



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/snlpr.v2i2.895>  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

## Semiotic Analysis of The “Mandala” Symbol in The Film “Ketika Berhenti di Sini” as a Representation of The Process of Letting Go

Sri Purwati Pertiwi Kusumawati<sup>1</sup>, Farida Nurfalah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Cirebon, Indonesia, [sripurwatipk@gmail.com](mailto:sripurwatipk@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Cirebon, Indonesia, [farida.nurfalah@ugj.ac.id](mailto:farida.nurfalah@ugj.ac.id)

Corresponding Author: [farida.nurfalah@ugj.ac.id](mailto:farida.nurfalah@ugj.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the representation of the mandala symbol in the film *Ketika Berhenti di Sini* as a visual construction of the process of letting go. The study employs a qualitative approach using media text analysis through Roland Barthes’ semiotic framework, which examines meaning at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth. The analysis is further enriched by Stuart Hall’s theory of representation and Carl Gustav Jung’s analytical psychology to understand the construction of meaning and the psychological dynamics of the characters. The findings reveal that the mandala symbol functions as a system of signs that maps the transformation of the main character’s inner condition from imbalance, attachment, and denial toward the attainment of inner balance and self-wholeness (the Self). The shift in meaning associated with the north, west, south, and east directions represents the stages of the individuation process. Interview findings with filmmakers and audiences indicate that the mandala symbol serves as a narrative device that strengthens the representation of the character’s psychological dynamics while also opening spaces for diverse interpretations among viewers. This study contributes to the development of Indonesian film semiotics by integrating representation theory and analytical psychology in interpreting visual symbols as representations of characters’ psychological dynamics.

**Keyword:** Semiotics, Mandala, Representation, Individuation, Letting Go.

### INTRODUCTION

The development of film media in recent decades has demonstrated an increasingly complex shift in function, from merely serving as a means of entertainment to becoming a medium for representing human psychological and cultural experiences. This transformation is closely related to media transformation and cultural convergence, which influence the production, distribution, and consumption of films in modern society (Jenkins, 2006). David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson state that “film is an art form with a language and an aesthetic all its own” (Bordwell, 2013). This statement indicates that film possesses its own language system that enables the production of meaning through visual elements, narrative

structures, and symbolic arrangements. Therefore, film functions not only as a medium for delivering narratives but also as a media text that produces meaning.

From a semiotic perspective, every visual element in film is viewed as a sign containing particular layers of meaning. Roland Barthes explains that signs in media texts operate through two levels of signification: denotation as literal meaning and connotation as cultural meaning. At a broader level, connotation develops into myth as an ideological construction embedded within society (Barthes, 1999). Through this framework, film can be interpreted as a structure of meaning that not only conveys stories but also represents psychological dynamics and cultural values that shape how individuals understand and interpret their inner experiences.

Issues related to mental health and psychological dynamics have become a global concern in modern society. A report by the WHO (2022) indicates a significant increase in anxiety and depression disorders, particularly among young people in the post-pandemic period (WHO, 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates society's growing need for representational spaces capable of visualizing experiences of loss, trauma, and the process of reconciling with oneself. Research by Botha (2020) published in *Frontiers in Psychology* found that mandala-based visual activities contribute to increased mindfulness and emotional balance. These findings suggest that certain visual symbols possess psychological potential and can function as media for reflection and emotional regulation. Thus, visual symbols in media, including film, have the potential to represent human psychological dynamics more profoundly.

As a symbol, the mandala has historical roots in Hindu-Buddhist traditions, representing the cosmos, harmony, and universal order. In *Man and His Symbols*, Carl Gustav Jung (1964) interprets the mandala as a symbol of the Self, representing the individuation process—namely, the integration of consciousness and the unconscious toward self-wholeness (Bryngelson, 1953). From the perspective of analytical psychology, the mandala is not merely a geometric circular form but also a symbol of the process of letting go and attaining balance. The relevance of this symbol in visual media becomes significant when positioned as part of a narrative addressing themes of loss, self-reflection, and psychological dynamics that lead toward inner balance in the individuation process toward self-wholeness.

The film *Ketika Berhenti di Sini* (Shahab, 2023), directed by Umay Shahab, presents themes of loss and emotional reflection through a subtle visual approach. The mandala symbol appears repeatedly within the film's visual elements without explicit explanation through dialogue. The presence of this symbol opens interpretive possibilities regarding the psychological and cultural meanings constructed through cinematic language. According to Stuart Hall's perspective (1997), meaning in media is not natural but is constructed through processes of representation involving systems of signs and cultural codes (Hall, 1997). Accordingly, the mandala symbol in the film can be understood as a representational device that constructs meanings related to the process of letting go and the attainment of the character's inner balance.

Several semiotic studies on Indonesian films during the 2020–2025 period demonstrate a tendency to focus on representations of gender, morality, and social criticism (Arum Lestari et al., 2025; Kartini, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2025). Research by Azzahra et al. (2025) examined representations of trauma and healing in Indonesian films; however, it did not position specific visual symbols as the central focus of psychological meaning analysis. Meanwhile, studies on mandalas are more commonly found within the fields of art therapy and visual culture (Budi Laksana, 2019; Liu et al., 2020), rather than within film text analysis as a construction of visual communication. This condition reveals a research gap, namely the absence of studies that specifically integrate Roland Barthes' semiotics, Stuart Hall's theory

of representation, and Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology in interpreting the mandala symbol in Indonesian films as a representation of the process of letting go.

