

***Simulacra* as a Distortion of the Meaning of the Mass for the Dead in the Music Video “*Dalam Hitungan*” by the Band.Feast**

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Simulacra</i>; Mrs. Arwah; Semiotics Roland Barthes; Video Clips; Digital Culture; Band Feast</p> <p>Info Article Accepted: Revised: Approved:</p>	<p>This study examines <i>simulacra</i> as a form of distortion of the meaning of the ritual of the <i>Soul Mass</i> (<i>Misa Arwah</i>) in the video clip “<i>In Count</i>” (<i>Dalam Hitungan</i>) by the band .Feast, which was released in 2023. This video clip is interesting to study because it presents a representation of religious rituals full of visual symbols, placed in a digital culture context that emphasizes media documentation, visibility, and connectivity. This research aims to understand how <i>simulacra</i> is displayed as a distortion of the meaning of the ritual of the <i>Soul Mass</i> through visual symbols that appear in a series of scenes. The method used is interpretive qualitative research with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, which includes the reading of denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. The selection of units of analysis was carried out through Jean Baudrillard's <i>simulacra</i> theory, focusing on ten scenes representing the five aspects of <i>simulacra</i>. The results show that this video clip builds on the dominant myth that represents social media and digital connectivity as a new authority in contemporary religious practices. The ritual of the <i>Mass of the Spirits</i> (<i>Misa Arwah</i>) is no longer fully interpreted as a sacred, transcendent experience but is reduced to a visual performance that can be recorded, displayed, and socially validated. These findings confirm the existence of a process of desecralization of worship and serve as a social critique of the shift in the religious orientation of the people in today's visual and digital culture.</p>

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has profoundly reshaped religious practices globally (Bingaman, 2023; Gao et al., 2024; Mudau & Tshifhumulo, 2025). Recent empirical data reveals the magnitude of this transformation: according to a 2022 Pew Research Center study, approximately 30% of Americans participated in online religious services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, with many continuing this practice even after physical gatherings resumed (Campbell & Tsuria, 2022). In Indonesia specifically, a 2023 survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) indicated that 68% of internet users accessed religious content online, while streaming of religious services increased by 150% between 2020 and 2023. Furthermore, research by Kołodziejska et al. (2024) demonstrated significant shifts in religious engagement patterns across different cultural contexts, revealing how digital platforms have become primary mediators of spiritual experience for younger demographics. These statistics underscore a critical transformation: the boundaries between physical sacred spaces and virtual religious experiences are rapidly dissolving, raising

fundamental questions about the nature of authentic worship in the digital age (Chizhande, 2024; George, 2025; Umbrello, 2023).

In the digital era, marked by rapid developments in communication technology and visual media, the boundaries between reality and representation are increasingly blurred (Aiello & Parry, 2019; Entezarinajafabadi & Roig Segovia, 2023; Tatiana, 2022). This phenomenon continues Jean Baudrillard's concept of *simulacra*, where signs and symbols no longer merely describe reality but construct a new one (Christin et al., 2024). In the advanced stages of *simulacra*, signs no longer refer to any original reality but instead refer to each other, forming a standalone reality detached from its original references (Ren, 2025). In the digital age, this process operates as technology replaces direct human events with media representations. Campbell and Tsuria (2022) explain that in religious practice, for example, the focus of the congregation can shift from spiritual experiences to screen-based interactions, blurring the boundaries between sacred and virtual spaces. In other words, *simulacra* in this era shifts the center of meaning from real reality to a world of symbols and images created by the media, transforming the true value of religious practice into a superficial yet seemingly natural spiritual experience.

One of the most effective mediums for shaping this process is the music video, which combines audio and visual elements to build narratives, create symbols, and actively shape audience perceptions (Espinoza-Carrasco & Turriate-Guzman, 2022). Furthermore, music videos result from collaborations between musicians and directors to convey messages, emotions, and cultural identities. Independent musicians often represent societal realities through music videos, enabling visual conveyance of social criticism. Yuliaswir and Abdullah (2019) support this view by highlighting the effectiveness of music videos in cultivating public understanding of culture and representing it in real life. Several studies have highlighted the significant impact of video media on Indonesian society.

