

## Sexual Harassment in the Name of Religion and Heaven as Shown in Walid's Film: Symbolic and Feminist Critical Approach

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### Abstract

This paper examines the phenomenon of sexual harassment cloaked in religious legitimacy through an analysis of the film Walid (2025), a cinematic work that critiques the abuse of religious authority. The background of cases of sexual violence in Lombok, especially in Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions, shows the existence of unequal power relations and a culture of silence that worsens the situation of victims. Walid's film depicts charismatic religious leaders who manipulate sacred teachings to establish absolute power and commit symbolic and sexual violence. The main objectives of this study are to: (a) identify the forms of sexual harassment that are justified in the name of religion, (b) analyze the representation of religious power in films as social criticism, and (c) provide social reflections to encourage the reform of the protection system in the religious environment. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, analyzing the theories of Power and Symbolic Relations (Michel Foucault), Symbolic Violence (Pierre Bourdieu), and Feminist Critical Theology. The findings of the study show that Walid is not only a fictional representation, but also a reflective means that expose the oppressive power structures in religious institutions, as well as invite the public to build critical awareness, fight for justice for victims, and reject all forms of violence that take refuge behind religious symbols.

**Keywords:** Religion; Sexual Harassment; Symbolic and Feminist; Walid's Film.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Lombok Island, known as the island of a thousand mosques, is currently facing an emergency situation and conditions related to violence and sexual harassment that occurred among junior high school students, senior high school students, colleges, and even in Islamic boarding schools (Jamaludin, 2025). Islamic boarding schools are the hope of parents to be the fortress and the front guard in shaping the character and noble character of the younger generation, now starting to be porous and fragile from within, caused by people who should be examples and role models for the community (Islamic et al., 2024). This has not only caused deep trauma and fear for victims, parents, and people who want to educate their children in the Boarding school environment. Recent data in Suara NTB.com

published on December 30, 2024, shows that in 2024, Mataram City recorded 63 cases of sexual violence, an increase from 43 cases in the previous year. Most of the victims were minors, with 11 cases of sexual intercourse and the rest sexual harassment. In East Lombok District, the number of cases of violence against women increased from 41 cases in 2023 to 83 cases in 2024. Violence against children also showed an alarming upward trend.

Antara News published on April 25, 2025, Shows Cases of sexual harassment in the educational environment are also in the spotlight. An ustadz at a boarding school in Kekait Village, West Lombok Regency, allegedly sexually abused at least 22 women, most of whom were alumni of the boarding school. The victims began to speak out after being inspired by the viral film *Bidaah*. Another case involved a lecturer in Mataram who allegedly committed same-sex sexual harassment against students and alumni from three different universities. To date, four victims have given statements to the police.

The government and various institutions have taken steps to deal with this situation. The Ministry of Social Affairs has shown deep empathy for the victims of sexual violence in Lombok and ensured that their rights are properly fulfilled. In addition, socialization of Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence continues to be promoted to raise public awareness and prevent gender and age-based violence (Prastini, 2024). This situation highlights the need for collective efforts from all parties to create a safe and free environment from sexual violence on Lombok Island.

Some media in cinematic form are deliberately created as a means to raise public awareness and prevent violence or sexual harassment that occurs in the community. Walid's film is a cinematic work that presents social and religious criticism of the phenomenon of religious deviation and fanaticism in people's lives (BOGE, 2025). Through the narration of the main character, a charismatic religious leader, the film illustrates how power can be abused through one-sided interpretations of religious teachings (Lizardy-Hajbi, 2024). In this context, Walid highlights the social reality in which religious authority is often monopolized by a small group of individuals who utilize their position to exert control over society. This phenomenon is not fiction, but rather reflects several real cases in various regions, including Indonesia, where the emergence of cults, deviations in religious practices, and the politicization of religion have caused social unrest.

In addition, the film also shows how people are often trapped in a mindset of blind faith, which is accepting and following the teachings of religious figures without a critical thinking process (Kleinig, 2020). This situation shows the weak culture of religious literacy and the lack of space for dialogue in religious communities. The character 'Walid' in the film is a symbol of an authoritarian figure who imposes his will in the name of religion, while the people around him submit and obey without questioning the truth of the teachings conveyed. This illustrates how the dominance of religious figures can create absolute power that ultimately deviates from the basic values of religion itself.

