RELIGIOUS IDENTITY NEGOTIATION AND HYBRIDITY IN BLACK METAL ISTIQOMAH VISUAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang identitas dan representasi bahasa visual Black Metal Istiqomah dalam melihat negosiasi yang terjadi di dalamnya. Lebih lanjut, negosiasi yang dimaksud antara identitas keagamaan dan hibriditas dalam performativitas visualitas dari Black Metal Istiqomah. Pengamatan dan penelusuran dilakukan dengan mengidentifikasi zine Black Metal Istiqomah di akun Instagram @blackmetalistiqomah melalui tiga karya komik strip berjudul "Komik Gelap", "HP Menurutku, Menurutmu", dan "Absolution". Analisis negosiasi black metal dan Islam yang mengkonstruksi identitas akan dibedah melalui tanda verbal dan visual pada elemen visual dengan pendekatan semiotik oleh Roland Barthes, dan untuk melihat fenomena sosial ini digunakan teori performatif dari konsep hibriditas Richard Schechner terkait dengan Zine Black Metal Istiqomah. Black Metal Istiqomah sejak awal merupakan wujud identitas yang melekat pada karyanya. Ekspansinya menjadi brand fashion dan merchandise menjadi penanda identitas yang awalnya terkonstruksi dalam zine Black Metal Istiqomah, yang mulai diterima sebagai bentuk representasi diri bagi para penggemar yang memiliki cita-cita yang sama dengan Black Metal Istiqomah.

Kata Kunci: Black Metal Istiqomah, hibriditas, negosiasi identitas keagamaan, performativitas visual

Abstract

This study discusses the identity and visual language representation of Black Metal Istiqomah in seeing the negotiations that occur in it. Furthermore, the intended negotiation between religious identity and hybridity in the visual performativity of Black Metal Istiqomah. Observations and searches were carried out by identifying the Black Metal Istiqomah zine on the @blackmetalistiqomah Instagram account through three comic strip work entitled "Komik Gelap", "HP According to You, and "Absolution". Analysis began with the negotiation of black metal and Islam that constructs identity. It will be dissected through verbal and visual signs on visual elements with a semiotic approach by Roland Barthes, and to see this social phenomenon using performative theory from Richard Schechner's concept of hybridity related to the Black Metal Istiqomah zine. Black Metal Istiqomah, from the beginning, is a form of identity attached to his work. Its expansion into a fashion brand and merchandise has become an identity marker initially constructed in the Black Metal Istiqomah zine, which began to be accepted as a form of self-representation for fans with the same ideals as Black Metal Istiqomah.

Keywords: Black Metal Istiqomah, hybridity, religious identity negotiation, visual performativity

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of paradigms and trends affects human life, including art workers. In the modern era, technology and the emergence of various alternative resources encourage art workers to explore more varied forms and forms of art (Yamato, 2016). The context and objectives have become more expansive. The forms of presentation of his works have become more diverse thanks to the sophistication of digital technology and the presence of various social media platforms that also give rise to new visual languages, like Black Metal Istiqomah, directed by Achmad Deptian Djenuari Rizky, which presents concepts and narrative content in the form of a zine *(read: zi'n)* as a visual language medium.

Initially, Ahcmaddepp -- *the pen name of Achmad Deptian Djenuari Rizky* -- created the Black Metal Istiqomah zine to introduce religion to the younger generation in a flexible and not rigid format. So, he chose to combine the terminology of underground music, black metal, with the concept of good values in Islam through visual language representations. The visual language presented by the *@blackmetalistiqomah* Instagram account is diverse, such as comic strips, variously illustrated posters, and short videos whose core content shows the values of goodness in Islam. Black Metal Istiqomah received enough attention and appreciation from netizens on the Instagram social media platform; in the end, the visual language was also published in a comic with the same title and created a second account, *@bmi_merch*, which was devoted to selling merchandise such as T-shirts with the Black Metal Istiqomah design.

From another aspect of visual language, Black Metal Istiqomah has a pretty intriguing phrase where the use of the term "Black Metal," which is closely related to the impression of being spooky, dark, and "anti-God," is juxtaposed with "Istiqomah" which is a term that is often used to represent Islamic view which means upright, straight in other words that is consistent in worship and carrying out religious law. Black Metal Istiqomah then narrates this concept through the character of Al-Varokah Nur Vahalla, who is described as a young man who is attached to the metal lifestyle but still holds fast to Islamic values. Story content is presented through visual language in the form of graphic illustrations, graphic posters, and comic strips that discuss religious messages, such as short prayers, honest advice, life illustrations, and humor. The message is delivered in a light and simple language without being patronizing. Furthermore, Black Metal Istiqomah presents an appearance that leans towards the identity of black metal music with the dominance of using black and white colors (Gao et al., 2022; Grant, 2018; Zhu et al., 2018).