Fitriani et al. (2022) explained that video media is the most effective medium and has proven capable of increasing interest and positive perceptions among Indonesians toward COVID-19 vaccination. This is supported by a 2021 survey stating that streaming video service users in Indonesia reached 83 million, a 25% increase from the previous year. In January 2024, YouTube was the most popular streaming application in Indonesia, with 139 million users (We Are Social, 2024). The YouTube application reaches nearly half of Indonesia's population (49.9%) without age restrictions. In Indonesia, music videos rank as the second-most-watched video content, at 62.6%. Therefore, music videos published on YouTube effectively represent the understandings that musicians seek to present to the public.

The intersection of digital media and religious practice has generated substantial scholarly attention in recent years, revealing both theoretical and empirical gaps that this study addresses. Four major streams of research inform this investigation. First, Grieve (2023) examined digital ritual through the lens of algorithmic religion, arguing that digital platforms create new forms of religious authority that compete with traditional ecclesiastical structures. His work, however, focused primarily on Protestant contexts and did not adequately address Catholic sacramental theology. Second, Cornelius (2022) investigated virtual Mass at Jakarta Cathedral, identifying the emergence of "religious hyperreality," where mediated liturgical experiences compete with physical attendance. While groundbreaking in the Indonesian context, Cornelius's study was limited to institutional responses during COVID-19 and did not analyze popular culture

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representations. Despite these valuable contributions, existing research has not systematically examined how popular culture—specifically music videos—represents and critiques the transformation of religious rituals in digital culture. Furthermore, no study has applied Baudrillard's *simulacra* theory in conjunction with Barthesian semiotics to analyze the visual representation of Catholic Mass in Indonesian independent music. This study fills these gaps by examining how .Feast's "*Dalam Hitungan*" music video functions as both a product and critique of digital religious culture, offering unique insights into the Indonesian context where traditional religiosity intersects with rapid digital transformation.

The development of the digital era has positioned popular music as a cultural medium that not only provides entertainment but also represents social identity, urban cultural expression, and criticism of socio-political conditions. In Indonesia, popular music has evolved alongside technological transformation and social change, reflecting the dynamics of contemporary society, including tensions between commercialization and freedom of expression. In this context, independent music plays an important role by prioritizing creativity, artistic freedom, and community interests over market impulses. One standout independent label is Sun Eater, which houses musicians with strong social criticism, including the band .Feast, known for consistently addressing social and political issues through lyrics, attitudes, and visual representations.

As an indie band, .Feast positions music as a medium of resistance and critical reflection on Indonesia's socio-political reality. Its lyrics are reflective, symbolic, and confrontational, building not only musical messages but also critical discourse. This criticism extends beyond audio into visualizations in music videos. One standout work is the music video *In Count*, released on August 3, 2023. This video presents a complex symbolic representation by combining Catholic religious rituals—especially the *Mass for the Dead*—with the dominance of digital technology. The main focus lies in the disruption of the congregation's spiritual experience due to digital distractions, resulting in a shift in the meaning of sacred symbols.

The ritual of the *Mass for the Dead* is theologically a core Catholic practice emphasizing intercessory prayer, spiritual solidarity, and hope for the deceased's salvation. However, in a digital society, this ritual is often distorted by technology's intrusion into sacred spaces. Digital media alters attention and participation patterns, shifting focus from transcendental experiences to screen-based interactions. This phenomenon blurs boundaries between sacred and virtual spaces, where religious practices are no longer fully rooted in spiritual presence but in visual representations and digital documentation. This shift indicates a transformation in how humans interpret rituals and spirituality amid digital disruption.

This research addresses a critical gap in understanding how popular culture mediates and critiques the transformation of religious practices in Indonesia's rapidly digitalizing society. While previous studies have examined online liturgies from institutional or participatory perspectives, none have systematically analyzed how creative cultural productions—specifically music videos—visualize and critique the *simulacra* of digital religion. The novelty of this study lies in three key contributions: (1) applying Baudrillard's *simulacra* theory combined with Barthesian semiotics to analyze religious representation in Indonesian popular culture, an approach not previously used in this context; (2) examining .Feast's work as cultural criticism operating through visual irony and symbolic subversion, revealing how independent

artists function as public intellectuals in contemporary Indonesia; and (3) identifying specific mechanisms through which digital media transforms Catholic liturgical symbols into hyperreal *simulacra*, offering both theoretical and empirical insights into the desacralization of worship. Unlike existing studies focusing on participant experiences or institutional responses, this research analyzes the meta-commentary embedded within popular culture itself, examining how artists reflect on and critique the digital culture they inhabit.

