

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

—Cinema can be theorized in many ways, the most common being an analysis of its message (the representations it contains and the meaning it conveys) or atmosphere (the affects it engineers through its visual forms and aesthetics) (Matic, 2024). In today's world, films are not only entertainment for the community, but also as a media of information, historical documentation, to the delivery of criticism to certain parties. So the film not only provides entertainment and visual aesthetic but can represent the message that it is trying to convey.

In understanding films, often the message is not well received, giving birth to various perspectives that are not in accordance with what the filmmaker is trying to convey due to various factors. Audiences from different backgrounds often had different interpretations of the same film. This was due to the influence of personal experiences, cultural values, and their life perspectives (Hall, 1980). Language and cultural barriers often became the main obstacles. Many films were produced in countries with different languages and cultures, so audiences from different backgrounds might have struggled to understand specific dialogues and cultural references. According to research by (Belton, 1999) differences in language and cultural context could hinder audiences' understanding and appreciation of international films.

In film, language can be one of the mediums of communication that have a lot of function. One of them is to deliver the ideas, concept, and information. Language can take the form of images, sounds, writing, and event movement. One of them is that in films we can fill all our senses with the language presented in films. Film is one great entertainment for people around the world, also as a media to study other people's culture. According Mahmood movie (or cinema) is a form of art that can be enjoyed visually, it contains sound, script, characters

which blend together to tell a story that portrays everyday life, and it might be inspired by real-life events, be it as action movie, adventure or romance. (Ardayati, 2018) mentioned that a movie or film has the ability to immerse the people who watch it into a magical journey in which the film scenes take place. The deep or abstract themes presented in films could challenge audiences to think more critically.

Usually film is made as a media of entertainment, however, some directors also often add hidden messages in their movies, thus sometimes it can be difficult to capture the meaning of the hidden signs and messages while simultaneously trying to enjoy a movie (Reeper, 2013) claims that there are so much going on in a film, and it might be overwhelming to try to understand many signs in the movie scenes in one viewing. Thus, thoroughly watching the movie and studying it is necessary in order to understand the signs that might contain hidden meaning.

Semiotic derived from Greek, namely Semion which sign. Semiotics aims to explore the nature of sign systems that move out the rules of grammar and syntax that govern the meaning of text that are complex, hidden, and dependent on meaning. This then raises attention to the additional meaning and is expressed through the use and combination of sign. Based on the semiotic view above, if all social practices can be regarded as language phenomena, then all of them can be seen as signs. The writer also thinks that semiotics are a unique study, because as images, gesture, musical sound, or anything can be a sign, whatever their substance because semiotics aim to take in any system of signs.

Because of interaction, humans may make some sign and give them some description then the sign has meaning. From the sign, people can understand what others mean. So everything in this world is looked at as a sign, so the writer aims to know the sign deeply because sometimes the writer finds something that can be a question in mind especially when he communicates with other people or looking at a picture or video that have no intrinsic meaning. Semiotic or Semiology in his book semiotics and socio cultural dynamics (Benny_H_hoed

Book, 2014) Prof. Benny H. Hoed from the university of Indonesia wrote a summary of experts and his view that signs and their meaning are not structures but a cognitive process called semiosis. So semiosis is the process of meaning and interpretation of signs. Saussures Chandler, in (Rudrakumar & Venkatraman, 2022) defines semiotics as signs which take the forms of words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects. According to (Eco, 2018) Eco Umberto Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign/ so we can conclude that anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as, signifying, something-referring to or standing for something other than itself. It means, every existing thing in our life is looked at as a sign is something that we should give meaning. In order to get the meaning expressed in the film, analyzing and understanding the signs in the film are not easy as we predict, but we can use a semiotic approach. (Benny_H_hoed Book, 2014) says that semioticism is the study of sign or the science that studies signs in human beings.