Black Metal is one of the sub-genres in Heavy Metal music whose presence in Indonesian society gives rise to various diverse perceptions. The negative public acceptance of the presence of black metal itself is not an obstacle to the existence of this underground music community (Morris, 2015). Both actors and fans make various efforts to show their existence, such as holding independent concerts to using various media as an effort to spread information about their community (Coggins, 2021;

Lundström, 2018). One of them is the development of community information media known as Fanzine or Zine.

At the beginning of its appearance, before the development of the era of technology and social media, zines were referred to as alternative media of unlimited expression by actors and their communities (Sampurno et al., 2020; Wiratmoko & Sampurno, 2021). The zine comes from the word fanzine, which is an abbreviation of fan magazine and is intended as a medium of communication for the ideas of a community or zinister, a term for artists or zines in the community (Poyntz, 2006). Media zine is a form of amateur journalism that develops independently as the community grows. This community then led the zine form to develop into an accessible alternative art. The layout arrangement, the content of the form, and the circulation are determined by zinister themselves so that zines have various forms, the use of mixed media such as the presentation of illustrations, posters, and comic strips to the application of collage techniques and writings that ignore originality and copyright (Coebel, 2009; Konstantakos, 2015; Maidment, 2018).

Therefore, this study discusses the identity and visual language representation that is combined between religion and black metal music. The merging of these two opposing sides would be interesting to examine further textually through the visual language of several posters, and comic strip works in the Black Metal Istiqomah zine with a semiotic approach by Roland Barthes. Furthermore, to see this social phenomenon in its entirety, a performative review will be carried out using Richard Schechner's concept of hybridity related to the Black Metal Istiqomah zine, which can combine two opposite identities through different visual languages.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative research uses the descriptive-analytic method to analyze text that focuses on the sign based on the meaning of denotation and connotation, producing myths in visual language to determine the embodiment of black metal music identity and Islamic identity (Akbulut & Kesdi, 2017; Leavy, 2017; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2008). Observations and searches were carried out by identifying the Black Metal Istiqomah zine on the @blackmetalistiqomah Instagram account through three comic strip work entitled *"Komik Gelap", "HP Menurutku, Menurutmu",* and *"Absolution".* Furthermore, observing and collecting news and articles related to the Black Metal Istiqomah digital zine in both print and electronic formats. Next, an analysis of the negotiation of black metal and Islam that constructs identity will be dissected through verbal signs and visual signs on elements of art, logos, typography and visual layout with a semiotic approach by Roland Barthes (Barthes et al., 1977; Barthes & Howard, 1988). Furthermore, to see this social phenomenon in its entirety, a performative review will be carried out using Richard Schechner's concept of hybridity related to the Black Metal Istiqomah zine, which can combine two opposite identities through different visual languages (Robinson & Cussen, 2022; Schechner, 2013, 2018).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Negotiating Black Metal and Islamic Identity

Posters and comic strips are a form of Black Metal Istiqomah visual language. Although they convey the essence of religious messages, in their visual presentation, posters and comic strips have their uniqueness and style. The visual language of the poster is presented with a combination of illustrations and letters with the use of concise and clear language so that it is easy to understand. At the same time, the visual language of comic strips looks more complex because it contains illustrations, narrations, themes, short story plots and characters framed through story panels, so it requires more attention to find out the meaning that the creator wants to convey (Cotti-Lowell, 2013; Ferriss-Hill, 2019; Schlund-Vials, 2011).

Picture1. Poster Black Metal Istiqomah
[Source: Instagram @blackmetalistiqomah]

The dominance of metallic impression is also reinforced by illustrations that are presented with dark nuances (Picture 1). In picture one, there is an illustration of a skull that is identical to the symbol of death juxtaposed with the *lafadz* of Allah, Muhammad, and the symbol of the moon and star, which is a symbol of Islam. At first glance, the Islamic symbols on the skull seem as if they satirize the concept of Islam coupled with the black color and skull connotations which are identical to death, scary and dark, far from the impression of Islam (Nasrullah & Rustandi, 2016; Pacholczyk, 2018). However, on closer inspection, the image is a reminder that every creature will experience death. These contradictory concepts that are merged will lead to different understandings if they are not considered carefully (Boyce-Tillman, 2020).