The urgency of this investigation stems from both academic and societal needs. Academically, as Christensen and Sumiala (2024) note in their analysis of digital death rituals, there is an urgent need to understand how digital transformations affect fundamental human practices related to mortality, memory, and transcendence. Societally, Indonesia faces unique challenges as a nation with deep religious commitments (87% of the population identifies as religious, per 2023 Pew data) undergoing rapid digital adoption (212 million internet users as of 2024). The theological implications are profound: if sacred rituals are reduced to visual performances validated by social media metrics rather than transcendent encounters, the foundation of religious meaning may be at risk. Culturally, understanding how digital media reshapes religious practice is essential for religious communities, educators, and policymakers navigating tensions between technological advancement and spiritual authenticity. This study responds to these needs through a rigorous semiotic analysis of how *simulacra* operate in contemporary Indonesian religious culture.

The distortion of religious rituals can be understood through Jean Baudrillard's concept of *simulacra*, where simulations no longer represent reality but create a hyperreal one independent of original references. In the context of the *Mass for the Dead*, digital technology serves as a substitute model for sacred experiences, masking the spiritual interactions central to the ritual. This aligns with Roland Barthes's concept of myth, in which ideological meanings are reproduced as seemingly natural and unquestionable. Therefore, this study examines how *simulacra* manifests as a distortion of the *Mass for the Dead* in the music video “*Dalam Hitungan*” by the Band .Feast, and how digital media reshapes religious ritual meanings in popular culture through a Barthesian semiotic approach.

METHOD

This study *used* an interpretive qualitative method with a semiotic analysis approach based on Roland Barthes to understand the meanings behind visual and narrative signs in the music video *Dalam Hitungan* by the band .Feast. This approach *was* chosen because Barthes's semiotics *allowed* for multi-level readings of meaning, from denotation and connotation to myth as an ideological construct in popular culture. Through this framework, the research *sought* to interpret how *simulacra* was represented as a distortion of the meaning of the Catholic *Mass for the Dead* due to the penetration of the digital world. The music video *Dalam Hitungan* was considered relevant as an object of study because it displayed religious symbols that *had undergone* a shift in spiritual meaning, alongside the dominance of digital media in contemporary religious practices.

The focus of the research *was* set to limit the scope of analysis to the essence of the study, by referring to the five aspects of Jean Baudrillard's *simulacra*: the indistinguishability between simulation and reality, hyperreality, simulation as parody or irony, the implosion of meaning, and the absence of reference to reality. These five aspects *served* as a reference for selecting

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ten scenes from the analyzed music video, each associated with visuals, lyrics, and accompanying symbolic contexts. The scenes were seen as representing the blurring of boundaries between sacred ritual and media simulation, as well as demonstrating how digital symbols constructed a new religious reality detached from its original theological references.

The research data consisted of primary data in the form of ten selected scenes from the music video *Dalam Hitungan* and secondary data in the form of academic literature and the theological context of the Catholic *Mass for the Dead*. Data collection was carried out through structured, non-participatory video observations, visual documentation, literature reviews, and brief interviews to strengthen understanding of religious contexts. Data analysis was conducted using Barthes's semiotic model by mapping signifiers and signified across denotative, connotative, and mythical levels. Through this process, the research sought to uncover how digital myths functioned as socio-cultural critiques of modern religious practices while demonstrating the role of media in shaping and distorting the meaning of religious rituals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To contextualize the findings from this analysis of .Feast's "*Dalam Hitungan*" within broader patterns of digital religious practice, it is valuable to compare these representations with empirical observations from other forms of digitally mediated worship. Research on online Mass participation during COVID-19 revealed that participants often experienced what Foley (2021) termed "spiritual communion"—a sense of connection that felt authentic despite physical absence, yet remained theologically contested within Catholic doctrine. Similarly, studies of virtual religious communities by Jupowicz-Ginalska et al. (2021) documented how Polish Catholics adapted liturgical practices to digital formats, developing hybrid forms of devotion that combined traditional prayers with digital interaction patterns such as commenting, sharing, and "liking" sacred content. These global patterns resonate with the visual critique presented in "*Dalam Hitungan*," which depicts Indonesian Catholics navigating similar tensions between authentic sacramental participation and mediated religious performance.

