

Distribution of Patriarchal Ideology In the Khilma Anis's Novel *Hati Suhita*: A Semiotic Study of Webb Keane's Ideology

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Abstract

This study examines Khilma Anis's novel *Hati Suhita* through the lens of semiotic ideology as outlined by Webb Keane. Semiotic ideology involves people's core assumptions about signs, their functions, and potential impacts. The research aims to uncover how signs within the novel depict patriarchal systems in pesantren families and highlight women's acts of resistance. Employing a qualitative methodology with a Peircean semiotic framework, informed by semiotic ideology, the findings indicate that: (1) the tradition of arranged marriages acts as a signifier representing patriarchal dominance in pesantren households; (2) the husband's silence and refusals symbolize naturalized masculine authority; (3) the determination and escape of the female character to her mother symbolize resistance to patriarchal dominance; and (4) a tension exists between semiotic ideologies of pesantren traditions and individual female agency. This research offers insights into how pesantren literature both reproduces and questions social power structures through signs.

Keywords: *semiotic ideology, Hati Suhita novel, patriarchy, pesantren, Peircean semiotics*

INTRODUCTION

Pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, have complex gender relations dynamics and have become the focus of contemporary researchers. According to Oktaviani et al., (2024) the root causes of gender inequality in pesantren are the hierarchy between kiai and santri, the perpetuation of patriarchal culture, and the santri's total obedience to the kiai. Pebriaisyah et al., (2022) in their study on power relations in Islamic boarding schools, found that a perennial patriarchal culture has been institutionalized in the boarding school environment through the curriculum, learning materials, and Islamic narratives that are often interpreted textually.

(Wardany et al., 2024) explain that in the pesantren tradition, a kiai is positioned as a parent who must be obeyed and respected, because a teacher or kiai is a parent who has given birth to a scholarly heart. This concept of ta'dzim (respect) encompasses four meanings: respect for knowledge, seeking blessings, hoping for the teacher's approval, and symbolizing obedience to the teacher. In the context of pesantren marriages, Amna, (2018) found that the charismatic leadership of the kiai and the concept of barokah believed by the santri made this matchmaking process possible.

The Novel *Hati Suhita* karya Khilma Anis is a work of contemporary pesantren literature that describes the dynamics of women's lives within the social structure of the pesantren family and represents the complexity of gender relations in the pesantren family setting. This novel tells the story of Alina Suhita, a woman who is arranged to marry Gus Birru, the son of the kiai who owns the Al-Anwar pesantren, but does not receive love from her husband, who still has a relationship with another woman. This situation places the protagonist in a subordinate position that must be negotiated through various strategies of resistance. This marriage without love results in complex internal conflicts, in which the female character

must negotiate with the tradition of arranged marriage, social expectations, and her personal desires.

In the context of literary studies, works set in Islamic boarding schools are interesting to study because they contain complex systems of signs. Pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, have a distinctive hierarchical structure, in which the kiai and his family occupy a central position. The tradition of arranged marriages between pesantren families is one of the practices that still survives today, functioning as a mechanism to maintain the continuity of kinship networks and pesantren leadership Eliya et al., (2024).

This study uses the perspective of semiotic ideology developed by Keane, (2018) which defines semiotic ideology as people's underlying assumptions about what signs are, what functions signs do or do not serve, and what consequences they might or might not produce. This concept opens up a broader space for analysis than simply identifying signs and their meanings, but also reveals how assumptions about these signs are shaped by specific social, cultural, and political contexts.