This gap is particularly relevant because, without a comprehensive semiotic reading, visual symbols in film risk being reduced to mere aesthetic elements. In fact, Barthes' structure of meaning (1964), particularly the layer of myth, enables deeper ideological and cultural interpretations of symbols. By combining Hall's theory of representation (1997) and Jung's concept of individuation (1964), the mandala symbol can be interpreted as a visual construction representing the psychological journey of characters toward inner balance. Therefore, this study focuses on the semiotic analysis of the mandala symbol in the film *Ketika Berhenti di Sini* as a representation of the process of letting go. Based on the explanation above, the research problem addressed in this study is: how is the mandala symbol in *Ketika Berhenti di Sini* represented through denotative, connotative, and mythical structures of meaning as a visual construction representing the process of letting go from the perspectives of Roland Barthes' semiotics, Stuart Hall's theory of representation, and Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology?

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich communication studies, particularly in the development of media text analysis based on visual semiotics integrated with representation theory and analytical psychology. Practically, this study may serve as a reference for filmmakers and visual communication practitioners in utilizing symbols as reflective and meaningful narrative devices. Furthermore, this study is relevant given the increasing societal need for media representations that are sensitive to mental health issues and emotional reflection. Thus, the analysis of the mandala symbol in this film not only contributes to the development of Indonesian film semiotic studies but also strengthens the relevance of communication studies in understanding human psychological dynamics through visual language.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach using media textual analysis. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis was utilized to examine the meaning of the mandala symbol at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth, which were subsequently elaborated through representation theory and analytical psychology to understand the construction of meaning and the individuation process.

The material object of the study was the mandala symbol in the film *Ketika Berhenti di Sini* (2023), while the formal object concerned the meaning of signs formed through visual representation within the film's cinematic structure. The unit of analysis consisted of scenes displaying the mandala symbol and related to the psychological dynamics of the main character. Sampling was conducted through purposive sampling based on the criteria of the appearance of the mandala symbol, the emotional context of loss, and narrative significance. Data were collected through textual observation, scene documentation, and literature review.

The research instrument was the researcher as a human instrument, assisted by a sign categorization sheet. Data analysis was conducted through the identification of signifiers and signifieds, followed by denotative, connotative, and mythical analyses, which were then theoretically elaborated. Data reduction was carried out by focusing the analysis on relevant scenes. The trustworthiness of the data was maintained through theory triangulation and audit trails, while validity was determined through consistency among the data, theoretical framework, and interpretation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. General Description of the Film**

*Ketika Berhenti di Sini* is an Indonesian romantic drama film that explores themes of loss, memory, and the process of letting go. The story centers on the main character, who experiences the loss of a partner due to an accident, triggering an internal conflict in confronting the reality of loss and the tension between holding on to past memories and continuing life in the present.

The film was released in 2023 and directed by Umay Shahab. The narrative is constructed through a combination of reflective dialogue, melancholic visual composition, and the use of Augmented Reality (AR) technology as a narrative device to bring back the presence of someone who has passed away. The presence of this technology functions not only as a storytelling element but also as a symbol of the character's emotional attachment to the past.

The film's primary conflict thematically lies not in external events, but in the character's internal struggle when confronting the reality of loss. This struggle illustrates psychological dynamics that move from denial, anger, and attachment toward reflection and the integration of inner experiences. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that representations of loss in visual media are not portrayed as instantaneous processes, but rather as gradual and complex psychological dynamics (Maulidia et al., 2024). The study emphasizes that individuals undergo phases of denial, emotional conflict, reflection, and integration as part of the process of interpreting experiences of loss.

Within the context of this study, these dynamics are not only presented narratively but are also visualized through the mandala symbol, which forms a structure connecting various psychological phases. Thus, the film not only represents the character's inner conflict but also constructs a structure of meaning indicating that the process of letting go consists of gradual psychological dynamics that are not entirely linear and are oriented toward self-integration within the framework of individuation.

This context demonstrates that visual symbols play an important role as representational devices. One of the dominant symbols is the mandala visual structure in the form of a four-direction compass integrated into the film's narrative. The symbol appears in several key scenes and is associated with moments of reflection, childhood memories, and transitions in the main character's emotional state. Its presence is not merely aesthetic, but also functions as a narrative structure accompanying the character's psychological development. Therefore, understanding the narrative context and visual structure of the film serves as an essential foundation before conducting a semiotic analysis of the mandala symbol as a representation of the process of letting go and the psychological integration of the main character.

### **2. Semiotic Analysis of the Mandala Symbol**

#### **1) The Northward Mandala as a Symbol of Imbalance and Awareness**



Source : VS--Netflix-When It Stops Here-0'27"

**Figure 1** Mandala "North is Earth"

**Denotative Meaning :**

The northern section of the mandala is visually emphasized through a dominant vertical line. The background color tends to be dark, particularly black, while the center of the symbol displays a combination of green, yellow, and white colors arranged in a symmetrical form resembling a mandala.