To understand a film deeply and comprehensively, especially how or what the author is trying to convey in the film to the audience is to understand it from a semiotic point of view. One of the semiotic experts who explored the meaning of signs thoroughly and comprehensively was Roland Barth with his theories of denotative, connotative and myth. In previous research, many meanings contained in films have been revealed using Roland Barth's theory. One of them is, in the research

In this research, the researchers used a film as the object of the research. It is felt that films can fulfill almost all human sensory aspects. The film communicates visually and verbally, through action and gesture, and verbally, through action and gesture, and verbally through dialogue (Boggs & Petrie, 2000) (Boggs & Petrie, 2000) By using film objects we can provide maximum examples of how Roland Barth semiotic theory is applied in various examples contained in the film *Dune*.

Dune film is a Sci-Fi film telling the story of young Paul Atreides, his apprentice to Duke Leto Atreides I and scion of House Atreides, his family

relocate to the planet Arrakis, the universe's only source of the spice melange. In a story that explores the complex interactions of politics, religion, ecology, technology, and human emotion. The writer is really interested in this motivated film to be analyzed. The writer uses Barth theory, to analyze signs that exist in the film, and also to get the clear meaning of every sign that exists in the film. The reason why the writer is interested to analyze the sign in this film is because oey hong lee in (Nöth, 1996) that film is one of the media to communicate and the writer has a personal interest to watch films, and sometimes the writer finds something that could be a new question in mind. To find further meaning of this film, it can be analyzed used semiotic theory and methods.

1.2 Research Problem

People have difficulties understanding the sign of the film, what the meaning behind those signs and what the writer of the film tries to convey to the audience. The researcher tries to uncover systematically in this study with theories that are relevant and easy to understand. With the hope of providing a deeper understanding of the challenges faced and providing relevant recommendations to improve our skill of analysis sign and signing. This problem can be explained and proven by watching the film and analyzing it using Roland Barth theory. This research problem is formulated in the research question below:

1. What are denotative, connotative and myth in Dune film that correlated with Lisan Al Ghaib
2. How are denotative, connotative and myth are presented to make meaning in Dune film?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research question above, researchers focus on the sign of denotative, connotative, and myth that appear on dune film. Researcher objectives of this analysis are:

1. To Find Denotative, Connotative, and myth that correlated with Lisan Al Ghaib in *Dune* film;

2. To analyze how Denotative, Connotative, and myth are presented to make meaning in *Dune* film.

1.4 Research Significances

In the realm of English Literature, research assumes a pivotal role, serving as the cornerstone upon which scholarly inquiry and critical analysis are constructed. Firstly, through research enables scholars to delve deeply into the rich tapestry of literary works spanning centuries, uncovering hidden meanings, cultural nuances, and authorial intentions. Through close textual analysis and theoretical frameworks, researchers can excavate subtext, uncovering layers of meaning that resonate with the contemporary sociopolitical realities.

The writer of this research also hopes to give an additional source of a semiotic analysis especially using Barth theory of semiotic to improve our knowledge and understanding of semiotics practically, the result of this study is expected to be useful for students of the English and Literature Department at Sunan Gunung Djati state Islamic University or students from the other university for the similar research as the other reference. The writer also hopes the result of this research could give more references for the development of semiotic theory, especially semiotic from Barth

1.5 Framework of thinking

The objective of this study is to approve several kinds of signs that can be used a lot using Roland Barth theory which is connotative, denotative and myth that appear in *Dune* film. Many people misleading of understanding the sign of something that appear in film. What kind of sign that appear in the film? And what the meaning behind? this involves utilizing semiotics to analyze how *Dune* film present the signs using denotative, connotative and myth researchers find the meaning behind this film. This framework explores the verbal and non verbal elements, such as symbols, rituals and dialogues, that convey meanings that correlated with *Lisan al ghaib*. Additionally, it considers intertextuality by linking these research question to broader analysis. Moreover the framework

integrates social and cultural context, examining how symbols reflect and influence societal beliefs, values, and interpretations within the film's production and audience reception.