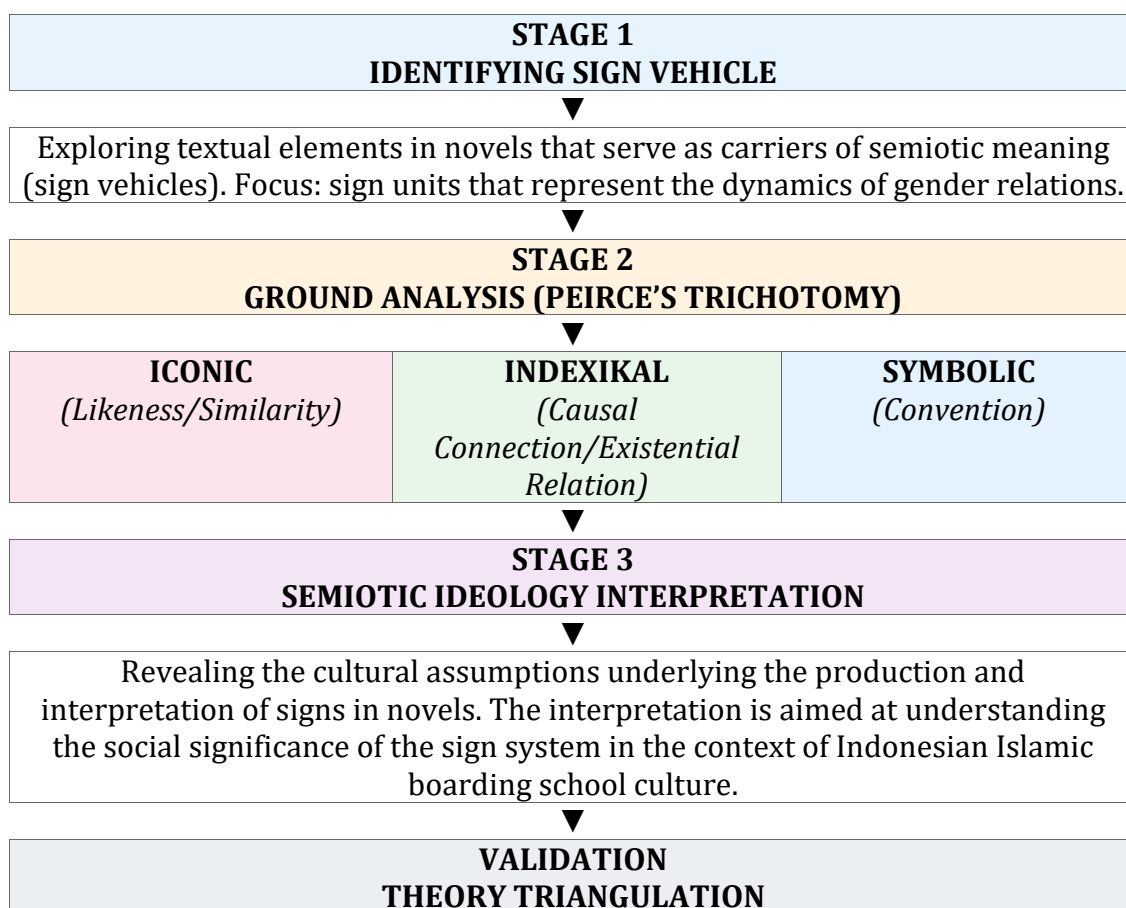
The novelty of this research lies in the use of a semiotic ideology theoretical framework to analyze Indonesian pesantren literature. Previous research on the film *Hati Suhita* tends to use the feminist approach of Wardany et al., (2024), and cultural studies (Rahma et al., 2022; Setiawan, 2024). Using a semiotic ideology perspective, this study not only analyzes representations of patriarchy and female resistance but also reveals how these signs are mediated by broader cultural assumptions about the relationship between signs and social reality.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method with a semiotic analysis approach mediated by the concept of semiotic ideology. The primary data source is the novel *Hati Suhita* by Khilma Anis, published by Telaga Aksara in collaboration with Mazaya Media in 2019, with a total of 405 pages.

The data collection technique used was reading and note-taking (Endraswara, 2008). The data consists of text excerpts representing: (1) the tradition of arranged marriages as a sign vehicle; (2) masculine dominance through words and actions; (3) forms of female resistance; and (4) the semiotic ideological struggle between tradition and individual agency.

Data analysis in this study adopts the semiotic ideology framework developed by (Keane, 2018), where semiotic ideology refers to “*people's underlying assumptions about what signs are, what functions signs do or do not serve, and what consequences they might or might not produce*”. This framework is combined with Peircean trichotomy (icon, index, symbol) to analyze gender representation in novels. The analysis process is carried out through three systematic stages.