3.1.1 *"Komik Gelap"*

"Komik Gelap" tells the story of a young man with visual characteristics of long loose hair and wearing corpse paint, who is restless and then decides to perform ablution and read the Quran (Picture 2). The character, who looks like a fanatical follower of the metal genre, was later given the name Al-Varokah Nvr Vahalla by Ahmadeep. The storyline starts from the top left panel on the first panel containing the caption *"duh*

gundah dan gelisah nich…." (Oh, I am upset and nervous...), his seems to suggest the restless atmosphere the main character is experiencing.

Picture 2. "Komik Gelap"
[Source: Instagram @blackmetalistiqomah]

Then on the second panel, the sequence moves, depicting an illustration of a character washing his hands and a background illustration of a water faucet with the sound effect of flowing water with the words *"bwush"* and *"wushh",* which refer to the activity of cleaning oneself or purification. In the third panel, an illustration of the main character represents with an extreme close-up on the side of the face and a smiling expression with the addition of a shining effect with two stars. In the fourth panel, the illustration of the character is depicted wearing a headgear (cap) and reading the Quran (recitation) shown from a high angle with the background of the Quran. The scene depicts a character about to start reading the Quran, marked by an image of the Quran being opened accompanied by the caption *"Audhubilahiminasyaithanirajim bismillahhirohmanirahim"*, which is a sign of the start of reading the activity, which is displayed in a sans-serif typeface.

Black and white monochrome colours visually dominate *"Komik Gelap"* that represents as a characteristic of black metal, and black and white are symbols of Islam. The technique of preparing the warrants in this work is different from other works that use positive and negative techniques; in *"Komik Gelap"*, white is arranged; on the contrary, the black colour of the hair and corpse paint changed to white. At the same time, the white colour on the face changed to black. However, it still retains black as the image background. *"Komik Gelap"*, at first glance, reflects the general narrative as standard functions of black on white. The visual image presented is the opposite of black on white, where black (dark) becomes white (light), and what was originally white (light) becomes black (dark).

Talking about the black and white colour, it reminds us of the Chinese philosophical concept, *Yin and Yang*, a symbol that is round and has black and white colours which have the meaning of balance as well as a duality or *Poleng* cloth which is attached to

the religious life of *Hindus* in Bali, Indonesia (Agyeiwaah et al., 2019; Cotti-Lowell, 2013; Elliot, 2015; Gomez-palacio & Vit, 2009). A cloth with a checkered motif like a chessboard is interpreted as a symbol of *Rwa Bhineda*, which represents two different or contradictory traits that symbolize the balance of nature such as up and down, morning and night, good and evil and many others (Coggins, 2021; Lang Hearlson, 2021). Black and white in work *"Komik Gelap"* seem to have the same concept as *Yin and Yang* and *Poleng Fabric*, representing two opposite traits. Black, which is associated with a negative image, represents the identity of black metal which is identical to darkness. At the same time, the white colour symbolizes goodness, and purity represents Islam (Howell, 2001).

The panels also contain connotations of hidden meanings behind the scenes. The first panel contains the description without an illustration describing the condition of feeling uneasy felt by the main character. The use of non-standard words gives a relaxed impression so that the delivery seems familiar and not stiff. The restless atmosphere as a highlight is built by giving an uneven texture using a line game so that it creates an uncomfortable impression (Lazard & Mackert, 2014). The captions are displayed using sans-serif fonts that seem light but firm with clear and easy-to-read forms to make the reader aware of the information as a highlight in the story.

The second panel illustrates the shift in the flow of the main character's action using running water to wash his hands and the sound effect of running water with the words *"bwush"* and *"wushh"* (Picture 2). Washing oneself using water is part of the Muslim worship procession which means purifying oneself before performing worship. In the third panel, the shifting action in the illustration of the main character is shown with a close-up point of view that highlights the side of the face that is slightly downcast with a bright, radiant face depicted through the addition of a shining effect with two stars. The depiction of the star effect and the smiling expression showed signs that the previously mentioned anxiety was starting to dissipate. In the fourth panel, illustrate characters with head coverings (caps) who explain the whole story and the scenes in the previous panels. The scene in the fourth panel is the final part of the story that offers a solution to the anxiety in the story panel, namely with.