The meaning of the north direction is conveyed through Dita's dialogue :

"The north direction is earth, it is black, it is my desires as a human being—often thirsty, often restless, searching for satisfaction without knowing until when."

The following scene presents the symbol in its entirety on a tote bag carried by the character. The camera employs a close-up technique to emphasize the design, directing the audience's attention toward the visual details of the mandala symbol.



Source: VS--Netflix-When It Stops Here-4'35"

**Figure 2** Ed Realizing the Mandala Design on Dita's Bag

**Connotative Meaning :**

This mandala symbol does not merely represent a geographical direction, but rather a psychological direction. The north is associated with earth, the color black, desire, thirst, and restlessness. In this context, black is not simply a color, but a symbol of desire, ego, and

human dissatisfaction. Dita’s narration clarifies that the “North” serves as a metaphor for the unstable human side that continues searching and has not yet found its center of inner balance.

The visible symmetry of the mandala contrasts with the narrative of anxiety and unrest. This contrast signifies that balance exists as a possibility, yet it has not been fully attained. The visual structure of the mandala suggests order and harmony, while the dialogue simultaneous.

**Mythical Meaning :**

The film constructs the following ideas :

1. Human beings are naturally filled with desires and restlessness.
2. The search for satisfaction is an existential condition of human life.
3. Loss and emptiness are part of the journey toward self-understanding.

The mandala, represented as a compass, implies that life is a journey of seeking direction. However, this direction is not geographical, but inward and psychological. The film normalizes the idea that emotional imbalance constitutes the initial stage toward emotional maturity and self-awareness.

From a psychological perspective, Carl Gustav Jung interprets the mandala as a representation of the Self, or the center of a whole personality. The mandala frequently emerges as a symbol of order when an individual is experiencing psychological instability. The narrative concerning restlessness and the thirst of desire reflects a psychic condition that has not yet reached balance. The presence of the mandala as a compass is therefore interpreted as a symbol of the potential for individuation, namely the process toward self-integration. In other words, Dita remains in a phase of anxiety and imbalance, yet the symbol already appears as a directional guide toward psychological integration and inner wholeness.

**2) Westward Mandala as a Representation of Desire and Loss**



Source : VS--Netflix-When It Stops Here-14'08”

**Figure 3** West Direction (Yellow – Wind – Desire – Love – Loss)

**Denotative Meaning :**

The western phase presents the mandala symbol in the form of a compass with four cardinal directions. The color yellow dominates the western section. Illustrations of wind elements are visible, along with symbols of red and black hands positioned close to one another.

The meaning of the west direction is conveyed through Dita’s dialogue:

“The west direction is yellow, it is wind, it is the feeling that suddenly appears, turning into desire and longing. To possess and to lose requires the courage to fall in love.”

The yellow color appears brighter compared to the northern phase. Through a sequence of scenes, this phase portrays the romantic journey of Dita and Ed: from the initial riddles and emotional closeness to happiness, conflict, and eventually the accident that results in loss.

**Connotative Meaning :**

In this scene, the West no longer represents the ego-driven restlessness associated with the North, but instead reflects more complex psychological dynamics: love, hope, and loss. Connotatively, the color yellow can be interpreted as symbolizing warmth, hope, and the energy of love. Meanwhile, the wind symbolizes instability, suggesting that love appears suddenly and desire emerges beyond human control.

The statement, “To possess and to lose requires courage,” indicates that love inherently contains risk. In this context, the West represents the phase in which Dita dares to open herself emotionally, yet simultaneously experiences her deepest emotional wounds. The emotional conflicts between Dita and Ed reveal an imbalance within their relationship. Ed’s accident becomes the pivotal moment of loss that destroys Dita’s emotional stability. Thus, the West is no longer merely a direction, but an emotional space where love and loss intersect.

**Mythical Meaning :**

At the mythical level, the film constructs the idea that:

“Love always coexists with the risk of loss. The courage to love means being prepared to be hurt. Loss is the consequence of attachment.”

The film normalizes the notion that romantic relationships are not solely about happiness, but also constitute spaces of conflict and emotional trials. The myth constructed here suggests that love is a process of maturation in which experiences of loss, conflict, and suffering become integral parts of personal growth.

From the perspective of Jungian analytical psychology, this phase represents a moment of confrontation with one’s deepest emotions, including both love and anger. Desire and attachment indicate the dominance of the ego and the need for affection. The experience of loss triggers psychological upheaval that encourages deeper self-reflection.

The western phase is interpreted as a stage of crisis within the individuation process, in which the individual begins confronting unresolved emotional attachments and affective conflicts. At this stage, the individual encounters the shadow, manifested in anger, feelings of being unloved, and rejection of reality. Ed’s accident functions as a symbol of forced separation from emotional attachment, pushing Dita into a phase of reflection and psychological transformation.