1.6 Previous Research

The study of find meaning of sign in films has been a prominent subject in both film studies and religious studies. Scholars have examined how imagery, motifs, and themes are represented in various genres and how they influence audience perception. This chapter, which will discuss some previous research that is relevant to this research topic. The studies studied focused on semiotic analysis in film, as well as the application of Roland Barthes' theory to explore the meanings contained in visual works. These studies provide an important theoretical foundation for understanding how verbal and non-verbal signs in films can represent certain ideologies, social themes, and cultures. By reviewing the existing literature, this study aims to explore the similarities and differences in the approaches used, as well as strengthen the arguments that will be discussed in these chapters.

The aspects of semiotics using barthes's theory on a series of unfortunate events movie poster by Ramy This thesis discusses the Semiotic analysis on advertisement .(Syahdini, 2019) In this study, the approach used is semiotic, specifically by referring to Roland Barthes' theory. Barthes' theory distinguishes between two types of meanings that can be drawn from an image. The similarities obtained, this study uses Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze meaning in visual objects. The difference, however, is that the Object of analysis is different (poster vs. film), as well as the context and depth of the analysis, where the film provides additional layers such as time dynamics, storyline, and characters, which are not present in static images such as posters. The presentation of the data focuses on words that have special meanings in the film, using tables and analyzed

Another research that researchers found is a journal entitled "Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes in Korean Baseball Girl Films" by Melli Anggriyani

Octaviani (Octaviani, 2021) This study examines gender issues in the Korean film *Baseball Girl* using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, focusing on the analysis of denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. This study uses a qualitative interpretive approach, describing gender issues and discrimination through signs that can be analyzed with semiotic theory. This journal focuses on gender issues in the movie *Baseball Girl*, while your thesis may focus more on themes of politics, power, or colonialism in *Dune*. The Different with this research is around social contexts, themes, and research object.

In "Colonial Entanglements and Ecological Power: Spice Commodification in *Dune* Movie (2021)" (Prihatika, 2024) Analyze the 2021 *Dune* film, exploring its themes and meanings. this studies likely focus on key topics such as colonialism and the commodification of spice, examining how these elements influence the narrative and characters within the story. However, the similarity of this research works share an interest in the symbolic weight of the film, your thesis, which employs Roland Barthes' theory, focuses more on the semiotic analysis of the signs and symbols present in the film, exploring how meaning is constructed through these elements.

The primary difference between my research and the journal lies in the theoretical frameworks applied. The journal focuses on the socio-political and ecological aspects of the film, discussing colonial power dynamics, ecological control, and the commodification of spice. On the other hand, this research, using Barthes' semiotics, emphasizes how signs (signifiers) and meanings (signified) are constructed within the film. Barthes' approach helps uncover the deeper, often hidden, meanings embedded in the film's symbols, such as the spice, and how the text of the film manipulates audience understanding through these signs.

While both studies focus on *Dune*, this research uses Barthes' theory to explore the structural and symbolic aspects of the film, focusing on concepts like denotation, connotation, and myth. In contrast, the journal's analysis is more concerned with the film's ecological and colonial themes, interpreting how the spice, as a commodity, reflects real-world issues of resource exploitation and

colonialism. Thus, while both papers analyze the same film, your thesis adopts a more structuralist and semiotic perspective, whereas the journal takes a broader socio-political and ecological approach

This study *A Comparative Analysis Between The Mahdi from Dune (2021) and Imam Mahdī in the Twelver Shi'a Tradition* analyzes the figure of the Mahdi (Vedadi, 2023) though in different contexts. In my thesis, I focus on the film *Dune* (2021) using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to explore the symbolic meaning behind the characters and themes in the film. While the study centers on the religious and historical figure of Imam Mahdī in Twelver Shi'a tradition, both works examine how the concept of a messianic figure plays a crucial role in shaping narratives—whether religious or fictional. Both analyses also seek to uncover underlying ideological meanings that inform the development of these characters.

One of the main differences lies in the theoretical framework used. My thesis applies Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which focuses on signs, symbols, and their meanings within *Dune*. I explore how signs like the character of Paul Atreides, the Mahdi figure, function within the film's narrative, analyzing their connotations and underlying myths. In contrast, the comparative analysis of Imam Mahdī focuses on the theological and historical context of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi'a beliefs. It examines religious texts and traditions to establish connections and contrasts between the Mahdi in *Dune* and the Imam Mahdī in Shi'a Islam. The approach in the study is rooted in religious and historical scholarship, while mine is more concerned with semiotic interpretation of the film's text.