Symbolically, Walid's film conveys moral messages within a gloomy and depressing atmosphere, creating a viewing experience that is both emotionally charged and reflective. Some visual elements, such as the use of white clothing, the depiction of extreme religious rituals, and the people's expressions of fear, reinforce the film's main message about the dangers of individual cults and religious manipulation. On an academic level, this work can be studied as a critical representation of the relationship between religion, power, and society, as well as an invitation to build critical awareness in understanding religious teachings (Demirel Ucan & Wright, 2019; Freathy & John, 2019). Thus, Walid functions not only as entertainment but also as a reflective medium that invites the audience to reflect on the complex and often manipulated social reality of religion.

Walid's film presents a cinematic representation that is relevant to the reality of the abuse of religious authority, including in the context of sexual violence that occurs in religious institutions such as Islamic boarding schools. The main character in the film is depicted as a charismatic but manipulative religious leader, using religious symbols and teachings to establish absolute power over the surrounding community. This phenomenon reflects the real situation where several cases of sexual violence in Islamic Boarding School are committed by religious figures who are respected, and even considered holy by the students and the surrounding community. In some cases, perpetrators use religious legitimacy and power relations to cover up acts of violence, and victims often have

difficulty reporting due to social pressure, stigma, and fear of being considered against 'ulama' or holy figures (Smith & Wardatun, 2022; Toyibah & Riyani, 2025).

Unequal power relations between teachers and students in traditional education systems such as Islamic Boarding School (*pesantren*) create a space that is vulnerable to manipulative practices, including sexual violence. Walid's film symbolically illustrates how uncontrolled spiritual domination can develop into a form of oppression, both psychologically and physically, in the absence of adequate accountability mechanisms. In the real world, weak regulations, lack of supervision, and a culture of silence in religious institutions make cases of sexual violence difficult to reveal and tend to be covered up in the name of maintaining the dignity of religious institutions (Gardner, 2021; Hamilton, 2021). This film indirectly invites the audience to re-examine how religious figures can exploit their position not only for ideological power, but also to facilitate sexual crimes wrapped in moral legitimacy.

As such, Walid is not just a fiction that displays the tension between religious teachings and deviance, but a sharp critique of the socio-religious system that leaves a single authority unchecked. The film serves as a crucial reflection for society, particularly in the context of protecting children and women in religious environments, to be more vigilant against the misuse of sacred teachings for personal gain that undermines human dignity. In this framework, Walid has a deep social meaning, as a voice for the silenced and a reminder that religiosity without ethics can be the most dangerous tool of violence.

Some previous studies, such as Syamsurrijal et al. (2024), Analysis of Maher Zain's "The Chosen One" Video Clip: Roland Barthes Semiotic. (Rahman & Maulana, 2024) Addressing Sexual Violence in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Study on Santri Perceptions and Institutional Responses. Thaufani and Sa'idah (2024) who analysed the film *Qorin* through religious symbols used to dominate women, and Permatasari and Amalia (2022) who used Roland Barthes semiotics to read Survivors of sexual violence in the film *Penyalin Cahaya*. (Suryani, 2023) critical media study of the power relations between perpetrator and victim of non-physical sexual harassment in surviving the truth in the film *Penyalin Cahaya*. (Rinaldi & Aulia, 2024) Semiotic Analysis of the Representation of Sexual Harassment Survivors in the Film *Like & Share*. (Hasan & Sa'idah, 2025) The Representation of Sexual Violence against Women in the Film *Vina: Sebelum 7 Hari*. (Sumintak & Idi, 2022) Michel Foucault's Power Relations Analysis: A Case Study of Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions.

The sixth article discussed has the main similarity of focusing on the issue of sexual violence and the representation of women as victims, both in the context of film and social reality. Most of them use semiotic analysis and critical studies approaches to understand how power relations and certain symbols influence the narratives and representations of victims of sexual violence. This can be seen in the use of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and Michel Foucault's analysis of power relations as theoretical foundations by several researchers.

Meanwhile, the current research uses the theoretical approach of Power and Symbolic Relations (Michel Foucault), Symbolic Violence Theory (Pierre Bourdieu) and Feminist Critical Theology which presents a sharp criticism of the abuse of power in the name of religion through the figure of charismatic leaders who manipulate spiritual legitimacy to commit sexual and symbolic violence.