Stage 1: Identification of *Sign Vehicle*. At this stage, researchers trace textual elements in the novel that serve as carriers of semiotic meaning. The concept of *sign vehicle* refers to the observable material or formal aspects of a sign Keane, (2003). The main focus is to find sign units that represent the dynamics of gender relations, such as the practice of arranged marriages, silence, religious rituals, and social interactions in the context of Islamic boarding schools.

Stage 2: Ground Analysis. This stage involves tracing the relationship between the sign vehicle and the object it refers to. This relationship is categorized based on trichotomy (Peirce, 1940; Short, 2007) (a) *iconic* relationship based on similarity or resemblance between the sign and its object; (b) *indexical* relations based on causal, existential, or spatial-temporal proximity; and (c) *symbolic* relations based on convention or social agreement. The entire analysis in this stage is framed through a semiotic ideology perspective to understand how these signs operate in a particular social context.

Stage 3: Interpretation of Semiotic Ideology. At this stage, researchers reveal the cultural assumptions underlying the process of producing and interpreting signs in novels. As Keane, (2018), argues, semiotic ideology *manifests the reflexivity that is inherent to the general human sign-using capacity* and connects general semiotic processes with specific ethical and political judgments. The interpretation is aimed at understanding the social significance of the sign system, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

The analysis was validated through theoretical triangulation with various academic sources on Islamic boarding schools and gender. This approach involved cross-checking the findings with theoretical frameworks from various disciplines, gender and Islamic studies (Mahmood, 2012), and symbolic capital theory (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

1. The Tradition of Arranged Marriage as a Sign of Patriarchal Power

The tradition of arranged marriage in the novel is represented as an institutionalized practice in Islamic boarding school families and functions as a mechanism for the reproduction of patriarchal power. The textual data that was successfully identified is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Findings Data on Arranged Marriage as a Sign of Patriarchal Power

| No. | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|---|--|---|
| 1 | <i>"Sebenarnya, perjodohan di kalangan keluarga pesantren adalah hal biasa... Tapi perempuan-perempuan lain jelas lebih beruntung dariku..." (hlm. 69, par. 1)</i> | Phrase 'hal biasa' and 'lebih beruntung dariku' | Normalization of arranged marriages as a common practice accompanied by awareness of personal inequality |
| 2 | <i>"Ya, aku tahu ini bukan salahmu. Kamu juga tidak punya pilihan lain selain manut. Tapi malam ini juga kamu harus paham, aku tidak mencintaimu, atau tepatnya, aku belum mencintaimu." (hlm. 2, par. 6)</i> | Leksikon Jawa 'manut' and declration of refusal | Expectations of female compliance coupled with the legitimacy of emotional rejection from husbands. |
| 3 | <i>"Namun, mereka tak tahu seberapa banyak tangisku tumpah. Mereka tidak tahu bahwa aku sudah lama berencana ingin pergi tapi tak sanggup kutinggalkan ummik yang terlanjur kusayangi. Ummik yang sendirian</i> | Repetisi 'sendirian' and phrase 'putera tunggalnya terlalu cuek' | Solidarity among women as motivation to persevere, accompanied by veiled criticism of neglectful masculinity. |

| No. | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|--|-----------|-----------|
| | <i>membesarkan pesantrennya. Ya, sendirian. Karena putera tunggalnya terlalu cuek." (hlm. 5, par. 3)</i> | | |

Sumber: novel *Hati Suhita* (Anis, 2019)

2. Silence and Rejection by the Husband as a Sign of Masculine Domination

A significant finding in the novel is the function of the husband's 'silence' as a vehicle for masculine domination that operates paradoxically—the absence of communication actually communicates power. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Findings Data on Silent Signs as Instruments of Masculine Domination