The study of Imam Mahdī in the Twelver Shi'a tradition places the Mahdi within a deep theological and religious framework, discussing the Mahdi as a savior figure who is believed to return and bring justice to the world. The Mahdi's significance in Shi'a Islam is connected to spiritual redemption and religious prophecy. My thesis, however, takes a more contemporary and fictional approach, focusing on how *Dune* constructs the Mahdi figure in the context of

science fiction, specifically through Paul's transformation and his role as a leader. The Mahdi in *Dune* draws on religious symbolism but is situated in a political and ecological narrative, which is different from the religious messianism associated with the Mahdi in Shi'a Islam.

Another difference is the narrative and thematic emphasis in both analyses. The study on Imam Mahdī delves into the religious significance of the Mahdi and how this figure aligns with or diverges from Islamic tradition. It discusses the implications of the Mahdi's return in the context of Shi'a eschatology and how this impacts the beliefs of followers. On the other hand, my thesis examines how *Dune* uses the Mahdi figure to explore themes of power, destiny, and ecological conflict. The Mahdi figure in *Dune* is framed within the politics of resource control and the complex dynamics of colonization, whereas the study on Imam Mahdī focuses more on the spiritual and prophetic aspects of the figure. Both explore messianic themes, but they do so through different lenses—one religious and the other fictional and political.

In comparing my research with the study titled *Messages from the Deep: A Reception Study of Denis Villeneuve's Dune* by Sarah R. Kern, both analyses examine Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* (2021) (Kern, 2015) but from different perspectives. My thesis focuses on applying Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to understand the signs, symbols, and underlying meanings in the film. I analyze how elements like the Mahdi figure, the ecology of Arrakis, and the concept of power are represented through symbols and how these meanings resonate with audiences. On the other hand, Kern's study employs a reception theory approach, focusing on how audiences interpret and respond to the film. While my approach is rooted in a theoretical framework, hers centers on audience perception and engagement with the text, making our methods distinctly different.

The key difference between our research lies in the theoretical approach and the focus of the analysis. My thesis uses Barthes' semiotics, which focuses on the construction of meaning through signs and symbols within the film. I analyze how *Dune* communicates ideologies and concepts such as power, colonialism,

and destiny through its visual and narrative elements. Kern, however, focuses on reception theory, investigating how different audiences interpret the film. Her study examines the audience's subjective experience, considering cultural, social, and individual factors that influence how viewers receive and understand the film. In contrast, my thesis takes a more analytical approach to uncover the intended meanings within the film's structure itself.

Another difference is in the scope of the research. Kern's study focuses specifically on the reception and interpretations of *Dune* by various audience groups, analyzing their responses and how these responses align with or differ from the filmmaker's intentions. My thesis, however, does not focus on the audience's reception but instead on the semiotic analysis of the film's internal signs and symbols. While Kern's study is concerned with the external impact of the film on its audience, I am more concerned with the film's constructed meaning within its narrative and visual elements. Despite these differences, both studies aim to deepen the understanding of *Dune* through critical analysis, but each from a different angle—one from the perspective of how the film is received by audiences and the other from the perspective of the film's internal symbolic structure.

In comparing my thesis to the study *Representation of Feminism in Bene Gesserit Members in Dune Film: Part Two (Semiotic Analysis of John Fiske)*, (Risvandi & Fikri, 2024) there are several notable similarities and differences. Both works focus on analyzing the representation of gender in the *Dune* franchise, specifically the role of women, with a particular interest in the Bene Gesserit. My thesis also examines feminism, but with a broader cultural and societal context, while this study narrows its focus to semiotic analysis through John Fiske's framework. In my work, I aim to explore how the representation of women influences societal perceptions, while the *Dune* study zeroes in on how specific semiotic signs within the film encode feminist themes.