**3) Southward Mandala as a Representation of Anger**



Sumber : VS--Netflix-When It Stops Here-36'43”

**Figure 4** (Southern Direction – Red)

**Denotative Meaning :**

The southern phase presents the mandala symbol in the form of a circle with four cardinal directions marked by the letters U (North), T (East), B (West), and S (South). The

southern direction is visually emphasized through the dominant use of the color red in the background.

The meaning of the south direction is conveyed through Dita's dialogue:

"The south direction is red, it is fire, it is disappointment burning within. Anger ignited turns into resentment, walking in the same place. I stop here."

Elements of fire and sharp geometric forms appear in the southern section of the mandala. The color red dominates the visual background of the scene. Within the storyline, this phase portrays Dita beginning to move forward with her life and developing emotional closeness with her friend, Ifan. However, she also experiences sadness and childhood flashbacks when her father explains the philosophy of the mandala:

"The East is peace, the South is anger, the North is greed, and the West is love."

This phase is marked by the presence of Ed's legacy in the form of Augmented Reality (AR) glasses capable of visualizing Ed's figure complete with his voice and virtual presence. The use of this device triggers inner confusion, excessive emotional attachment, and disorientation toward present reality.

### **Connotative Meaning :**

Connotatively, the color red represents anger, emotional intensity, unresolved wounds, and psychological outbursts. The element of fire in the phrase "burning disappointment" signifies that the loss of Ed does not merely produce sadness, but transforms into anger and rejection of reality.

The statement, "Walking in the same place," indicates a stagnant emotional cycle. Dita is not moving forward, but is instead trapped in the repetition of emotional pain. The Augmented Reality (AR) glasses symbolize an attachment that has not yet been released. Connotatively, technology in this context does not represent progress, but rather a means of escaping reality. The glasses create the illusion of presence, making it increasingly difficult for Dita to distinguish between the past and the present.

In this phase, the South is no longer merely a direction, but an emotional space where anger and denial coexist. The dominance of red, combined with the imagery of fire and technological illusion, reinforces the representation of a psychological condition overwhelmed by unresolved grief and emotional attachment.

### **Mythical Meaning :**

At the mythical level, the film constructs the ideological notion that anger is an inherent phase in the process of loss. This emotion is not portrayed as a form of weakness, but rather as a natural psychological response when individuals are unable to fully accept reality. In addition, the film represents technology as a medium incapable of completely replacing genuine human presence. The use of Augmented Reality (AR) glasses within the narrative demonstrates that attempts to preserve the past through simulation actually prolong inner conflict and delay the process of acceptance.

This representation indicates that the process of letting go does not unfold linearly. There are regressive phases in which individuals become increasingly attached to memories before ultimately reaching the awareness necessary to release them. The myth constructed in this phase emphasizes that loss which is not processed reflectively has the potential to develop into destructive anger and hinder an individual's psychological growth.

From the perspective of Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology, the southern phase represents the stage of confrontation with the shadow, namely the unconscious aspect containing the darker sides of personality such as anger, denial, resentment, and the fear of loss and abandonment. The shadow is not merely negative emotion, but a component of the psychic structure that must be recognized and integrated within the individuation process.

The use of Augmented Reality (AR) glasses in this phase symbolizes the ego's inability to fully accept the reality of loss. Ed's virtual presence becomes a symbol of a defense

mechanism in which Dita chooses to preserve illusion rather than confront unresolved emotional wounds. This condition demonstrates that the experience of loss has not yet been integrated into the structure of consciousness, causing inner conflict to continuously repeat itself.

The mandala in the southern direction illustrates that the center of the Self has not yet attained stability. The element of fire associated with the South symbolizes not only destruction, but also a process of symbolic purification—the burning away of the old ego burdened by attachment and denial. Thus, this phase can be understood as a stage of crisis preceding inner transformation toward a more complete integration of the Self.

#### 4) Eastward Mandala as a Representation of Transformation



Source : VS--Netflix-When It Stops Here-59'10"

Figure 5 East direction - White/Water

#### Denotative Meaning :

The eastern phase presents the mandala symbol in the form of a circle divided into four cardinal directions. The eastern direction is marked by the color white and visual elements of flowing water. The lighting in this scene appears brighter than in the previous phases, with a softer and calmer color composition dominating the visual atmosphere.

The meaning of the east direction is conveyed through Dita's dialogue:

“The east direction is white, it is water, it is sincerity of the heart, flowing in tranquility, filling every emptiness. There is something to be found in loss. Maybe I can find it.”

The narrative development shows that Dita intensively uses the Augmented Reality (AR) glasses to bring back Ed's presence. This action triggers conflicts with her mother, arguments with Ifan, and reprimands from Ed's grandmother. In the final part of the scene, Dita decides to delete the system installed in the glasses and return them. She then visits her father's grave and expresses reflective thoughts as a form of emotional resolution and inner closure.

#### Connotative Meaning :

At the connotative level, the dominance of white in the eastern direction represents a more integrated inner condition, characterized by reflective awareness, the integration of inner experiences, and clarity of thought. From Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective, color is understood as a sign that carries emotional and symbolic meanings rather than functioning merely as a visual element. The use of white in this phase signifies a shift in the character's psychological condition from conflict toward a more stable and reflective state.