| No. | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 1 | <i>"...Mas Birru malah menyiksaku dengan diamnya. Dengan tatapan kebencian dan penolakannya." (hlm. 29)</i> | The word 'menyiksa' and 'tatapan kebencian' | Silence as an active act of psychological torture intended as rejection. |
| 2 | <i>"Tapi di kamar ini, tak terjadi apa-apa. Purnama atau sabit sama saja, tak menggerakkan matanya untuk melihatku. Tak menuntun tangannya untuk menyentuh tubuhku. Tak seorang pun berani bersuara. Tak seorang pun berani memecah kesunyian." (hlm. 10, par. 5)</i> | Repetition structure 'tak... tak... tak...' and the phrase 'berani bersuara' | Silence as a norm that binds both parties with the cumulative effect of emptiness. |
| 3 | <i>"Aku tahu mereka satu tim. Tapi melihat sinar bahagia Mas Birru, hatiku hancur</i> | Metaphore 'sinar bahagia' versus 'tatapan | Contrasting treatment that creates layered |

| No. | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|---|---|---|
| | <i>berkeping-keping... Aku begitu lunglai dihantam gelombang cemburu." (hlm. 125)</i> | kebencian'; somatic expression | wounds; emotional rejection manifested physically |
| 4 | <i>"...Fokus aja urus pondok. Urus mertuamu." (hlm. 52)</i> | Short imperative sentences that reduce the role | Husband's expectations: wife as servant of the institution and family, not partner. |

Source: novel *Hati Suhita* (Anis, 2019)

3. Women's Negotiation Strategies in Patriarchal Structures

The textual data shows various negotiation strategies used by female characters to survive within patriarchal structures without confrontation. These strategies are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings on Women's Negotiation Strategies

| No. | Strategy | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Internalization of Emotions (Silence as Protection) | <i>"Di luar hujan semakin deras... Aku rindu. Tapi aku tahu, itu harus kusimpan sendiri dalam diam..." (hlm. 20)</i> | Modality 'harus' and practice 'mendem jero' | Silence as a survival mechanism, not an expression of obedience |
| 2 | Distribution to Religious-Domestic Practices | <i>"...lalu memberiku amalan-amalan dan wirid agar aku lekas mengandung." (hlm. 62)</i> <i>"...berusaha keras untuk bisa memasak</i> | The practice of wirid (Zikr practices in the form of reciting prayers and praises to Allah SWT) and mastery of family cuisine | Accumulation of spiritual capital and domestic competence as a claim to self- worth |

| No. | Strategy | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| | | <i>makanan andalan keluarga ini..." (hlm. 66)</i> | | |
| 3 | Social Identity Development | <i>"Alina Suhita, dikenal semua orang sebagai calon menantu Kiai Hannan..." (hlm. 39)</i> | Relationship status with in-laws (not husband) | Social legitimacy through channels that do not depend on the husband's acceptance |
| 4 | Symbolic Escape to the Figure of the Mother | <i>"Aku menangis dalam gelap. Terisak dalam sunyi. Aku ingin lari menembus hujan. Menghambur ke pelukan ibuku." (hlm. 93)</i> | Repetition 'dalam gelap', 'dalam sunyi'; desire 'lari menembus hujan' | Longing to return to a secure system of signs; expressions of sadness in private spaces |
| 5 | Considerations for Direct Confrontation | <i>"Tekatku sudah bulat, aku harus menemui Ratna Rengganis. Dia harus pergi dari kehidupan Mas Birru." (hlm. 13)</i> | Target of confrontation: other women (not husband) | Patriarchal ideology directs anger towards other women |

Source: novel *Hati Suhita* (Anis, 2019)

Table 3b. Characterization Data on the Resilience of Female Characters

| No. | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 1 | "...Dia mekar. Tumbuh lurus... Tapi tidak tenggelam... Ia tenang dalam keindahan.." (hlm. 43) | Botanical Metaphore: 'mekar', 'tumbuh lurus', 'tidak tenggelam' | Ability to survive and thrive in unfavorable conditions |
| 2 | "Dukanya bahkan membuat orang seperti Aruna menangis tersedu... Tapi kau adalah seorang ratu." (hlm. 45) | The title 'ratu' which signifies dignity | Recognition of permanence within the hierarchical framework (without actual power) |

Source: novel *Hati Suhita* (Anis, 2019)

