exploring the tensions between modernity and tradition. The city's unique status as a special region governed by a Sultan further emphasizes the interplay between cultural authority and democratic governance. Within this context, the film's portrayal of women reflects the broader societal challenges they face in navigating their roles within a system that simultaneously celebrates and constrains them. While the film attempts to highlight women's struggles for autonomy and equality, it ultimately reinforces the idea that their liberation remains incomplete, constrained by the very cultural and political structures it seeks to critique. This duality highlights the complexity of addressing gender issues in a society where tradition and modernity coexist, often in conflict.

The reinterpretation of women's roles in modern times, particularly within the framework of democratic systems (Khoular et al., 2024), lies at the heart of OPPO Indonesia's marketing strategy. This approach specifically targets female consumers, with a strong focus on Java, Indonesia's most populous and culturally significant island. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, bps.go.id), the demographic potential of women in Java is substantial: in 2018, Central Java had 11,797,357 women aged 15-64; by 2022, West Java recorded 24,338,582 women in the same age group; East Java reached 20,761,748 in 2023; and Banten accounted for 6,343,421 in 2019. These statistics underscore the importance of women as a critical demographic for OPPO's smartphone marketing efforts. By addressing issues relevant to women such as empowerment (Ilaa, 2021), equality, and representation OPPO effectively integrates diverse, heterogeneous markets into a cohesive, homogeneous segment. This strategy capitalizes on women's influential roles as decision-makers and persuasive agents within their families, enhancing OPPO's market positioning while minimizing competitive pressures. The success of this strategy is evident in the remarkable 227% increase in sales of the OPPO Find X3 Pro 5G following its launch. Notably, pre-orders for the device reached 50% of the sales target within just three days (infokomputer.grid.id; teknobisnis.com). This achievement highlights the effectiveness of OPPO's marketing communication strategy (Anker, 2023), which leverages advertising films to resonate with female consumers. By aligning its brand narrative with themes of women's empowerment and modern democratic values, OPPO not only strengthens its market presence but also fosters a deeper emotional connection with its target audience. This approach demonstrates how addressing societal issues through marketing can drive both commercial success and cultural impact, positioning OPPO as a brand that understands and values the evolving roles of women in contemporary society.

This marketing process integrates advanced product branding strategies with a focus on market segmentation, specifically targeting women residing on the island of Java. The strategy is built on a multifaceted approach that considers female consumers' responses to key factors such as product value, pricing, accessibility, and proximity to purchasing points. Additionally, OPPO's promotional campaigns are designed to resonate with women by addressing

issues relevant to their social and cultural contexts (Keller et al., 2023), encouraging their active participation in conversations about these topics. The timing of these marketing efforts is strategically aligned with the post-COVID-19 period, a time when digital engagement and online activities have surged. Social media platforms, particularly YouTube, play a pivotal role in this strategy, as they became the most widely used media during and after the pandemic. By leveraging YouTube's extensive reach, OPPO amplifies discussions around the evolving roles and positions of women in society, positioning them as agents of education and change in social and environmental initiatives. This is particularly evident in family-oriented educational activities conducted online, where women often take the lead. The marketing team at OPPO Indonesia has developed a highly effective plan that emphasizes the unique features and advantages of their products through compelling digital media content (Van Dijck et al., 2021). By crafting narratives that address issues relevant to women—such as empowerment, equality, and representation—the team creates a strong emotional connection with their target audience (Egelhofer et al., 2022). These narratives are deeply rooted in the cultural context of Java, particularly Jogjakarta, a region known for its rich traditions and evolving gender dynamics. This culturally informed approach not only enhances the relatability of the campaigns but also strengthens OPPO's brand identity as one that understands and values its consumers. This marketing communication strategy is highly effective, as it allows OPPO to analyze both the strengths and weaknesses of its product offerings while engaging in persuasive communication patterns. By addressing the specific needs and concerns of women, the marketing team gains valuable insights into consumer motivations, enabling them to refine their strategies and better compete in the market. Furthermore, this approach facilitates a deeper understanding of competing products, allowing OPPO to differentiate itself through culturally relevant and socially conscious messaging. Ultimately, this strategy not only drives product sales but also positions OPPO as a brand that champions women's empowerment and social progress, fostering long-term loyalty among its target demographics.

In 2023, OPPO Indonesia experienced a decline in sales growth, with the primary market share dominated by Vivo at 19% (with 13% growth), Xiaomi at 18% (with significant growth of 40%), Samsung at 1%, and Transsion at 147% growth. However, in the first three months of 2024, OPPO regained its leading position in the Indonesian market, followed by Samsung, Transsion (including Infinix, Tecno, and iTel), and Xiaomi. OPPO Indonesia's market share reached 19.9%, with a year-on-year growth of 8.5% (source: [tekno.kompas.com](https://tekno.kompas.com)). Overall, OPPO Indonesia's sales in the first quarter of 2024 reached 10 million units, with 1.99 million smartphones sold between January and March 2024. By the third quarter of 2024, OPPO Indonesia secured the top sales position with 22%, followed by Xiaomi at 19%, Transsion at 18%, and Samsung and Vivo each at 16%. In the Philippines, OPPO ranked second with 16% market share, trailing Transsion at 33%. In Thailand, OPPO led with 24%, while in Vietnam, it ranked second after Samsung with 23%. In Malaysia, OPPO held the top position with 16%. Consumer engagement is the primary objective of OPPO Indonesia's use of YouTube as a marketing platform. This strategy is based on fostering emotional interactions between consumers and the company, evidenced by consumption patterns among viewers of OPPO Indonesia's advertising films. These patterns include curation (viewing reviews), creation (recommending experiences to others), and collaboration (encouraging consumers to follow subsequent advertising campaigns).