Analysing sexual abuse in the name of religion and heaven in Walid's film has the important benefit of raising public awareness of the existence of sexual abuse in religious settings, encouraging the reform of surveillance systems in religious institutions, and opening up space for critical and dialogical religious education. In addition, this analysis gives voice to victims by exposing the power structures that conceal perpetrators, while encouraging the creation of artworks that are courageous and supportive of social justice. The objectives of this research are: a. To identify and understand the practice of sexual abuse justified in the name of religion and heaven, b. To analyse the representation of religious power in Walid's film as a form of social criticism, c. To provide social reflection to encourage the renewal of the protection system in religious environments.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method to analyze the film 'Bida'ah Walid in 2025,' directed by Rajkumar Hirani, through the theories of Power and Symbolic Relations (Michel Foucault), Symbolic Violence

Theory (Pierre Bourdieu), and Feminist Critical Theology. A descriptive qualitative research method was chosen as it focuses on analyzing textual data, in keeping with the approach (Silverman & Patterson, 2021) where data appears in the form of words rather than numbers, the data of this research consists of all the scenes from the beginning to the end of the film. The data was collected from social media platforms such as YouTube.

The data was systematically collected and categorized based on the emotional responses expressed in comments, reviews, and uploads. This process followed Harrison et al. (2020) recommendations for qualitative research, where data were analyzed without statistical measures but through thematic interpretation. The researcher used the following steps: (1) data collection, (2) categorization of lyrics, (3) interpretation of emotional responses, and (4) conclusion drawing.

Data in the form of heretical films can be analyzed in depth by combining Michel Foucault's theory of Power and Symbolic Relations, Pierre Bourdieu's Concept of Symbolic Violence, and Feminist Critical Theology. Through Foucault's perspective, Walid's power as a sect leader is built through the production of religious discourse and surveillance practices that discipline the bodies and minds of his followers, creating absolute obedience. Meanwhile, Bourdieu shows how symbolic violence works through religious symbolic capital such as clothing, sacred language, and rituals that appear natural yet oppressive, so that patriarchal structures and submission are accepted unconsciously as truth. Feminist Critical Theology highlights the experiences of women, such as the character of Baiduri, showing how patriarchal interpretations of religion are used to legitimize violence and women's subordination, but also open up spaces for resistance from within. These three approaches reveal that the Heretic not only critiques religious deviance but also exposes the way power operates in bodies, language, and beliefs, and how women can be active subjects in the struggle to free themselves from symbolic and spiritual domination.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Synopsis of Bida'ah (Walid) Film

Bida'ah (Walid) is an evocative and suspenseful Malaysian drama series, directed by Ellie Suriaty, and premiered on the Viu platform in 2025. The series highlights the perversion of religious teachings, spiritual manipulation, and abuse of power by charismatic figures incarnated as religious figures. The story focuses on Baiduri, a young girl living under pressure from her mother, Kalsum. The mother, influenced by extreme teachings, forces Baiduri to join a religious group called Jihad Ummah, a sect led by Walid Muhammad Mahdi Iman. Walid claims to be Imam Mahdi, a messenger of God, and demands absolute obedience from his followers.

Behind his religious image, Walid engages in a variety of heretical practices, often cloaked in holy verses. He performed forced spiritual marriages, used women in the name of worship, and taught deviant rituals such as kissing and drinking water soaked in his feet. Within the sect, Baiduri slowly began to realise that the teachings she had received were full of misdirection and misuse of religion. Hope arose when Hambali, Walid's biological son, who had just returned from Yemen, also began to doubt his father's teachings. Hambali, who had studied Islam in depth, began to see the discrepancies between his father's teachings and the true values of the religion.

Baiduri and Hambali then work together to expose Walid's mask and save the followers from the cult's snares. But it's not easy, as Walid has built a powerful system of power, surrounded by fanatical followers and brainwashed wives. The series reaches a peak of conflict when the secrets of Walid's past are revealed, leading to a major confrontation between sincere faith and manipulative power.

Bida'ah depicts sensitive yet relevant themes, such as religious abuse, forced polygamy, spiritual abuse, and freedom of thought. The series also illustrates how religion can be exploited for domination and power if not critically examined. It is also a journey of women's emancipation and the struggle of the younger generation to seek truth amidst cultural and spiritual pressures.

After its airing, Walid's character became a viral phenomenon on social media. The phrase 'Close your eyes, imagine Walid's face' became a meme and a hot topic of discussion, inviting an emotional response from the public

due to its resemblance to real cases of cult leaders. With sharp directing and strong acting, Bida'ah (Walid) is not just a drama, but a profound social reflection on the dangers of fanaticism and the importance of critical thinking in leading a religious life.