However, the primary difference lies in the methodological approach. While my thesis relies on a broader theoretical analysis of feminism, including cultural

and sociological perspectives, the Dune study employs John Fiske's semiotic analysis, focusing more on the signs and symbols present in the film. This makes my approach more expansive in its interpretation of feminism, whereas the Dune study is more specific, interpreting the visual and linguistic cues within the film that convey feminist ideas. Both approaches contribute to understanding the feminist representation in Dune, but each offers a distinct lens of analysis.

When comparing my thesis to *Desert Power: A Chronological Comparison of Dune and Its Relationship With Contemporary American Views Towards Islam* by (Figueiró, 1967) I notice several key similarities and differences in terms of focus and approach. Both my thesis and Vlaanderen's study analyze Frank Herbert's Dune through a lens that engages with the cultural and political themes embedded in the narrative. While I focus on the representation of feminism and gender, particularly within the context of the Bene Gesserit, Vlaanderen's work investigates how Dune reflects and engages with American perceptions of Islam, especially in the context of the 20th and 21st centuries. Both studies examine how Dune serves as a mirror to contemporary societal issues, though from different perspectives.

One major similarity is that both studies consider the socio-political implications of the Dune narrative. While my thesis looks at feminist theory and its reflection in the portrayal of women in the Dune universe, particularly focusing on the Bene Gesserit, Vlaanderen's work examines how the portrayal of the Fremen and the desert planet Arrakis aligns with or challenges Western perceptions of the Middle East and Islam. Both works involve an analysis of how the fictional elements in Dune can be read as metaphorical representations of real-world issues, whether in terms of gender or cultural stereotypes.

The main difference between my research and Vlaanderen's study is the focus and the theoretical frameworks employed. My thesis primarily relies on feminist theory, analyzing gender representation through the depiction of the Bene Gesserit and the broader role of women in the Dune series. On the other hand, Vlaanderen's study takes a historical and political approach, specifically

analyzing the relationship between Dune and the changing American views toward Islam over time. His study draws heavily on political history and the discourse surrounding the Middle East, particularly during the Cold War and the post-9/11 era, which makes his research distinctively focused on geopolitical issues rather than gender studies.

Additionally, the methodological approaches differ significantly. My thesis utilizes a feminist lens to deconstruct the role of women in Dune and how they relate to broader feminist movements, while Vlaanderen's work is rooted in historical and political analysis, with a particular focus on how Dune intersects with contemporary American views of Islam. While my research looks at how symbolic representations within the story reflect feminist ideals and the role of women, Vlaanderen's research considers how Herbert's portrayal of the Fremen, their culture, and their struggle for control of the desert power reflects American anxieties about Islam and the Middle East. Both works offer deep and insightful readings of Dune, but through different analytical frameworks.

When comparing my thesis with *A Narratological Study of Streaming Science Fiction Films: The Case of "Dune"* by (Zhou, 2023), I notice that both works explore Dune through an analytical lens, but the areas of focus and methods of analysis differ significantly. My thesis is centered around the representation of feminism, specifically focusing on the Bene Gesserit and the role of women in Dune. I examine how gender dynamics are presented and how these representations contribute to broader feminist discourse. Zhou's study, on the other hand, examines Dune from a narratological perspective, analyzing its narrative structure within the broader context of science fiction films, especially those in the streaming domain.

One similarity is that both of our studies engage deeply with Dune and its cultural impact, though through different frameworks. While I focus on feminist theory and gender representation, Zhou is concerned with the film's storytelling techniques and how its narrative aligns with or challenges traditional science

fiction tropes. Both analyses acknowledge that *Dune* plays a significant role in shaping contemporary views, but my focus is on how its characters, particularly the female ones, reflect or challenge feminist ideals, whereas Zhou is more interested in how the narrative structure of *Dune* contributes to the evolution of science fiction storytelling.