Contradictory visual presentation implies messages about good and evil through contrasting colours that coexist and complement each other (Indrajaya, 2018). Religion, especially the Quran, can be a source of solace and peace of mind when a dark heart arises. When combined with the context of the story, the black metal character, which is symbolized through the appearance and make-up of the main character who is performing ablution (purification) and reading the Quran, implies a message that even though he has faith in something will not hinder belief and obedience to God.

In this case, the use of contrasting colors and religious symbolism create a powerful mythic narrative that reinforces the idea that good and evil are in constant struggle, but that faith and obedience to God can provide a source of solace and peace of mind

in the face of darkness. Barthes would argue that this mythic narrative functions to naturalize and reinforce the dominant cultural beliefs about the role of religion in providing moral guidance and support in times of trouble.

Overall, Barthes would see the visual presentation and religious symbolism in this context as part of a larger system of signs and symbols that create a powerful mythic narrative about the relationship between good and evil, faith and obedience, and the role of religion in providing solace and peace of mind in the face of darkness.

3.1.2 *"Menurutku, Menurutmu"*
The visual language through the comic strip with the title *"HP Menurutku, Menurutmu"* is displayed interactively by involving two characters in a fairly intense conversation (Picture 3). It tells the story of a debate between a young man and a middle-aged man, which implies a message not to be quick to think badly of others.

Picture 3. *"HP Menurutku, Menurutmu"*
[Source: Instagram @blackmetalistiqomah]

In the first panel, the illustration is in close-up size, where the image displays a specific focus on a part so that it seems to cut off—telling a man who is grateful for the help given by the young man with a friendly smiling face shown through facial expressions and balloons saying *"waduuh de makasih yah, udah nolongin" (Wow, thank you for helping).* Then he replied with Varokah Nvr Vahalla cheerfully while giving a thumbs up in agreement.

The second panel shows switching panels with action-to-action closures where the character indicates the response to the first panel. The second panel tells of the father showing displeasure with a frowning face, with the mouth frowning and furrowing eyebrows showing a slightly cynical facial expression. The uncomfortable atmosphere is also emphasized by the intense background that seems ready to attack the young man in the lower left panel, plus the description of the wavy word balloons showing a threatening tone *"Aelaahh.. nolong seuprit gitu aja minta imbalan HenPon piye toh coeng…" (Aelaahh.. helping just like that, and you ask for a reward)* by the young man

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with a stern face. Switching on the third panel is depicted with a subject-to-subject closure showing the same scene in the second panel but depicted from a different point of view depicting the character's changing emotions. The father is depicted more dominantly with the size of the extreme close-up image, which shows a more extreme intimidating emotion which is depicted with raised eyebrows, an open mouth and a vibrating tongue. The depiction of the emotional changes in the father's character is also supported by the visual effect of writing the word in capital letters *"NOLONG ITU HARUS IKHLAS JANGAN MINTA IMBALAN DEK!!" (HELPING MUST BE SINCERE, DO NOT ASK FOR REWARDS!!)* (Picture 3)*.* The depiction of tightly tapered word balloons further emphasizes the emotions of the characters, who are angry and shouting in a rising tone. The intimidated youth is depicted in a very cornered position at the bottom of the panel, with an almost invisible portion of the image accompanied by the word *"WANJAY"* in smaller font size.

Next, the storyline shifts to the fourth panel, telling the leading young man to reply to the father's words in the last panel in a high tone while explaining the misunderstanding that occurred between the young man and the father. The illustration in this panel is centred on a young man in extreme close-up size with stiff lines showing an angry expression with sharp eyes, an open mouth showing sharp teeth and a protruding tongue. The information depicted on the pointy-shaped word balloon is supported by writing a caption using the capital letter *"HAMDALAH PISAN ITU MAKSUDNYA BUKAN HENPON!!!"* (*pisan*=very in Sundanese Language) explains the annoyed and firm expression. Meanwhile, the father is illustrated with a poster of a small body raising his hands in surrender and giving an acknowledgement that his original accusation was wrong. The situation was emphasized by the statement *"OK ALHAMDULILLAH WADUH SAYA GATAU MAS …"* in a reduced font size so that it seems that the perspective is far from the youth leaders. The father's perspective, which seems distant, also means a greater dominance of youth. Furthermore, at the bottom right of the panel, it is closed with the Black Metal Istiqomah logo and hand lettering *"hamdalah"*, a comic highlight disguised by sharp and pointed letters and a thin line decoration resembling blood that seems to drip typically of Black Metal.