### **3.2. What are the forms of sexual abuse committed in the name of religion and heaven in a religious environment?**

The film "Heretic" (Walid) from Malaysia is a poignant cinematic portrayal of sexual violence in a religious context, released in 2025. The story goes that Walid, a respected religious figure in his community, is a perpetrator of sexual abuse. The abuse is not done in a vulgar manner, but wrapped in religious symbols and narratives such as the promise of heaven, the argument for obedience to teachers, and the dogma of submission to religious authorities (Njoku, 2022). In this context, religion is used not as a way of salvation, but as a mask to hide deviant power.

The phenomenon can be read in depth through Michel Foucault's theoretical framework of power, discourse, and the body. Foucault rejects the idea that power is only repressive and vertically owned by the state or ruler. Instead, he asserts that power is productive and diffuse, present in every social relation through institutions such as schools, hospitals, and even religious institutions. In this film, religious figures utilize the sacred position attached by society to structure and control the discourse of truth. Any form of objection from victims is considered heresy, a form of deviation from 'religious truth'. Foucault calls this system the regime of truth, a social construction of truth that is regulated and monopolized by the powerful. Furthermore, Foucault developed the concept of the panopticon, a metaphor for a surveillance system that causes individuals to watch and control themselves because they feel constantly watched, voluntarily. In the film Heretic Walid, the religious community acts like a panopticon: judging, spying, and silencing those who are perceived to be against authority. Walid, as the victim, becomes the object of moral surveillance and social pressure, so he experiences not only physical violence, but also symbolic and psychological violence.

In The History of Sexuality, Foucault explains that sexuality is the main arena where power works, not only through prohibition, but through the regulation, classification, and production of knowledge about sex. Walid's deviant sexuality becomes a tool of power to dominate the victim's body and identity. Sex is used as a weapon to silence and control. Patriarchal religious discourse suppresses conversations about sexual harassment, making it taboo and causing victims to feel guilty if they speak out. The opinions of several experts also support this analysis. Dr Lies Marcoes from Rumah KitaB asserted that 'victims of sexual violence in the pesantren environment are often silenced because they feel guilty against religious teachers who are considered holy and authoritative' (Rahman & Maulana, 2024). She emphasised that religious narratives can be twisted to justify violence, especially if the perpetrator is an authority figure (Van Liere, 2020). Similarly, Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadawi, in her book The Hidden Face of Eve, explains how religion, interpreted patriarchally, regulates women's and children's bodies and normalises violence through spiritual justification.

Through Foucault's approach (Foucault, 2019), we can see that sexual abuse in The Heretic of Walid is not just a matter of individual deviants, but the result of a system of power that manipulates religion and morality to maintain dominance. This film voices the need to open a space for critical discussion on power relations in religion, especially how the body, sexuality, and 'truth' are controlled in the name of God. As Foucault emphasised, our task is not to challenge whether a truth is true, but how it is produced, disseminated, and used to discipline bodies and minds.

### **3.3. How does Walid's film represent misused religious power?**

#### **A. The Theory of Symbolic Violence in the Context of Religion**

Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, introduced the concept of symbolic violence to explain a form of power that works subtly, does not look like physical violence, but has a strong domination effect (Branson & Miller, 2020; Fowler, 2020). This power is legitimized by symbols, language, and cultural values that are deeply rooted in society. In the context of religion, symbols such as religious clothing, the title of ustaz, and authority in conveying religious law become tools of power that enable control over individuals without explicit coercion.

In Walid, the teacher (*ustadz*) figure who becomes the perpetrator of sexual violence uses his religious authority to control children and silence resistance. The surrounding community, having a habitus (mental structure) formed from religious teachings and practices since childhood, tends to accept the *ustadz*'s position as a moral figure without questioning the veracity of his behavior. Bourdieu mentions that symbolic violence is most effective because the dominated often do not realize that they are being dominated.

### **B. Symbols, Capital, and Power in Walid**

In this film, symbolic capital plays a big role. The *Ustadz* has great social influence, not because of wealth or physical strength, but because of his religious status. He is considered holy, religiously literate, and has moral authority. When violence occurs, people tend to doubt the victim and not the perpetrator. This is the result of symbolic power successfully shaping social perceptions. In a society where religion is the highest authority, questioning religious figures is often considered a form of moral defiance (Kütük-Kuriş, 2021; Murphy, 2021).