The primary objective of marketing communication through advertising films is to leverage women's issues as a stable marketing strategy, revitalizing product branding and positioning among female audiences (Sembiring & Diana, 2024). This approach incorporates up-to-date marketing content that addresses pressing issues related to women, making it both relevant and impactful. By allocating resources to Indonesian filmmakers for producing these advertising films, OPPO Indonesia adopts an effective strategy to address creativity challenges, particularly in empowering women to become content creators in the digital world. In this context, director Riri Riza's role and perspective are deeply rooted in feminist ideals. Riza's work reflects a commitment to addressing the significant issues surrounding the role and position of Javanese women in their fight for freedom, particularly within the democratic system, while challenging male-centric ideologies. Riza seeks to reinterpret the narratives about women, which have historically been shaped by men to reinforce male dominance and power. His interpretation of women's realities highlights their struggles across various spheres of life, including their roles and positions within the domestic household, the workplace and professional environments, and the realm of practical politics.

Riri Riza offers alternative interpretations through his films. As a director and producer, he has created numerous works centered on themes of women and children, including *Petualangan Sherina* (2023), *Paranoia* (2021), *Bebas* (2019), *Kulari ke Pantai* (2018), *Emma* (2016), *Sokola Rimba* (2013), *Sang Pemimpi* (2009), *Tiga Hari untuk Selamanya* (2007), *Atambua 390 Celsius*, *Pendekar Tongkat Emas* (2014), *Athirah* (2016), *Milly & Mamet* (2018), *Drupadi* (2008), *Garasi* (2006), *Untuk Rena* (2005), *Gie* (2005), *Eliana Eliana* (2002), and *Kuldesak* (1998). Riza's focus on women and children reflects his psychological and ideological commitment to interpreting the roles and positions of women within societal structures, allowing him to authentically portray the diverse conditions and challenges women face. Feminism, in this context, is defined as the advocacy for women's rights and equality, regardless of the advocate's gender. It

involves actively supporting and addressing the issues women encounter within the social system, often through creative expressions such as film. Riri Riza exemplifies this by striving to champion the rights, roles, and positions of women in the nation's social and political landscape within the framework of modern Indonesian democracy. Born on October 2, 1970, Muhammad Rivai Riza frequently collaborates with Mira Lesmana in the production of his films, further solidifying his commitment to feminist narratives and social issues.

## 5. Conclusion

OPPO Indonesia's marketing communication strategy, utilizing YouTube and the advertising film *You and Me in Low Angle*, successfully incorporates eight denotative and connotative signs. These signs include the pillow, a photo of a depressed woman, the gate (ivory arch), a red *kebaya*, a washing machine, a blue wall, a man at the south gate, and a painting of a woman. Denotatively, these signs reflect the traditional roles of Javanese women in the domestic sphere, legitimized by the *plengkung gading* gate as a symbol of the Jogjakarta palace. Connotatively, they represent the struggles of Javanese women to redefine their roles within both domestic and public spaces, particularly in the context of leadership within Javanese society. While the film predominantly features women, the ideological conflict between patriarchal norms and women's aspirations remains unresolved, with male dominance prevailing. The depiction of Javanese patriarchal ideology is prominently reflected in the narrative's setting, particularly through the male painter who observes the bustling streets of Jogjakarta and portrays women as the subjects of his paintings. This male perspective constructs a social reality that frames women's freedom within the confines of the painting's frame, symbolizing its limited and controlled nature. The metaphor of the frame underscores the imbalance between the male-dominated perspective and the struggles of women fighting for freedom in various ways. Through this, advertising film director Riri Riza seeks to reinterpret the realities of Javanese women, emphasizing their struggle for equality with men within the cultural context of Java.

The connection between women's issues and OPPO Indonesia's advertising film production lies in the targeting of female audiences as a key demographic in marketing communication. Women's significant roles in household decision-making enable them to determine and manage their families' needs, making their purchasing decisions crucial. As agents of change, women are seen as capable of influencing product marketing environments and outcomes. This positions them as essential partners in the success of OPPO Indonesia's marketing strategy. The campaign aligns with the broader marketing objective of promoting smartphones as tools for creativity, enabling users to produce and share content on platforms like YouTube and Instagram. The strategy employed by Riri Riza and OPPO Indonesia's marketing team successfully reinterprets the role of Javanese women, targeting them as a homogeneous audience. By dismantling the myth of women's lack of freedom, the film transforms this perceived weakness into a strength, reshaping market realities through the lens of Javanese patriarchal ideology. The success of OPPO's marketing lies in its ability to connect marketing objectives with the reinterpretation of women's roles, using the narrative of women's search for identity and freedom in Jogjakarta as a central theme.

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