The element of flowing water connotatively signifies psychological dynamics that are no longer stagnant. Whereas fire in the southern phase was associated with anger and

emotional outbursts, water in the eastern phase represents tranquility and the ability to adapt to reality. This transformation of elements indicates the protagonist's inner transformation.

The dialogue stating, "Filling every emptiness," demonstrates a shift in the character's perspective on loss. Emptiness is no longer positioned as something to resist or avoid, but rather as an experience that can be accepted and transformed into new understanding. At this stage, loss is no longer interpreted solely as emptiness, but as part of a process of self-reflection.

A transformation of meaning is also evident in the use of the Augmented Reality (AR) glasses. Whereas in the previous phase the glasses functioned as a symbol of rejection of reality, in the eastern phase they undergo a shift in meaning, becoming a medium that signifies awareness of the boundary between illusion and reality. The scene in which Dita deletes the system from the glasses connotatively represents the release of unhealthy emotional attachment.

This action demonstrates the character's conscious decision to return to reality as part of the process of integrating inner experiences. This condition not only reflects the character's psychological transformation but also opens broader possibilities of interpretation. Within the context of Javanese culture, the process of letting go is not understood as an instant act, but rather as a gradual inner process aimed at achieving balance and harmony in life (Effendi, 2020; Irkhamna, 2024).

### **Mythical Meaning :**

At the mythical level, the film constructs the ideological notion that the process of letting go does not mean erasing memories, but rather integrating experiences of loss into the structure of personal identity. Loss is represented not as permanent emptiness, but as a phase capable of generating understanding and psychological growth. From Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective, this meaning is not conveyed explicitly as a moral message, but is instead naturalized through the symbolism of the color white, the element of water, and the act of deleting the system from the glasses.

The film normalizes the idea that the integration of inner experiences requires the courage to confront reality. This process is not represented as a form of escape through technology or emotional denial, but as the result of self-awareness and confrontation with experiences of loss that have not yet been integrated. Thus, the myth constructed in the eastern phase suggests that emotional maturity is achieved when individuals are able to integrate experiences of loss into the structure of their identity rather than continuing to reject them.

From the perspective of Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology, the eastern phase can be understood as the early stage of integration within the individuation process. If the southern phase represented confrontation with the shadow—the darker aspects of the psyche such as anger and denial—then the eastern phase demonstrates a shift toward a more reflective consciousness. Dita's realization that Ed's presence through the glasses is merely a system-generated construction marks the withdrawal of psychic projection. She no longer identifies her inner conflict with an external figure, but gradually recognizes that the source of her suffering originates within herself. This process indicates that the ego has begun to make space for the Self as the center of psychic integration.

The element of water accompanying the eastern direction also carries symbolic relevance within the Jungian framework, as water is often associated with the unconscious. However, in this phase, water no longer functions as something overwhelming or drowning, but rather as something flowing and integrated into consciousness. The act of deleting the system from the glasses symbolizes the release of the ego's identification with the past and the initial step toward a more complete inner balance.

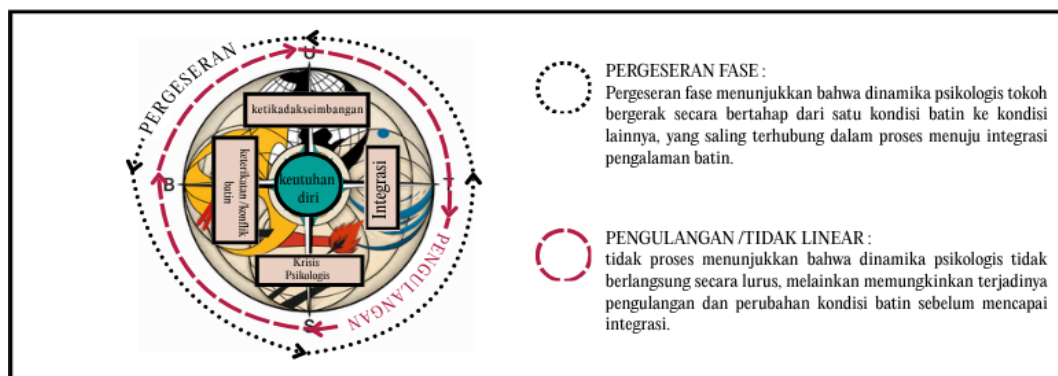
This condition demonstrates that the integration of experiences of loss is a gradual process involving reflection and adaptation to the realities of life. Within the Indonesian cultural context, particularly one influenced by Javanese cultural values, this process may be understood as an effort to attain inner balance through the integration of loss into the structure of individual life. The Javanese value of *nrimo ing pandum* represents a form of acceptance and adjustment to life's realities, including loss, which contributes to the formation of psychological well-being (Huda & Layalin, 2023).

### 3. Representation of the Main Character's Process of Letting Go

Based on the results of the semiotic analysis of the mandala symbol in each cardinal direction, it can be concluded that the process of letting go in the film is not represented as an instant action, but rather as a progressive and multilayered psychological dynamic. These dynamics form an interconnected structure that illustrates the transformation of the character's inner condition, beginning from emotional attachment, moving into inner conflict (anger and denial), continuing toward self-reflection, and ultimately reaching psychological integration that leads to inner balance.