However, the music video goes further by revealing the ironic consciousness underlying these practices—participants are shown simultaneously engaging in digital documentation while remaining aware of its absurdity, suggesting a form of "knowing *simulacra*" where the artificiality of digital religious experience is recognized yet perpetuated. This comparison demonstrates that the findings from this semiotic analysis are not isolated artistic commentary, but rather reflect documented transformations in global digital religion, while offering unique insights into how popular culture processes and critiques these changes. The contribution of this study to global understanding of digital religion lies in its demonstration that creative cultural productions can serve as sophisticated meta-analytical frameworks, revealing dynamics of digital worship that participants themselves may navigate unconsciously.

The difference between the title of the video clip *In Counting* and the visual representation of the Mass of the Spirits in this video clip cannot be understood as a mere asynchrony, but rather as a deliberately constructed symbolic strategy. The title *In Counting* represents the logic of time that is measured, calculating, and profane, meaning that it is a modern perspective that views life, death, and the value of human existence in units of numbers, duration, and efficiency. On the contrary, the Mass of the Spirits as a religious ritual presents a dimension of sacred time,

where death is not counted, but is contemplated through prayer, silence, and spiritual relationships. This tension between the title and the visuals becomes the narrative foundation that frames the overall meaning of the video clip.

Through this juxtaposition, this video clip shows how the sacred ritual of death is placed within the framework of a typical "calculation" of contemporary culture influenced by the logic of media and digitalization. The Mass of the Spirits is no longer present solely as an intimate and transcendent worship practice, but as a visual event that can be recorded, displayed, and consumed. Thus, the title *In Counting* serves as an ideological marker that hints at a process of desacralization, in which religious experience is reduced to a logic of representation and visibility. This narrative is then further developed through each scene as a reflection of the shifting meaning of worship in modern visual culture.

1. Scene 1 (0.42 – 0.52)

Scene 1 at a duration of 0.42–0.52 shows a priest performing the opening rite of the spirit mass by entering the altar and performing a gesture of respect in the form of a kiss. Denotatively, this scene still shows the usual Catholic liturgical practice, but the presence of a modern tablet or pad on the altar presents a significant shift in meaning. The altar, which should be the only symbolic center as a symbol of Christ, actually shares space with visually prominent digital objects. At the connotative level, the gesture of kissing the altar no longer only represents reverence for Christ, but also seems to involve digital technology, so that tablets appear not only as profane aids, but also acquire an aura of sacredness. This shows how technology began to be absorbed into the sacred realm and treated as equivalent to religious symbols that have deep theological meaning.

At the level of myth and *simulacra*, this scene builds a narrative that digital technology is a new medium that is legitimate and worthy of being placed at the center of religious rituals. Through the logic of hyperreality, the visual representation of the tablet on the altar creates an alternate reality that seems more convincing than actual liturgical practice, allowing the viewer to interpret the sacred legitimacy of the technology. Furthermore, this condition also indicates the absence of reference to reality, when sacred signs are attached to objects that have no theological or liturgical basis, so that the meaning of the ritual loses its original reference. What is shown is no longer the Catholic Mass as it is, but a visual construction that resembles a rite but apart from the reality of faith, presenting a pure *simulacra* in the form of a pseudo-sacredness formed by digital technology.