Bourdieu asserts that power operates both culturally and institutionally. In Walid's case, it is not only individuals (*ustadz*) who commit violence, but the religious system and institutions themselves perpetuate the violence by choosing to remain silent and not take corrective action. This reinforces Bourdieu's thesis that symbolic violence occurs and is perpetuated through institutions.

### **C. Art as Social Criticism**

According to Kartika et al. (2020), emphasise that works of art, including films, can be a space for criticism of power practices hidden behind cultural and religious legitimacy. In this case, Walid's film functions as a tool to voice the unheard and expose the hidden. By presenting the narratives of child victims and how the system silences their voices, this film challenges the audience to think critically about power relations wrapped in sacred symbols.

Walid's film clearly represents how religious power can be misused and how this form of violence works symbolically, as explained by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2020, 2024; Robbins, 2020). Through religious symbols, moral authority, and entrenched social structures, violence can be carried out invisibly, even accepted as legitimate. In a society that tends to adhere to religious authority, criticism and awareness of symbolic violence is essential so that power does not become a tool of oppression. Walid's film reminds us that the sacred can hide the foul, and that siding with victims must begin with the courage to re-examine power relations that have been taken for granted.

### **3.4. What social messages can be drawn from Walid's film about the protection of victims of sexual violence in religious institutions?**

The film *Heretic*, featuring the character of Walid as a manipulative spiritual leader, has been an important catalyst in exposing and discussing the issue of sexual violence in religious institutions. Through a narrative that depicts the abuse of religious authority, the film conveys a profound social message regarding the protection of victims of sexual violence, particularly in religious education settings.

#### **A. Abuse of Religious Authority and Power Relationships**

Walid's character in the film *Heretic* represents how religious authority can be misused to commit sexual violence. As the leader of the Jihad Ummah sect, Walid uses his position and charisma to exploit his followers, especially women, under the pretext of spirituality and religious promises. This phenomenon reflects a reality in which religious figures employ dogmatic interpretations to justify their actions, thereby creating unequal power relations between leaders and followers.

Sociologist Dr Muh Khamdan (Khamdan & Hum, 2022) explains that in a patriarchal society that is permissive of gender-based violence, perpetrators feel they have the 'right to power' over women's bodies, especially those who are economically, age and socially vulnerable. When the institutions of family, education, religion, and law enforcement fail to perform their social control functions, deviant and destructive individuals emerge.

## **B. Impact of the Film on Awareness and Case Reporting**

The film not only functions as a work of art, but also as an educational tool that opens people's eyes to the practice of sexual violence hidden behind religious institutions. In West Lombok, for example, after watching the film, several female students from a boarding school reported cases of sexual violence that they had experienced by the head of the boarding school. They realized that their experiences were similar to those depicted in the film, which motivated them to speak out and seek justice (Khoo & Ash, 2021).

Humanitarian activist Siti Farah from LBH Banda Aceh also highlighted that the film depicts a reality that often occurs in religious education settings in Aceh. She stated that many cases of sexual violence in dayah (Islamic boarding schools) go unreported because victims are afraid, ashamed, or do not trust the legal system.

## **C. Victim Protection and Institutional Reform**

The social message of the Bidaah film emphasises the importance of protecting victims of sexual violence and the need for reform within religious institutions. Religious institutions must reflect deeply so that they no longer become grey spaces that open up loopholes for the manipulation of faith by moral predators (Alexander, 2019). Higher education must also reform the sexual harassment reporting system to make it safe and in favour of victims.

According to Richards et al. (2021) emphasised that victim protection must be a priority, and that reporting cases of sexual violence is not about exposing shame, but an important step to save victims and prevent new victims.

The film, through the character of Walid, conveys a strong social message about the dangers of abusing religious authority and the importance of protecting victims of sexual violence in religious institutions. By portraying an often-hidden reality, the film encourages awareness, reporting, and institutional reform to create a safe and just environment for all individuals, especially those who are vulnerable to exploitation and violence.

The film, which features the character Walid as the leader of a religious sect, is a cinematic work that sharply criticizes the abuse of religious authority in oppressing women. From the perspective of Feminist Critical Theology, the film can be read as a reflection on how patriarchal domination rooted in certain religious interpretations can produce an exploitative system of power. Walid uses religious pretexts such as 'nikah batin' - a marriage without witnesses that is supposedly authorized by God and the Apostle - to justify the practice of sexual violence against women. This reflects unequal power relations, where male religious leaders monopolize the interpretation of sacred texts and manipulate them to maintain control over women's bodies and lives.