The primary difference lies in the theoretical approach and the scope of the research. My thesis relies on feminist theory to interpret the representation of women and their role in the *Dune* universe, while Zhou's study uses narratology to understand how the film's narrative structure interacts with its genre conventions, particularly in the context of streaming platforms. Zhou's research is more focused on the technical and narrative aspects of filmmaking, such as plot development, character arcs, and the use of visual storytelling, whereas my work is more concerned with the sociocultural aspects of representation and how *Dune* engages with feminist ideas. These differences make our studies complementary, yet distinct in their academic contributions.

When comparing my thesis, which analyzes the film *Dune* using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, with the study *Semiotics and Computational Linguistics: On Semiotic Cognitive Information Processing* by (Rieger, 1997). Rieger, the correlation lies in our shared use of semiotic theory, but our research focuses on distinct aspects of semiotics and its application. In my thesis, I apply Barthes' semiotic framework to explore how signs and symbols in *Dune* contribute to the construction of meaning, particularly regarding the portrayal of gender and feminism through characters like the Bene Gesserit. I analyze how visual, auditory, and narrative signs within the film create meaning and how those meanings relate to broader cultural discourses, especially feminist ones. In contrast, Rieger's work explores semiotics through the lens of computational linguistics, focusing on how cognitive information processing can be modeled and analyzed through semiotic principles, particularly in language and communication systems.

While both studies are grounded in semiotic analysis, the application of semiotics in my research is more focused on understanding cultural and ideological meanings embedded within the film's narrative and imagery.

Barthes' concept of "myth" and his idea of how cultural codes and connotations work in creating meaning are central to my approach. I examine how *Dune* as a visual and narrative text constructs gendered meanings and reinforces or subverts feminist ideologies. Rieger, however, approaches semiotics from a more computational perspective, using algorithms and models to understand how information and signs are processed cognitively. While my research focuses on the cultural impact of semiotic signs, Rieger's work is more concerned with the cognitive and linguistic processing of these signs in human communication.

Another key difference is in the theoretical frameworks we employ. Barthes' semiotics, which I use in my thesis, is deeply connected to cultural theory and the social construction of meaning. Barthes emphasizes how signs, whether they are visual, linguistic, or auditory, function within systems of meaning that reflect and shape societal norms. My analysis of *Dune* explores how these signs reinforce or critique gender stereotypes, especially through the portrayal of female characters and their roles in the narrative. On the other hand, Rieger's work is rooted in computational linguistics, which examines how semiotic signs function within cognitive and computational models of communication. His study focuses more on how meaning is constructed and processed on a cognitive level, using technology and computational models to simulate these processes.

In terms of methodology, my thesis involves a more traditional cultural semiotic analysis, applying Barthes' theories to dissect how *Dune* communicates feminist ideas through its visual and narrative elements. I analyze the film's use of myth and symbolism to understand how it engages with broader cultural discourses. Rieger's work, however, is more focused on developing computational models that can simulate and process semiotic signs, which is a more technical and experimental approach. While I am interpreting the semiotic

codes within the film through a humanistic lens, Rieger is using computational tools to model how semiotics functions in cognitive processes, thus offering a more scientific, data-driven approach to semiotics.

Despite these differences, there is a correlation in how both studies use semiotics to interpret meaning, albeit through different lenses. Both Barthes' theory in my thesis and Rieger's cognitive processing model view signs as a central element in the construction of meaning. The film *Dune*, for instance, can be analyzed both through Barthes' lens of cultural signs and myths, as I do in my work, or through the cognitive process of how viewers might process and interpret those signs, which aligns with Rieger's focus. Both approaches seek to understand how signs function within larger systems—whether in cultural, narrative, or cognitive contexts—and how these systems shape our understanding of the world around us.

Ultimately, the connection between my thesis and Rieger's study lies in our mutual interest in semiotics as a tool for meaning-making, but our research diverges in how we approach the study of signs and the contexts in which they operate. While my work focuses on the film *Dune* and its sociocultural implications using Barthes' semiotic theory, Rieger's research explores semiotic processing from a cognitive and computational standpoint. Both perspectives contribute to the broader field of semiotics, offering different but complementary insights into how meaning is created and interpreted.