2. Scene 2 (0.53 – 0.55)

In Scene 2 at a duration of 0.53–0.55, the most prominent aspect of *simulacra* is "the indistinguishability between simulation and reality", which is seen through the gesture of the congregation bowing not to prayer or the reading of the word, but to stare at the screen of the mobile phone. On a surface level, this scene shows a shift in the focus of attention in the liturgical space, where the bowing gesture that traditionally served as an index of devotion has now shifted to an index of attention to a digital interface. Religious rituals that previously relied on the presence of the body, sacred space, and communal experience are now remediated, so that the experience of "presence" can be produced and maintained through the medium of the screen. This condition reflects an empirical shift also seen in mediated liturgical practice, when the boundaries between being physically present and being present through visual representation are becoming increasingly blurred.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be read through Baudrillard's thinking about *simulacra*, when digital representations no longer refer to ritual realities that preserve their sacred meaning, but instead construct a new reality that is perceived as real by the perpetrator. In this context, the act of bowing to a mobile phone in the middle of the liturgy is no longer understood as a distraction, but as an alternative form of participation that seems legitimate because it is capable of producing religious experiences that can be archived, shared, and judged through the logic of visibility and engagement. The ritual of the word that originally demanded collective concentration turned into a moment of image production, where the value of the ritual was measured by the ability to document and display the experience. Thus, simulations in the form of digital imagery manage to rival, even cover, the liturgical reality that should be the main reference.

If Barthes perspective is added, the act of looking down at the screen can also be understood as the process of mythologizing digital devices. Mobile phones serve as second-level signs that bring new values such as connectivity, public validation, and self-presentation, which appear as natural and unproblematic in the context of worship. As a result, the traditional boundaries between the sacred and the profane, prayer and documentation, and worship and entertainment lose their normative power. The implications of this condition are hermeneutical, sociological, and ethical, as the faithful risk losing the ability to distinguish between embodied ritual experiences and simulated experiences. Thus, Scene 2 affirms that such simple gestures are a systemic manifestation of the collapse of the distinction between simulation and reality, in which digital representations claim the status of religious reality for the perpetrator despite the absence of authentic theological and liturgical references.

3. Scene 3 (1.19)

Scene 3 at 1.19 shows how the simple act of refreshing an Instagram account is placed in the context of the mass of the spirit, so that the digital habit shifts its meaning into a substitution ritual that resembles a religious practice. The repetitive movement of refresh mimics the pattern of prayer—repetition, expectation, and waiting for an answer—but what is expected is not a theological affirmation or sacramental sign, but a digital notification. At this point arises the aspect of the indistinguishability between simulation and reality, since religious experiences that are supposed to be rooted in sacramental presence and embodied communities are replaced by interface-mediated experiences. Digital representations are no longer merely recording or aiding the experience of faith, but begin to function as reality itself, so that spiritual certainty is sought through the logic of connection, access, and technical response.

This condition develops into hyperreality when the digital interface—feeds, notifications, refreshes, and "error" badges—provide a sense of psychological certainty that feels real to the subject, even stronger than the liturgical reference. The practice of refreshing the screen in the middle of the spirit rite creates an alternative reality where safety is perceived as something that can be accessed instantly, but at the same time is prone to failure when the system does not respond. At the same time, this scene works as a simulation as parody or irony, as the ritual of prayer is parodied through the mechanics of application: eschatological expectations are distorted into waiting for updates, and the promise of salvation is confronted with the irony of a disconnected connection. In this way, sacred authority is not directly denied, but is

undermined through digital irony that questions the source of certainty of faith in the age of platforms.

The accumulation of religious signs and digital signs eventually results in the implosion of meaning, when sacred meanings and technological meanings collide and cancel each other out. The Mass of the spirit, which was supposed to be a space of consolation and the hope of revival, was reduced to an absurd experience that depended on the success of the digital system. Salvation no longer refers to the promise of faith, but rather to the smoothness of the network, and when the network fails, all that remains is a void of meaning. Scene 3 thus not only criticizes digital habits, but shows how *simulacra* can dissolve religious meaning into the circulation of blank signs, so that faith risks being reduced to a technological performance that is subject to the logic of application, rather than to authentic theological and liturgical references.

4. Scene 4 (1.23)

Scene 4 at 1.23 minutes shows a *simulacra* aspect in the form of hyperreality, when the deity mass congregation simultaneously raises their phones with the front camera of Instagram, so that traditional liturgical symbols are visually and symbolically replaced by digital devices. Within the Catholic theological framework, the liturgy—especially the Mass of the spirits—is sacramental and inseparable from the physical presence of the people as one body united in the Eucharist, as affirmed in official liturgical documents that reject the idea that online Masses can replace real sacramental celebrations. However, this scene actually reduces the presence of the body to a digital gesture, where the act of raising a mobile phone parodies the symbol of "sursum corda" and shifts the orientation of prayer from the lifting of the heart to God to the lifting of the image to the camera. In Baudrillard's hyperreality logic, digital signs no longer refer to the reality of the Catholic liturgy, but rather create a new reality that feels authentic to the perpetrator, so that the liturgy of the spirit transforms into the performativity of social media images. As a result, altars, prayers, and sacraments are pushed to the periphery by "digital altars" in the form of screens and algorithms, presenting a *simulacrum* of worship in which digital existence and validation appear as a "new god" that replaces the sacramental essence of the Catholic faith.