This progression demonstrates that the process of letting go does not end at the stage of acknowledging the reality of loss, but instead consists of a series of confrontations, reflections, and integrations of inner experiences. The narrative structure emphasizes that the character's psychological dynamics are not static, but gradually evolve through phases of imbalance (North), emotional attachment and inner conflict (West), psychological crisis (South), and finally the integration of inner experiences (East), all of which ultimately lead toward the attainment of inner balance within the framework of individuation.

The circular pattern of the mandala reinforces the idea that the character's psychological dynamics unfold cyclically. Each phase does not stand independently, but is interconnected with the others, allowing for repetition and regression before integration at the center of the Self is ultimately achieved.



Source : Research Results, 2026

**Figure 6** Mandala "Flow of Psychological Dynamics"

The northern phase demonstrates that the mandala symbol represents a condition of emotional imbalance marked by the dominance of the ego and feelings of restlessness. The western phase illustrates strong emotional attachment through experiences of love and loss, which deepen the character's inner conflict. The intensification of this conflict reaches its peak in the southern phase, characterized by anger, rejection of reality, and dependence on Augmented Reality (AR) technology as a form of escape from unresolved emotional wounds. In this phase, the mandala symbol signifies emotional stagnation as well as psychological crisis.

Transformation begins to emerge in the eastern phase, when the main character realizes that Ed's virtual presence cannot replace reality. This awareness is followed by the act of deleting the system from the glasses, which symbolically represents the release of unhealthy emotional attachment. This shift demonstrates that the process of letting go does not end with acknowledging the reality of loss, but instead involves stages of confrontation, reflection, and the integration of inner experiences as part of a gradual psychological dynamic.

From Stuart Hall's perspective, the meaning of letting go does not arise naturally, but is constructed through a structured system of visual signs embedded within the mandala symbol. Each cardinal direction functions as a code that frames the psychological dynamics of the character, allowing audiences to understand the transformation of the character's inner condition as a gradual yet non-linear process, marked by recurring phases and regressions in emotional states. Thus, the film constructs the discourse that letting go does not mean erasing memories, but rather integrating experiences of loss into a more mature structure of identity.

These findings demonstrate that the mandala symbol functions as a representational device that maps the protagonist's inner transformation. Loss is represented not merely as a source of suffering, but as a medium for the formation of emotional maturity and the reconstruction of personal identity.

#### **4. Psychospiritual Integration of the Mandala Symbol**

The psychospiritual analysis of the mandala symbol demonstrates that the visual structure in the film can be interpreted as a representation of the individuation process as proposed by Carl Gustav Jung. Analytical psychology views the mandala as a symbol of the Self, namely the center of psychic wholeness formed through the integration of consciousness and the unconscious. The mandala is not merely a geometric pattern, but a symbol of balance achieved after individuals pass through internal conflict. The main character's process of letting go reflects the stages of this process.

In the northern and western phases, the dominance of the ego and emotional attachment to love and loss indicate a psychic condition that has not yet been integrated. The ego still attempts to maintain control over and assign meaning to the experience of loss. The crisis reaches its peak in the southern phase, when the character confronts the shadow in the form of anger, rejection of reality, and dependence on technological illusion as a form of psychological escape. This phase marks a confrontation with the darker aspects of the self that had previously been repressed.

Psychospiritual integration occurs when the character no longer identifies herself solely through the experience of loss, but is instead able to position that experience as part of personal growth and the search for meaning in life. Through this process, the mandala symbol functions as a map of the inner journey, illustrating the transition from imbalance toward inner harmony.

Thus, the mandala in the film represents not only emotional directions, but also reflects the individuation process that moves from ego dominance toward the integration of the Self.

The symbol demonstrates that sincerity and acceptance are not merely emotional conditions, but the result of a gradual and reflective process of psychospiritual integration.

## **5. Representation of the Mandala Symbol through the Perspectives of Filmmakers and Audiences**

### **1) Filmmaker's Perspective on the Mandala Symbol**

Based on the interview results with the screenwriter, Alim Sudio, the mandala symbol was chosen as a representation of life direction and the character's journey. He explained that the symbol is associated with the meaning of life direction in Javanese culture and with the emotional journey of the character after experiencing loss.

In the interview, Alim Sudio stated:

"Hmm. The mandala symbol has... a profound meaning as guidance for one's direction in life within ancient Javanese culture. So, I felt that this film is about life direction—about how someone responds to life after experiencing something, after experiencing confusion about their direction. So, the mandala symbolizes direction, direction, the direction of our character's journey, which also symbolizes the elements that become important parts of our character's emotional journey."

(Interview with Alim Sudio, February 12, 2026).

He further explained that the use of the mandala symbol emerged from the need to structure the stages of the story, leading him to select the symbol through a research process as a structure capable of representing the emotional development of the character.

Alim Sudio stated:

"It emerged because I felt that there needed to be stages within the story structure, and I found that those stages could be symbolized effectively through a symbol. So I conducted research and discovered that the mandala was the most suitable symbol."

(Interview with Alim Sudio, February 12, 2026).