4. Mediation between Traditional Islamic Boarding School Ideology and Modern Ideology

The novel presents a battle between two different value systems regarding the position and agency of women. Textual data showing the representation and negotiation of both ideologies are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Findings on the Mediation of Traditional and Modern Ideologies

| No. | Ideological Dimension | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Traditional Islamic Boarding School (Figure of Ummik—mom) | "Ummikku adalah perempuan hebat... pesantren kami berkembang pesat bukan sebab abah, tapi sebab tangan dingin ummik." (hlm. 128) | Phrase 'bukan sebab abah' and 'tangan dingin ummik' | Recognition of women's agencies operating 'behind the scenes' without challenging the formal hierarchy |

| No. | Ideological Dimension | Data Quotation | Signifier | Signified |
|-----|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| 2 | Modern (Rengganis Figure) | " <i>Aku tahu mereka satu tim. Tapi melihat sinar bahagia Mas Birru, hatiku hancur berkeping-keping... Aku begitu lunglai dihantam gelombang cemburu.</i> " (hlm. 125) | 'Sinar bahagia' in the relationship between choice and rigidity in arranged marriages | Alternative models of femininity based on personal choice; both a threat and another possibility |
| 3 | Synthesis (Protagonist) | " <i>...Dia mekar. Tumbuh lurus... Tapi tidak tenggelam... Ia tenang dalam keindahan.</i> " (hlm. 43) | 'Mekar' dan 'tumbuh lurus' (nilai modern) + 'tenang dalam keindahan' (nilai tradisional) | Negotiations to find a position that allows survival while maintaining dignity |

Source: novel *Hati Suhita* (Anis, 2019)

1. The Tradition of Arranged Marriage as a Sign of Patriarchal Power

The tradition of arranged marriage functions as a *sign vehicle* that indexes the patriarchal power structure within the pesantren family. Keane (2018) explains that in ritual traditions, symbolic meaning cannot be separated from its material consequences. The same is true of the tradition of arranged marriage in this novel, where arranged marriage is not merely a symbol of the union of two families, but has real material consequences for women's lives. The tradition of arranged marriage has undergone a process of naturalization, referred to in Keane's terminology as *rhematization*, in which practices that are actually historical and contingent are treated as something natural and inevitable. The use of the phrase "it's normal" in the first quote shows how arranged marriage has been normalized in the pesantren community.

The phenomenon of arranged marriages in the novel *Hati Suhita* can be analyzed through the concept of *patriarchal bargain* developed by Kandiyoti, who explains:

"Women strategize within a set of concrete constraints, which I identify as patriarchal bargains. Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct 'rules of the game' and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression." (Kandiyoti, 1988)

This concept is very relevant to understanding Alina's position in the novel. She does not completely reject or accept the patriarchal structure, but rather negotiates within it. Her obedience is not a sign of a lack of agency, but rather a strategy to *maximize security and optimize life options* within the available constraints. Kandiyoti further explains that in the *classic patriarchal* system characteristic of South Asia and the Muslim Middle East, women acquire power not through direct confrontation, but through the accumulation of capital in the domestic hierarchy, primarily through the role of mother-in-law who controls her daughter-in-law. This pattern is seen in Alina's relationship with her *ummik* (mother-in-law), where Alina survives not because of her husband, but because of her solidarity with a senior female figure who has also "paid the price" in a similar patriarchal system.

The theme of arranged marriage in the context of Islamic boarding schools is also a major focus in the novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban (Women Wearing Headscarves)* by Abidah El Khalieqy. (Muzakka et al., 2020) found that the struggle for gender equality in the novel was caused by male oppression of women based on highly patriarchal explanations and interpretations of verses from the Qur'an. However, there are significant differences between the two novels. The character Anisa explicitly rebels against the patriarchal structure through divorce and higher education, a form of *liberal feminism* and *radical feminism* (Hardiasari et al., 2024). In contrast, Alina in *Hati Suhita* represents a more subtle model of resistance, which

is referred to by (Mahmood, 2012) as agency that does not always take the form of resistance against dominant norms.