5. Scene 5 (1.32 – 1.57)

In scene 5, three aspects of *simulacra*—the indistinguishability between simulation and reality, hyperreality, and the implosion of meaning—appear intertwined through the representation of the Mass congregation of the spirits who raise their mobile phones to document the Father. This act of documentation is treated as if it were a legitimate part of the rite, so that the line between real liturgical participation and digital representation becomes blurred. In fact, in the Catholic liturgy, the Mass of the Spirits has a sacramental structure that demands the involvement of the body, prayer, and the presence of the faithful as a community of faith, not just a visual spectacle. However, in this scene, the presence of the Father and the altar is reduced to an object of imagery, while the religious experience of the faithful takes place simultaneously in the sacred room and the mobile phone screen. The lyrics about "The Garden of Eden with Wi-Fi and front cameras" further affirm the collapse of the distinction between the reality of faith and digital simulation, as the eschatological concept of heaven is re-engineered into a virtual space governed by algorithms, rather than by a transcendent relationship with God.

This condition develops into hyperreality, when digital documentation no longer merely complements the Mass, but replaces part of the liturgical experience itself. Liturgical gestures such as *sursum corda* are ironically reproduced through the lifting of mobile phones, so that cameras and digital networks function as new mediums of presence that are felt authentically by the faithful. As a result, the sacramental meaning of the Mass of the soul undergoes an implosion of meaning: symbols of faith such as the altar, the cross, prayer, and the Eucharist lose their transcendent reference and dissolve in digital signs in the form of images, social visibility, and algorithmic metrics. The Mass is no longer understood primarily as a prayer for the soul and the encounter of the faithful with Christ, but rather as a collective image event that is produced and shared. Thus, this scene shows how the Catholic liturgy is reduced to a media simulation, in which the meaning of faith collapses into a digital formivity that feels real, but theologically loses its sacramental essence

6. Scene 6 (1.50 – 2.20)

Scene 6 can be read as a representation of the collapse of the boundary between liturgical reality and media simulation through the condition of the indistinguishability between simulation and reality and hyperreality. The scene of the congregation busy playing the camera, followed by the presence of a woman whispering directions to the congregation and the priest, signaled the entry of media authority into the sacred room of the deceased's mass. In the Catholic tradition, the Mass of the Spirits is a sacramental celebration of the Eucharist, centered on prayer for the soul and the presence of Christ represented by the priest. However, the whisper of "editorial direction" personifies the power of the media that infiltrates intimately and authoritatively, so that the people are no longer able to discern whether their direction in life comes from God's word or from the media framing. This creates hyperreality, when the sound of digital notifications is equated with eschatological trumpets, and media symbols are perceived as valid as the sacred signs of the Church.

The situation develops into a simulation as parody or irony, because the liturgical structure is imitated and twisted at the same time until it appears caricatured. The role of the proclamation of the Word that should be carried out by the priest in persona Christi is parodied through the figure of a media woman who whispers like a revelator, while the lyrics that equate the trumpet with the notification present a sharp irony to the eschatological meaning of Catholicism. The symbols of salvation and end-time judgment are reduced to banal metaphors of digital culture, so that the Mass of the Spirits no longer directs the people to the hope of resurrection, but to obedience to editorial narratives and algorithms. This parody reveals how media simulations not only mimic the liturgy, but also laugh at it, making the sacred a sign game in popular culture.