Texture distribution is used as a supporting element in the story's context. The black and white colour in work *"HP Menurutku, Menurutmu"* as a symbol of black metal and Islam is visualized by playing with dots that form a texture. The texture then becomes the dominating element in this work. The black texture often appears when the illustration depicts the emotion of anger. The intensity of the dark texture on the head refers to the human brain. In the brain, there is a part called the limbic system that plays a role in generating emotions that are usually processed automatically in response to the situation. The intensity of the black colour can connote negative emotions that gather, which results in emotional outbursts (Robinson & Cussen, 2022). At the same time, the dark texture used as the background is used as a reinforcement and atmosphere builder. As in the background of panel two, the texture fills the field that gradually tapers towards the youth as if the father is intimidating the main character.

The comic strip still carries the theme of Black Metal Istiqomah, which is shown through the illustration of a young character wearing a corpse paint face as a symbol of black metal identity—overall conveying a message of kindness to help each other selflessly which is a representation of Islamic values. In addition to the message of kindness, *"HP Menurutku, Menurutmu"* describes a scene of misunderstanding that stems from the problem of inappropriate communication language and excessive suspicion. This scene is often encountered in everyday life. Indirectly, the story in the comic strip implies the importance of mutual respect and understanding between human beings.

3.1.3 "Absolution"

Absolution's poster depicts a character trying to break free from the rope that entangles his entire body (Picture 4). Using balanced image proportions that form diagonal symmetrical lines with variations in the use of perspective creates the illusion that the image has depth. The Black Metal Istiqomah logo has the same meaning as the title of the previous work and the work's identity. The title *"Absolution"* means absolution or forgiveness of sins. In general, poster illustrations can be interpreted as symbols of efforts to get forgiveness from sins.

Picture 4. *"Absolution"*
[Source: Instagram @blackmetalistiqomah]

Visual language through illustration is the crescent moon and star, a symbol of Islam. On the lower left side is an image of a human figure with long hair with make-up corpse paint, which shows a sad expression as shown by the open mouth and the corners of the lips pointing downwards. While the body parts are not visualized, only the right arm is depicted, pointing towards the upper left towards the image of the moon and stars. The position of the crescent moon and stars as a background is connoted as abandoned Islamic teaching, but in reality, it makes it entangled in evil. The visual of the hand being raised while being entangled in a rope is connoted as a form of struggle to escape. Supported by the depiction of desperate expressions displayed by the characters, the hand that is trying to reach the ceiling pointing at the

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moon and stars is a visualization of the character's desire to be able to escape from disobedience and return to Istiqomah.

The black colour is still the dominant colour in this work, which means darkness which is also a colour identical to Black Metal (Coggins, 2021). While the colour white as a counter to black fills the field, which creates an even visual texture on every part of the poster (Lusty, 2019). The game of line elements is felt strongly in work "Absolution". Many line elements appear to visualize the entangled ropes.

3.2. Identity Construction of Black Metal and Islam

The negotiation of the identity of Black Metal and Islam in Black Metal Istiqomah zine is considered the most prominent, as seen from the image elements in each of his works, such as the dominance of color, image shape, composition, and proportion of images, as well as the use of textures that act as space fillers. The appeal of Black Metal Istiqomah zine is to negotiate the concept of each identity and then mix it into a presentation of works according to the required portion. The mixing results of the negotiation of each identity, which is adjusted to the portion based on the context of the message, then construct a new idea about Black Metal and Islam.

Color is the most prominent element in Black Metal Istiqomah zine. Solid black and white colors dominate all parts of the work. The color itself is a perception which is a non-verbal language that can symbolize emotions so that it can communicate ideas without having to use words. In psychological symbolism, black is said to be a color that has depth (Kia, 2012; Morris, 2015; Rico, 2019). At a glance, the reader will think that Black Metal Istiqomah zine refers to all Black Metal content without questions about Istiqomah because of its strong black color dominance. However, black and white have their respective portions, forming meaning according to the presented content.