Amna (2018) found that arranged marriages are absolutely chosen by the kiai, who also acts as the wali mujbir (guardian) for the marriage of his students. This finding shows how the charismatic authority of the kiai indexes patriarchal power that transcends the religious domain into the realm of marriage. Kholilurrohman et al., (2025) found that santri obedience is instilled through subtle but effective hegemony, creating a pattern of voluntary obedience. This process parallels how arranged marriages are naturalized within pesantren families, not through explicit coercion, but through the internalization of values of obedience. Within the framework of , this constitutes a form of *symbolic* violence that operates through an unconscious agreement between dominant and subordinate parties.

2. Husband's Silence and Refusal as an Iconic Sign of Masculine Domination

The husband's silence operates as a complex *sign vehicle* with *multiple layers of meaning*. Keane, (2003) explains that naturalization occurs when an indexical sign is taken as an iconic sign of a person's character or essence. In the novel, the husband's silence has undergone a transformation from an indexical sign related to a response to lack of love into an iconic sign as a representation of the essence of masculinity that has the right to ignore. The repetition of the negation "not... not... not..." reinforces the paradoxical presence of absence, namely silence as a performative *speech act*. Although no words are spoken, the silence actively communicates rejection and power.

The husband's silence in the novel can be understood through the concept of *disciplinary power* (Foucault, 1995) Explaining how modern power operates not through explicit repression, but through surveillance and normalization that produces *docile bodies*:

"Discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)."

King, (2004) argues that Foucault's theory is highly relevant to understanding the disciplining of women's bodies. He writes that *gender, specifically femininity, is a discipline that produces bodies and identities and operates as an effective form of social control*. In the context of the novel, Gus Birru's silence functions as a disciplinary mechanism that shapes Alina into an obedient subject who monitors and normalizes herself without the need for explicit coercion. Bartky (1990) expands on Foucault's analysis with a feminist perspective, arguing that women discipline and control their bodies in feminine ways that *serve the interests of domination*. In the novel, Alina internalizes her husband's gaze of rejection to the point that she constantly monitors herself, a form of internalized *panoptic surveillance*.

The theme of psychological violence through silence and neglect is also found in the novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (The Woman with the Turban). Research (Kurniawati & Muafiah, 2023) identifies two forms of violence: direct violence, characterized by destructive actions, deeds, and behavior; and indirect violence, characterized by foul language, inappropriate behavior, and deviation from norms. The character Samsudin commits direct physical and sexual violence, while Gus Birru in *Hati Suhita* commits indirect violence through silence and neglect. This difference shows the spectrum of masculine domination that operates in various registers, from the visible to the subliminal.

In the context of pesantren marriage, Gus Birru inherits this hierarchical position as the son of a kiai, and his silence serves as a marker of his superior status. Fauzi et al., (2019) found that the power relations that operate in pesantren involve a unique process of power and discipline that is structured and has become part of the culture of the pesantren itself. This finding confirms that the husband's silence in the novel is not an individual phenomenon, but rather part of a broader power system operating within the pesantren institution.

3. Women's Resistance through Symbolic Strategies

The resistance of female characters operates within the boundaries of patriarchal semiotic ideology, not outside of it. Keane, (2018) explains that *semiotic ideologies are kinds of abduction, and abduction is the fundamental epistemological mode of social life*. In other words, the way women in the novel read their situation and choose their response is determined by the semiotic ideology available to them. The strategy of keeping silent is not merely passivity, but a form of agency that operates within the semiotic ideology of Islamic boarding schools, where a good woman is one who is able to "*mendem jero*" (keep things deep inside). The practices of reciting prayers and cooking can be understood as alternative *sign vehicles* that enable women to build *symbolic capital*, which in turn enables them to maintain their position within socially accepted boundaries.

Alina's resistance strategy can be analyzed through the concepts of *symbolic capital* and *habitus*. Bourdieu, (1990) defines *habitus* as *the durable and generalized disposition that suffuses a person's action throughout an entire domain of life*. In the context of gender, he explains:

The dominated apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear as natural. (Bourdieu, 2001)

Huppertz (2009) develops Bourdieu's concept to analyze *feminine capital*, a form of capital acquired through the appearance and practice of recognized femininity. In the novel, Alina's competence in cooking the family's signature dishes and her diligence in performing wirid (prayers) are forms of accumulated *feminine capital* that give her a position that cannot be easily replaced in the pesantren family structure.