Finally, this scene shows the implosion of meaning as well as the absence of reference to reality. The transcendent meaning of prayer, the word, and sacramental rituals "explodes" and dissolves into digital signs such as media whispers and notification sounds, which have no theological legitimacy in Catholic liturgy. The main references to the Mass of the spirit—namely God, the Church's prayer, the presence of the body of the people, and the ritual structure—are displaced by visual representations and stand-alone media narratives. As a result, what remains is a pure *simulacra*: a pseudo-religious experience that feels visually and emotionally real, but loses its ontological and sacramental references. Scene 6 thus confirms

the criticism that digital culture has created an alternative reality in which media and algorithms serve as new authorities, replacing the center of Catholic liturgical meaning that is supposed to be rooted in faith and divine revelation.

7. Scene 7 (2.25 – 2.29)

In scene 7, the hyperreality aspect is seen strongly through the scene of Father holding up the SIM card at the altar while the congregation simultaneously points their cameras. The profane object is treated visually like a sacred symbol, so that the reality of the Catholic liturgy that should be centered on the host, the Scriptures, and the presence of Christ is replaced by digital technology as the center of meaning. The media and networks no longer serve as additional intermediaries, but rather as "new realities" that feel authentic and even more prominent than the reality of faith itself. In these conditions, the faithful have the potential to appreciate the image of the SIM card and its visual documentation more than the sacramental meaning of the Eucharist, signaling how digital simulations mask and replace liturgical theological references.

The scene also works as a simulation as parody or irony and the absence of reference to reality. The adoption of the SIM card is an ironic parody of the Eucharistic rite, as the structure of Catholic rituals is imitated—priests, altars, rapture gestures—but the content is reversed: the symbol of salvation is replaced by the symbol of digital connectivity. This irony exposes criticism that technology has been normalized as the "new sacredness", while the symbol of faith has lost its original meaning. At the same time, the reference to a valid liturgical reality disappears completely, since SIM cards have neither sacramental nor doctrinal legitimacy. All that remains is visual perperitvity and digital validation, so that faith is represented no longer through a sacramental relationship with God, but through technological imagery and media attention.

8. Scene 8 (2.45)

Scene 8 represents hyperreality through the elimination of the sacramental meaning of the Eucharist and its replacement with technological symbols. The Father's act of inserting a SIM card into his mouth in the context of the Mass of the spirit establishes a simulated reality in which the sign no longer refers to the reality of the Catholic faith, but rather creates a new truth that is received visually and symbolically. The host as the Body of Christ that presents a real presence—as affirmed in the *Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae* and *Redemptionis Sacramentum*—is eliminated, and replaced by a SIM card that is treated as if it has transcendental power. In the video frame, salvation and immortality of the soul are no longer understood as union with God, but rather as the sustainability of data, networks, and algorithmic calculations. This condition is in line with Baudrillard's critique of hyperreality, in which technological simulations become more "real" than theological reality itself, and are reinforced by the findings of research on digital liturgy that show the occurrence of the desacralization of symbols and the shift of the focus of the faithful from the reality of the sacrament to the media performativity.

At the same time, this scene works as a simulation as parody or irony as well as the absence of reference to reality. The parody comes when the ritual structure of Holy Communion is ironically imitated—altars, priests, gestures of acceptance—but its content is reversed by presenting a SIM card in place of the host. This irony is not simply mocking, but criticizing how technology is positioned as the "new sacrament" in digital culture, as Barthes explains

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about modern myths that empty old meanings and fill them with dominant ideologies. The absence of reference to valid liturgical reality further confirms the *simulacra*: SIM cards have no theological or sacramental legitimacy, but in the video they are assumed to be the bearers of the meaning of salvation. Thus, the ritual of faith loses its footing in reality—faith is replaced by image, the sacrament by technological objects, and salvation by digital validation—shows how the Catholic liturgy in this scene is immersed in a hyperreal world that disconnects from the authentic reality of faith.

9. Scene 9 (3.07 – 3.10)

Scene 9 in the video clip “In Count” represents the aspect of hyperreality through the formation of a religious space that is fully mediated by digital symbols. The scene of Father holding up his SIM card at eye level and then handing it out to the congregation in line while pointing the camera shows how the profane object of technology is positioned as a new center of sacredness, replacing the host in the rite of Holy Communion. In Catholic doctrine, only the consecrated host has a sacramental reality as the Body of Christ, while the SIM card does not have any theological legitimacy. However, through liturgical gestures, congregational queues, and the network's symbolic language (“not hacked by people outside the network”), the visual representation creates a ritual experience that feels authentic to the congregation in the video. This is a state of hyperreality, when the meaning of salvation and spiritual participation is no longer rooted in faith and the sacraments, but rather in the connectivity, digital identity, and visual legitimacy built by the media.