Negotiation through the element of texture is also felt to be quite strong in Black Metal Istiqomah zine. The visual texture was created using a black and white color game combined with lines and dots. Texture in Black Metal Istiqomah zine is the element that is most often found in almost every image area with different intensities in each of his works. The texture refers to symbols of good and evil that are always sided by the side. Textures with more intense colors are used to emphasize messages that convey stories, such as depictions of emotions that cannot be conveyed explicitly. The combination that merges into one symbolically expresses that it is still good behind the darkness, even if it is only a speck. The embodiment of texture in work symbolizes excellent and bad qualities. Good qualities are related to the belief that Islam is, and bad qualities are related to the darkness of the heart or the nature of Black Metal.

The form of the combination of Black Metal and Islam is also negotiated through the use of typefaces and typography. Letters and typography are essential elements in Black Metal Istiqomah zine work to support the process of delivering verbal messages.

Gothic typefaces and hand lettering with sharp and stiff shapes are the typefaces most often used to give titles and highlights to Black Metal Istiqomah works. Gothic typeface and hand lettering with dark historical nuances of gothic letters that are thick with dark nuances are suitable to describe the nature of Black Metal (Lusty, 2019). While the form of Islamic identity, described through terms such as the word Istiqomah, *hamdalah*, Arabic letters, fragments of Quran verses, and other words, seem inappropriate when describing the impression of Islam when described through letters with the character of Black Metal. However, it looks natural and not forced. The depiction of Islamic words using the Black Metal typeface intends to hide the Islamic meaning behind the nature of Black Metal (Baluja, 2021). It takes precision to be able to see the hidden meaning. However, not all letter shapes are adapted to the typical form of Black Metal. Serif fonts with clear, easy-to-read, and relaxed looks are also used to write descriptions for some comic strip works (van Leeuwen & Djonov, 2015). The combination of letter and word forms is Ahmadeep's strategy to gently negotiate the two identities without reducing the essence of each identity.

3.3. Performativity Hybrid Black Metal Istiqomah

Hybridization refers to meeting two or more cultures which are then mixed through a negotiation process between each party to maintain each characteristic. The mixing process finally creates a new form without losing the characteristics of each culture (Kraszewski, 2011). The long process of hybridity then changes, and evolution follows the flow of time; as Jan Pieterse put it, hybridization as a process undergoes rapid acceleration and mixing, expanding its field.

The development of the technological era facilitates a new phase of the intercultural contract. It is undeniable that the Black Metal Istiqomah zine is an intercultural product resulting from negotiations that go through specific processes and tactics to adapt to maintain identity. Zine Black Metal Istiqomah, an extension of hybridization that is experiencing acceleration, is a product that was born through the incorporation of cultural values with the support of new technology (Locke, 2015; Schechner, 2013). With born in the era of digital technology, Black Metal Istiqomah zine is considered an alternative innovation in understanding religion and works of art. The merging of contradictory identities is a strategy in introducing Islam to the black metal community with a negotiation tactic to merge into black metal through light symbols familiar in everyday life in black metal.

Based on the observations, it appears that the identity of Islamic black metal is a manifestation of reconciliation without significant contestation between the two. The two identities became a hybrid existence thanks to the efforts to negotiate their identity symbols with portions adjusted to the Black Metal Istiqomah mission to remind the attitude of tolerance and mutual acceptance with differences presented in a light style. Islam which is positioned as a religion that carries a message of goodness in the zine Black Metal Istiqomah and black metal as a representation of counter Islam which is identical to evil, is positioned as an instrument to convey messages. In the end, Black Metal Istiqomah identity does not explain the domination relationship that

ultimately wins because, from the beginning, the goal of Black Metal Istiqomah zine is to unite the two identities into a hybrid so that it can give the impression that although black metal is still Istiqomah in practicing religion and Istiqomah.

Black Metal Istiqomah, as a work of art, looks almost like a new identity, carrying the concept of a combination of two contradictory identities that captivates the eyes of followers in every way to negotiate these two differences. Ahmadeep's work has received much appreciation from his followers. Even in some of his works, this Black Metal Istiqomah follower not only puts comments in support of the works posted but also diligently reposts and disseminates Ahmadeep's works.