Alina's resistance strategy can also be understood through the framework developed by Mahmood, which challenges the assumption of liberal feminism that women's agency always takes the form of resistance to dominant norms:

If the ability to effect change in the world and in oneself is historically and culturally specific... then the meaning and sense of agency cannot be fixed in advance, but must emerge through an analysis of the particular concepts that enable specific modes of being, responsibility, and effectivity. (Mahmood, 2012)

In the context of the Islamic piety movement, women's agency does not always take the form of resistance to patriarchy, but can also be *the capacity* to inhabit and embody norms that appear subordinative. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding how Alina builds her agency through piety and domesticity, rather than through rejection of them.

In *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (Women Wearing Headscarves), the character Anisa represents a different model of resistance, which refers to as *challenging patriarchal Islam* (Hellwig, 2011). Anisa actively questions subordinative religious interpretations and pursues higher education as a path to emancipation. In contrast, Alina in *Hati Suhita* represents what (Rinaldo, 2014) refers to as *pious critical agency*, namely agency that operates within the framework of piety without rejecting the religious structure as a whole. These two models demonstrate the spectrum of strategies available to pesantren women in negotiating with patriarchy.

Kurniawati et al., (2023) found that women often use adaptive strategies to survive in structures that are not favorable to them. These findings confirm that Alina's resistance strategy is not merely a literary phenomenon, but reflects real patterns found in empirical research. Istiqlaliyani (2022) explains that female scholars in Islamic boarding schools have successfully developed boarding school programs by becoming charismatic, democratic, and servant leaders. Although Alina is not a scholar, her strategy reflects a similar pattern by building authority through demonstrations of competence in culturally accepted domains.

4. Mediation between Traditional Islamic Boarding School Ideology and Modern Ideology

There is a battle between two semiotic ideologies. On one side, there is the traditional pesantren ideology that emphasizes obedience, blessings, and hierarchy, placing women's as supporters (not actors) of power. On the other side, there is a modern ideology that emphasizes individual agency, romantic love, and personal choice. Keane (2018) explains that *semiotic ideology can play a crucial role in religious or political clashes, in which the very existence of the object of signification is itself in question*. The figure of Rengganis operates outside the structure of pesantren matchmaking, representing the possibility of relationships based on individual choice. The *sign vehicles* attached to Rengganis are described as intelligent women, sociable, and able to position themselves, indexing the modern semiotic ideology of independent women. Conversely, Alina Suhita is identified through traditional *sign vehicles*: the kiai's daughter-in-law, performing wirid practices, and cooking.

Keane (2018) explains that semiotic ideology is not monolithic; in every society, there is *a representational economy* of the totality of sign systems available in a particular historical and social context. In the novel, *the representational economy* of the pesantren includes not only symbols of obedience, barokah, and feminine domesticity, but also symbols of resilience and wisdom that can be appropriated by women. The characterization of the protagonist as "blooming," "growing straight," "not sinking," and "calm in beauty" shows the reconciliation of the two ideologies. This battle of semiotic ideologies leads to transformation rather than destruction of the structure, but rather a reinterpretation of meaning within that structure.

The ideological struggle in the novel is analyzed through the concepts of *field* and *habitus*. McCall (1992) explains that *field* refers to *binary oppositions which structure the entire social space (e.g., dominant/dominated, high/low, strong/weak,*

male/female, culture/nature). In the context of the novel, the Islamic boarding school is a *field* with its own logic of practice. Alina and Rengganis represent two different *habitus*, namely traditional-domestic *habitus* and modern-professional *habitus*. The figure of *ummik* functions as a strong and influential female mediator but operates within a traditional framework, thus representing the possibility of female agency remaining within the structure of the Islamic boarding school without directly rejecting traditional ideology.

Ismah (2011) notes that novels such as *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* represent a *new generation of women writers from the pesantren tradition* who bring feminist issues into the discourse of pesantren literature. However, the way the two novels resolve ideological conflicts differs significantly. In *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, resolution is achieved through leaving the structure, namely divorce, higher education, and remarriage to a progressive man. In *Hati Suhita*, resolution is achieved through transformation from within, namely Gus Birru finally recognizing Alina's value, so that she maintains her position without leaving the pesantren structure. This difference represents two different visions of women's emancipation in the context of Indonesian Islam.