At the same time, this scene works as a simulation as parody or irony because it ironically mimics the structure of Holy Communion by replacing its central symbol. The distribution of SIM cards parodies the division of hosts, thus presenting a theological irony: the divine and transcendent are replaced by technological objects of a profane nature. This parody is not just a mockery, but a critique of the shift in the center of spiritual meaning in digital culture, where the language of faith is reduced to technological terminology such as network security and exclusivity of access. In a Barthesian framework, this simulation serves as a modern myth that empties the meaning of the sacrament of the Eucharist and fills it with a new meaning of “digital salvation”. Thus, the irony reveals how modern society tends to submit to technological logic in a way that resembles adherence to religious liturgical structures.

The aspect of the absence of reference to reality becomes apparent when liturgical signs lose their authentic theological reference. The SIM card does not refer to any sacramental reality, but in the video representation it is given a religious function that resembles Holy Communion. The form of ritual is still retained—the gesture of rapture, division, and participation of the congregation—but its ontological reference is cut off from the faith and doctrine of the Church. The liturgical reality that is supposed to be rooted in the physical presence of hosts, priests, and communities is replaced by visual simulations circulating in media spaces. As a result, salvation and divine presence are reduced to representational experiences that rely on digital imagery and logic, rather than on the transcendent reality of the Catholic faith, so that rituals appear visually “real,” but theologically empty.

10. Scene 10 (3.23 – 3.32)

Scene 10 shows the indistinguishability between simulation and reality, when the boundary between sacred ritual experience and digital representation becomes blurred. The

scene of the congregation raising the camera to photograph the faces of the dead in the Mass of the deceased shows how the act of visual documentation takes over the liturgical experience itself. In the Catholic tradition, the Mass of the Spirits focuses on intercessory prayer, veneration for the body of the deceased, and the hope for eternal life. However, in this scene, the sacred reality is reduced to a recorded and stored image, so that the photo of the corpse in the mobile phone seems more "real" and more memorable than the prayer being said. Visual representations are no longer merely complementary, but a substitute for religious experience, marking a simulated condition in which the faithful find it difficult to distinguish between an authentic liturgical presence and a simulated media circulating as a digital archive.

In addition, this scene also represents the implosion of meaning, which is the explosion and blurring of the meaning of the death ritual. The practice of photographing corpses shifts the meaning of grief, reverence, and spiritual transition into visual and performative logic. The theological meaning of the Mass of the Spirit—prayer for the salvation of souls, consolation of faith, and transcendent relationship with God—is fragmented into visual signs that can be superficially consumed, shared, and remembered. Death, which should have been understood as a sacred and reflective event, is transformed into spectacle and content, so that liturgical symbols lose their depth of meaning. Thus, the meaning of grief and faith is no longer centered on transcendent reality, but is implied into a digital image that dominates the people's experience and memory of death.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of all scenes in .Feast's music video *Dalam hitungan* concludes that *simulacra* consistently distorts the ritual meaning of the Catholic *Mass for the Dead*, representing sacred elements like altars, hosts, prayers, congregational gestures, and priestly authority through digital media and profane objects (e.g., tablets, phones, SIM cards), thereby creating a hyperreality that supplants original theological and sacramental references. Through Baudrillard's mechanisms—absence of reference to reality, indistinguishability between simulation and reality, and implosion of meaning—religious rituals morph into visual performances driven by algorithmic validation, documentation, and imagery, centering network logic over transcendent faith. From Barthes's mythic perspective, the video constructs digital media as the "new god" of contemporary religiosity, shifting salvation, presence, and legitimacy from sacraments to social media recognition, while offering ironic critique of worship's desacralization. These findings validate Baudrillard's *simulacra* and hyperreality, affirm media's replacement of sacred experiences, and highlight theological, sociocultural, and semiotic risks of fragile digital rituals masking authentic faith. For future research, scholars could extend this framework to comparative analyses of *simulacra* in other Indonesian indie music videos depicting Islamic or Protestant rituals, exploring cross-religious patterns of digital distortion.

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