The religious dogmatism that underpins the sect places women in a subordinate position. In the film, women are prohibited from appearing in the public sphere and are used as objects to satisfy men's desires in the name of religious teachings. Walid's practice of polygamy - divorcing and marrying women unilaterally - is a clear illustration of gender inequality perpetuated by biased religious interpretations. Feminist Critical Theology, as outlined by thinkers such as Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas, critiques such practices by calling for a re-reading of sacred texts from a contextual, historical, and gender-justice perspective. Liberating and inclusive interpretations become an important agenda so that religion does not become a legitimising tool for violence against women (Fidhayanti et al., 2024; Reda, 2023).

The character of Baiduri in this film serves as a symbol of women's resistance to structural oppression, often wrapped in religious dogma. She is a representation of an educated woman who can criticize Walid's heretical teachings and tries to save her mother and other women from the clutches of the sect. Baiduri's struggle reflects the core idea of Feminist Critical Theology, which emphasizes the importance of critical and contextual religious literacy. When women have access to religious knowledge and the ability to interpret sacred texts independently, they can resist the symbolic and structural violence that is often hidden behind traditional religious interpretations.

In addition to sexual violence, the film also explores deviant religious practices such as the 'ngalap blessing' ritual of kissing and drinking Walid's foot bath water or using his bath water as a means of purification. It illustrates how religious charisma can be exploited to create a cult of blind obedience. From the perspective of Feminist Critical Theology, such rituals not only deviate from the principles of pure Islamic spirituality but also reinforce

oppressive hierarchical power and distance religion from the true values of justice and equality.

Thus, the film is not only a medium for criticizing the misuse of religion by patriarchal institutions, but also an invitation to reflect on the role of women in religious traditions. Through the lens of Feminist Critical Theology, we are invited to see that women's liberation in a religious context can only be achieved if women are theologically empowered, have the right to interpret sacred texts, and can fight the patriarchal system that hides behind divine discourse. This film, therefore, is not just fiction, but also a form of social commentary that demands structural changes in the way we perceive religious authority, gender justice, and the protection of victims of violence within religious environments.

This study reinforces previous research that highlights the dangers of unchecked religious authority and its capacity to justify and conceal sexual violence within religious institutions. Similar to findings in works by Rahman and Maulana (2024), it underscores how patriarchal and hierarchical structures in religious settings facilitate abuse and silence victims. The utilization of theories such as Foucault's power relations and Bourdieu's symbolic violence aligns with earlier scholarly efforts to analyze power dynamics and cultural symbols that perpetuate violence critically. Furthermore, this research emphasizes the urgent need for institutional reforms, transparency, and education to break the cycle of silence and abuse, consistent with prior recommendations from other studies.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Walid's film is a powerful and meaningful cinematic representation of the abuse of power in the name of religion. Through evocative narratives and visuals, the film raises crucial issues about sexual harassment, symbolic violence, and the dominance of religious figures who are often untouched by social control. Walid's character as a charismatic religious leader illustrates how power can be manipulated to suppress, exploit, and even harm society under the guise of false moral and spiritual legitimacy. Analyses through Foucault's theory of power, Bourdieu's symbolic violence, and feminist critical theology reveal that an unaccountable religious system opens a huge gap for gender-based violence and human rights violations. In this case, Walid reminds us of the importance of building critical awareness of religious figures and the need for reform in the protection system within religious environments, especially in the context of *pesantren* education. This film not only explores religious aspects but also serves as a reflective medium that highlights the need for a dialogue space, transparency, and collective courage to critique the power imbalances hidden behind symbols of sanctity. Thus, Walid becomes an important voice for victims who have been silent, as well as an invitation for the community to no longer allow violence to take refuge behind sacred teachings.

Based on the study of Walid's film, future research can be directed to various relevant topics, such as comparative studies of the representation of sexual violence in films with similar themes, a study of the perception of students and alumni towards religious authorities and sexual violence, and the evaluation of regulations and supervisory mechanisms in religious institutions. In addition, critical theological analysis of the manipulation of religious teachings to justify violence, research on the production and reception of cinematic works with the theme of sexual harassment, and the development of film-based anti-violence education modules are also important research directions. These studies not only enrich cross-disciplinary academic fields such as sociology, religious studies, gender studies, and cinema but also make a real contribution to building critical public awareness and encouraging safer, fairer, and more victim-friendly reform of religious institutions.

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