In recent years, Black Metal Istiqomah has entered the world of clothing lines that produce their fashion designs using the concept of Black Metal Istiqomah identity (Adams, 2006; Airriess et al., 2012). Black Metal Istiqomah identity, which was previously only applied to zines, was later expanded to become a new form of work in merchandise brand design. Not wanting to be bothered, the designs offered on the brand are also previous works posted on their Instagram account as if the zine is a new form that is becoming more and more familiar to their followers. Applying Black Metal Istiqomah identity to fashion design brands has received much appreciation and positive responses from followers. This form of appreciation can be seen in followers' comments expressing support for the Black Metal Istiqomah brand. Some followers also diligently use the hashtag *#blackmetalistiqomah* when uploading their photos using the Black Metal Istiqomah brand.

Based on a short conversation conducted by the researcher with several randomly selected followers of the Black Metal Istiqomah account, a phenomenon was found the followers of Black Metal Istiqomah were divided into two groups. The first group is followers who like Black Metal Istiqomah zine work, and the second group is followers who feel the same ideology as Black Metal Istiqomah concept (Salazar, 2013; Yıldırım, 2020). Black Metal Istiqomah zine carried out various tactics to combine black identity into a source of inspiration and a mere form of entertainment. For groups who are fans of Black Metal Istiqomah zine, Black Metal Istiqomah identity is an exciting concept as work because it manages to convey messages unusually. Some fans of Black Metal Istiqomah zine even regretted the change in Black Metal Istiqomah which is currently more focused on its merchandise brand than its comics or posters.

Meanwhile, the existence of Black Metal Istiqomah identity for fans who feel the same ideology is seen as an alternative concept that is used as a form of self-representation of their identity, namely a black metal person but still adheres to Islamic teachings. Most fans on this side are familiar with metal, have been involved in underground communities before, and admit that they are trying to emigrate and obey religious teachings. Black Metal Istiqomah is consciously used as a representation and self-existence. Some of his fans also believe that his Black Metal Istiqomah identity is a unique form of existence.

4. CONCLUSION

The identity and visual language representation in Istiqomah Black Metal that is combined between religion and black metal music can be seen from the composition of the drawing area and the composition of the depiction of the symbols of the identity of Black Metal and Islam in each of his works. For example, black metal symbols in worship are used to understand ugliness and negative things, such as the depiction of demons and the black color being positioned as a nuisance when worshiping. So, the position of worship will be higher. While in some other works, Islamic symbols are deliberately hidden in potent black metal symbols.

The main character of Al-Varokah Nvr Vahalla is the result of the negotiation of the adjustment between the nature of black metal and the nature of Islam. Other negotiations can be seen from the simplified illustration adjustments, the dark and terrible impression of Black Metal's characteristics, adapted to Islamic values through the depiction of characters in every poster and comic work. The main character of Al-Varokah Nvr Vahalla appears as a representation of fanatical Black Metal followers, namely a wild and ignorant figure depicted through the appearance of an all-black dress style, wearing torn pants, long black hair, and wearing corpse paint make-up. However, behind his all-metal appearance, Al-Varokah Nvr Vahalla is shown to have a simple character with polite behavior polite speaking style.

The use of black metal symbols to represent ugliness and negativity, as well as the positioning of worship as higher in the face of such symbols, reinforces a mythic narrative that associates black metal with rebellion and darkness, and religion with guidance and righteousness. Similarly, the depiction of the main character of Al-Varokah Nvr Vahalla as a fanatical follower of black metal with a wild appearance but a polite demeanor reinforces a mythic narrative that associates black metal with rebellion and non-conformity, but also with a deeper sense of morality and values.

Furthermore, the expansion of the Istiqomah Black Metal identity into a fashion brand and merchandise reinforces a mythic narrative that associates the identity with a specific set of values, ideals, and lifestyle choices. This mythic narrative creates a sense of community and belonging among fans who share these values and ideals, and reinforces the belief that music, fashion, and identity are all interconnected and can be used to express one's beliefs and worldview.

Overall, Barthes would see the use of black metal and Islamic symbols in Istiqomah Black Metal's visual language and identity representation as part of a larger system of signs and symbols that create a powerful mythic narrative about the relationship between music, religion, and identity. This mythic narrative reinforces cultural beliefs about rebellion, non-conformity, morality, and values, and creates a sense of community and belonging among fans who share these beliefs and values.

Black Metal Istiqomah, from the beginning, is a form of identity attached to his work. Its expansion into a fashion brand and merchandise has become an identity marker

initially constructed in the Black Metal Istiqomah zine, which began to be accepted as a form of self-representation for fans with the same ideals as Black Metal Istiqomah.

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