Damayanti et al., (2021) explain that realizing education that is rich in gender responsiveness requires support from all levels of society, and awareness and understanding related to gender equality are important. The novel describes how female characters do not completely reject traditional ideology, but rather negotiate with it through the figure of *ummik*. Rahman (2017) explains the importance of gender mainstreaming in pesantren education, which does not reject tradition, but rather examines Islamic feminism as a framework for reinterpretation. Keane (2018) asserts that *semiotic ideologies are kinds of abduction* in which, *in the end, people's interactions with one another neither start from nor arrive at certainties*. The implication is that social transformation does not

have to take the form of a total rejection of one semiotic ideology and the adoption of another, but can occur through negotiation and reinterpretation of existing signs.

The above analysis shows that the novel *Hati Suhita* represents the complexity of women's negotiations with patriarchal structures in the context of contemporary Javanese Islamic boarding schools. Through Keane's semiotic ideology framework, we can see how signs such as arranged marriages, husbands' silence, and women's resistance strategies operate within a complex and contestable network of meanings. This analysis shows that women's agency in the novel cannot be understood solely through the binary framework of resistance-subordination. Instead, the women in the novel demonstrate various strategies that operate within and sometimes reform existing structures. A comparison with the novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* shows the spectrum of strategies available to pesantren women. While El Khalieqy's novel represents a model of confrontational resistance that leads to leaving the structure, Khilma Anis's novel *Hati Suhita* represents a model of negotiation that leads to transformation from within. These two models should not be viewed as hierarchical, with one being more feminist than the other, but rather as contextual responses to the specific conditions faced by women.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the novel *Hati Suhita* using Webb Keane's semiotic ideology perspective yields the following important findings:

The first, The tradition of arranged marriage as a sign vehicle. The tradition of arranged marriage in Islamic boarding school families functions as a sign vehicle that indexes the patriarchal power structure through the process of rhematization, namely the social reproduction of Islamic boarding school institutions. This process is a product of the transformation of the indexical relationship between the will of parents and the obedience of children into an iconic relationship of arranged marriage as the nature of women in Islamic boarding schools.

The Second, Husband's Silence as an Iconic Sign of Domination. The husband's silence operates as an iconic sign of masculinized domination that has been naturalized, as a response to conditions of non-love. Silence is treated as the husband's prerogative in the patriarchal marriage structure, a form of symbolic violence that is not recognized as violence.

The Third, Women's symbolic resistance operates through symbolic strategies that do not directly challenge the dominant semiotic ideology, but rather negotiate with it through socially accepted practices such as silence, wivid practices, the role of the kiai's daughter-in-law, and escape to the mother to build symbolic capital and maintain their agency.

The fourth, the battle between the traditional semiotics ideology of Islamic boarding schools and the modern ideology of women's agency is resolved through the figure of the *ummik* (mother-in-law), who represents women's power within the traditional framework. This figure represents the possibility of transformation from within, bringing about a change in meaning without destroying the structure.

Overall, this study demonstrates the value of Keane's semiotic ideological framework for analyzing gender representation in contemporary Indonesian literature. This framework allows for analysis that goes beyond the identification of patriarchal symbols to an understanding of how sign systems operate to naturalize gender inequality, while opening up space for agency and resistance within the available boundaries.

The findings in this study have significant implications for various aspects of social life, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding schools and the wider Muslim community in Indonesia. The understanding that the tradition of arranged marriage is a *sign vehicle* that naturalizes patriarchal structures opens up critical awareness for pesantren families to reflect on marriage practices that have been considered "natural." The practical implications include: (a) the importance of open dialogue between parents and children in the process of determining life partners;

(b) the need to distinguish between substantive Islamic values and patriarchal cultural constructs; and (c) recognition of women's right to actively participate in decisions about their own marriage, as guaranteed in Islamic jurisprudence through the concept of consent (*ridha*).

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