This demonstrates that the mandala functions not merely as a symbolic element, but as a narrative device integrated into the dramatic structure of the film. These findings are consistent with the semiotic analysis, which indicates that the mandala operates as a progressive sign system—north, west, south, and east—representing the character's emotional phases from imbalance toward self-integration.

The interview also reveals the existence of representational limitations. Alim Sudio stated:

"The film did not entirely succeed in conveying the message of acceptance through its visual symbols."

(Interview with Alim Sudio, February 12, 2026).

Referring to Stuart Hall's theory of representation, this condition may be understood as a difference between the process of meaning production (encoding) and audience interpretation (decoding). Thus, the representation of the mandala symbol remains open to diverse interpretations.

### **2) Audience Perspectives on the Meaning of the Mandala**

#### **a) Similarities in Interpretation**

Based on interviews with three audience members, similarities were found in their interpretations of the mandala symbol as a structure that divides the emotional journey of the main character.

Raihan Chairunissa Kurniawan, interviewed on Thursday, February 12, 2026, stated that:

"The film conveys that every human being has emotional cycles in life, and that the character's journey is represented through symbols that carry philosophical meaning."

(Interview with Raihan Chairunissa Kurniawan, February 12, 2026).

This statement indicates that the mandala is understood as a map of emotional phases that progress over time.

Laila Annaziah, interviewed on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, interpreted:

“The mandala as a symbol of life direction related to emotional stages in the process of loss.”

(Interview with Laila Annaziah, February 11, 2026).

Meanwhile, M. Zaidan Aqila, interviewed on February 12, 2026, stated that:

“The mandala is like a wheel of life depending on its phase, and it is related to self-balance and the process of letting go.”

(Interview with M. Zaidan Aqila, February 12, 2026).

All three informants understood the mandala as a representation of life direction, an emotional map, an inner cycle, and the process of letting go. These similarities in interpretation reinforce the researcher’s connotative analysis that the mandala functions as a progressive structure of meaning that can be visually recognized. The system of signs constructed through the division of the cardinal directions is understood by audiences as a representation of the emotional phases experienced by the main character.

#### **b) Differences in Interpretation (Critical Findings)**

Although similarities were found in understanding the basic function of the mandala symbol, variations in interpretation emerged at the level of representing acceptance and letting go.

Raihan Chairunissa Kurniawan, interviewed on Thursday, February 12, 2026, argued that:

“The representation of acceptance in the film is more symbolic than realistic.”

(Interview with Raihan Chairunissa Kurniawan, February 12, 2026).

Laila Annaziah, interviewed on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, stated that:

“The ending of the film does not fully portray acceptance because there are still signs of emotional denial, such as the character’s hesitation when deleting the AR glasses system and the strong attachment to past memories.”

(Interview with Laila Annaziah, February 11, 2026).

In contrast, M. Zaidan Aqila, interviewed on February 12, 2026, argued that:

“The ending of the film sufficiently represents acceptance, although it still leaves room for interpretation.”

(Interview with M. Zaidan Aqila, February 12, 2026).

These differing evaluations demonstrate that the mandala symbol is polysemic, meaning that it remains open to multiple possibilities of interpretation. From Stuart Hall’s perspective of representation theory, meaning is not singular, but is produced through interaction between the text and the audience. The process of meaning production by creators does not necessarily result in uniform interpretations among viewers.

These findings indicate that although semiotically the mandala symbol functions as a map of the individuation journey and the process of letting go, the integration of inner experiences and meaning remains influenced by the personal experiences and emotional backgrounds of individual viewers. Thus, interpretative validation through interviews not only confirms the researcher’s analysis, but also demonstrates that the representation of meaning in film is open-ended and allows for differing interpretations regarding the extent to which the film successfully represents acceptance and emotional resolution.

These differences in interpretation reflect the diversity of audience positions in interpreting experiences of loss and the integration of inner experiences, in accordance with the perspective that meaning is constructed differently by each individual. Javanese cultural

values, particularly those emphasizing inner balance and harmony in life, regard the process of letting go as a non-uniform journey shaped by life experiences, social environments, and each individual's construction of meaning. Therefore, the openness of meaning within the mandala symbol not only demonstrates the polysemic nature of semiotics, but also reflects cultural dynamics in understanding human emotional processes.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the mandala symbol in the film *Ketika Berhenti di Sini* is represented as a visual construction that maps the psychological dynamics of the main character in the process of letting go. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the mandala functions not merely as an aesthetic element but as a system of signs that produces meaning through denotative, connotative, and mythical layers. The shift in directions from north, west, south, to east represents the character's psychological transformation from imbalance, attachment, and emotional conflict toward self-reflection and the integration of experiences of loss in achieving inner balance.

This sequence indicates that the process of letting go does not end with grief, but develops into a reflective process that leads to the acceptance of loss. Interview findings with filmmakers and audiences reinforce the function of the mandala as a narrative device, while also revealing variations in interpretations regarding the degree of the main character's acceptance and sincerity. This confirms that film meaning is polysemic, as explained in Stuart Hall's theory of representation. The Indonesian cultural context, particularly one influenced by Javanese cultural values, demonstrates that the process of letting go occurs gradually and is shaped by individuals' life experiences and social backgrounds. Thus, the mandala symbol not only represents the psychological dynamics of the character but also reflects cultural values that emphasize balance and harmony in life.

This study contributes to the development of Indonesian film semiotics through an interdisciplinary approach integrating visual symbol analysis, semiotics, representation theory, and analytical psychology in understanding characters' psychological dynamics. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single film and one primary symbol. Therefore, future studies are recommended to broaden the scope of analysis and explore variations of visual symbols in different films and visual media texts in order to enrich communication and visual representation studies in Indonesia.

## REFERENSI

- Arum Lestari, A., Agus Humaidi, M., Komunikasi, I., & Islam Kalimantan MAB Banjarmasin, U. (2025). Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes dalam Film *Gadis Kretek* Pada Permasalahan Gender. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 9, 17258–17264. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v9i2.28613>
- Azzahra, F., Nurbaiti, S., & Nurfalah, F. (2025). Representations of Talking About Trauma and its Healing in the Film “Bolehkah Sekali Saja Kumenangis” (May I Cry Just Once): A Case Study of UGJ Students. *Greenation International Journal of Law and Social Sciences*, 3(3), 704–713. <https://doi.org/10.38035/gijlss.v3i3.513>
- Barthes, R. (1999). *The rhetoric of the image*. Sage Publications. <https://share.google/Ax2q3Kua2eOCeTVdP>
- Bordwell, D. (2013). *Ebook: Film art: An introduction*. McGraw Hill.
- Botha, M. (2020). Prior Entrepreneurial Exposure and Action of Women Entrepreneurs : Exploring the Moderation Effects of Entrepreneurial Competencies in a Developing Country Context. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11(May). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00922>

- Bryngelson, B. (1953). Man and his symbol. *The Speech Teacher*, 2(2), 81–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634525309376603>
- Budi Laksana, R. (2019). Kajian Konsep Mandala Terhadap Motif Naga Besaung Pada Kain Tenun Songket Palembang. *Jurnal Sitakara*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.31851/sitakara.v4i1.2561>
- Effendi, D. I. (2020). “The Religion of Jawa” Karya Clifford Geertz. *Core*, 52–63. [https://www.academia.edu/97037200/The\\_Religion\\_of\\_Jawa\\_Karya\\_Clifford\\_Geertz](https://www.academia.edu/97037200/The_Religion_of_Jawa_Karya_Clifford_Geertz)
- Febriani, S. R., Taufik, C. M., Kebangsaan, U., Indonesia, R., Kebangsaan, U., & Indonesia, R. (2025). Menghidupkan Kembali Jiwa Yang Sudah Mati. *Komunikabangsa: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 3(1), 1–10.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage Publications. <https://share.google/7ezH3Erw19M7wnk69>
- Huda, E. A., & Layalin, N. A. (2023). Nrimo In Pandum: Description of Javanese Self-Acceptance After the Family Died. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 4. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.4.723.48908>
- Irkhamna, B. (2024). *Etika Jawa (Studi Epistemologi Pemikiran Etika Franz Magnis Suseno)* [repository.syekhnurjati.ac.id]. <http://repository.syekhnurjati.ac.id/id/eprint/17337%0A>
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Welcome to Convergence Culture*. Pop Junctions. [https://henryjenkins.org/blog/2006/06/welcome\\_to\\_convergence\\_culture.html?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://henryjenkins.org/blog/2006/06/welcome_to_convergence_culture.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Kartini. (2023). Analisis Semiotik Roland Barthes Dalam Film Layangan Putus. *Jurnal Cahaya Mandalika*, 04 (02), 294–303. <https://doi.org/10.36312/jcm.v4i2.1478>
- Liu, C., Chen, H., Liu, C. Y., Lin, R. T., & Chiou, W. K. (2020). Cooperative and Individual Mandala Drawing Have Different Effects on Mindfulness, Spirituality, and Subjective Well-Being. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11(October), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.564430>
- Maulidia, V., Suzanna, E., & Dewi, R. (2024). Gambaran Grief Pada Remaja Yang Mengalami Kematian Orangtua Akibat Kecelakaan. *INSIGHT: Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 2(2), 290–302. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/>
- Rahayu, S. G. P., Hasmawati, F., & Trisiah, A. (2025). Analisis Semiotika Dalam Film “Vina Sebelum 7 Hari.” *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 1(2), 1. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47134/jpbsi.v1i2.1479>
- Shahab, U. (2023). *Ketika Berhenti di Sini*. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt24546804/>
- WHO, W. H. O. (2022). Mental Health and COVID-19 : Early evidence of the pandemic ’ s impact. *Scientific Brief*, 2(March), 1–11. [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci\\_Brief-Mental\\_health-2022.1](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci_Brief-Mental_health-2022.1)
- Wibisono, P., & Sari, Y. (2021). Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes Dalam Film Bintang Ketjil Karya Wim Umboh Dan Misbach Yusa Bira. *Jurnal Dinamika Ilmu Komunikasi*, 1(1), 30–43. <https://doi.org/http://journal.moestopo.ac.id/index.php/dinamika>