



## Original Article

### Semiotics of Family Conflict in the Film “Ipar Adalah Maut” 2024

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#### Abstract:

This study examines the conflict in the family between a husband and his sister-in-law depicted in the film "Ipar Adalah Maut". This study aims to analyze the signs of communication that appear in the relationship, as reflected through various elements in the film. The method in this study is descriptive qualitative with media text analysis and reinforced by Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The data collection technique is in-depth analysis that focuses on the main source, namely the film "Ipar Adalah Maut". The analysis process is carried out by identifying communication patterns through two levels of meaning in semiotics, namely denotation and connotation. The results of the analysis show the existence of explicit and implicit messages that reveal the dynamics of interaction between husband and sister-in-law, which reflect the complexity of interpersonal relationships and family dynamics. This finding is interpreted as a myth that represents cultural values, social norms, and communication challenges in the context of family relations.

**Keywords:** Semiotics; Film Ipar Adalah Maut (2024); Roland Barthes; Family Conflict

#### Introduction

Film is a special kind of art because it can present us with an interesting picture of social, political, and cultural issues. The film has various purposes, including being a means of communication (film as a propaganda tool), artistic expression, and creative expression and channeling of ideas (film as an art), selling by highlighting certain topics (film as a business), and, of course, the intersection of the three (Imanjaya, 2019). Films have a unique ability to influence the soul, mind, lifestyle, behavior, and even language of the audience, so they have a significant impact on a person's life. Because films often contain moral messages, they can be useful tools for teaching life lessons to others and changing their perspectives and ways of thinking. This is better known as ethical values, which can relate to life, religion, culture, or other social values (Nurjanah et al., 2024). Films based on semiotic studies are very urgent and interesting because the development and growth of cinema are so rapid and able to move audiences as viewers. The study's results will be used to assess whether the film is worth watching or vice versa. A film should be evaluated from an artistic perspective, not just rationally, because a creative



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film may be worthless if only assessed rationally. After all, it does not have a specific purpose and meaning ([Mudjiono, 2011](#)).

The film "Ipar Adalah Maut" shows the dynamics of complex family relationships, especially in the interaction between husband and brother-in-law. This relationship is often discussed in society because of the potential for conflict, jealousy, and moral issues. Therefore, it is important to understand how the communication patterns between husband and brother-in-law are displayed in this film and how its meaning is constructed through the symbols, dialogue, and body language used. Films are a medium used by directors to convey messages to their audiences. Generally, films raise themes or phenomena that exist in society. One of them is the film "Ipar Adalah Maut" directed by Hanung Bramantyo, starring actors such as Deva Mahendra as Aris, Michelle Ziudith as Nisya, Davina Karamoy as Rani, Alesha Fadhillah as Raya, Dewi Irawan as Nisya and Rani's mother, Devina Aureel and others. This film raises the theme of family drama with a touch of comedy. This film depicts the dynamics of the relationship between family members that are intertwined with conflict and tension, especially in the interaction between brother-in-law and sister-in-law. The journey of Aris and Nisa's love story began when they met in college, and since they started dating, these two people have been doing well. Feeling that they had found a match, Aris and Nisa finally decided to get married. Since getting married, this couple has been blessed with a daughter, Raya. The conflict began when Nisa's mother left Rani to live with Nisa and go to college. After discussing the husband and wife, Aris finally allowed Rani to live together in one house with his wife and children. At first, their lives went normally until one day, there was intimate interpersonal communication between Aris and Rani.

The background of this problem is rooted in the story in the film "Ipar Adalah Maut," which depicts a complex relationship between a husband and his sister-in-law. This film shows emotional conflict and unhealthy communication that triggers the main problem. The tension between the husband and sister-in-law is exacerbated by the lack of clear boundaries in their interpersonal relationship, ultimately impacting family harmony. This storyline reflects real issues in people's lives, where relationships between family members are often a source of conflict that is difficult to resolve. Roland Barthes' semiotic theory provides a framework for understanding this film's signs and hidden meanings. Denotation describes what is directly visible, while connotation reveals a deeper meaning, often related to cultural values and social norms. In interpersonal communication, this theory helps explain how verbal and nonverbal messages between a husband and sister-in-law create certain dynamics. In addition, family communication theory is used to analyze how roles and expectations within the family influence these communication patterns. The semiotic approach in this analysis allows us to uncover the hidden meaning of each character interaction through verbal dialogue and nonverbal communication. By understanding these communication patterns, we can gain deeper insight into how the film represents social norms and cultural values related to family relationships. Through this research, it is hoped that specific communication patterns that strengthen or oppose existing social values in society can be found. Semiotic analysis can also help identify how the film shapes the audience's perception of the relationship between the husband and the brother-in-law and its impact on social life in the real world.

Roland Barthes is the successor of Saussure's thinking. Saussure was interested in the complex ways in which sentences are formed and how sentence forms determine meaning but was less interested in the fact that the same punishment can convey

different meanings to people in various situations. Saussure's theory, developed by Roland Barthes, is the concept of signifiers in the search for denotative-connotative meaning. One important area that Barthes explored in his study of signs was the reader's role. Barthes, at length, reviewed what is often referred to as the second level of the meaning system, which is built on other previously existing systems. This second system is called connotative by Barthes, which, in his *Mythologies*, he clearly distinguishes from denotative or the first level of the meaning system ([Sobur, 2009](#)). Barthes says signs can grow and form new meanings through metalanguage phenomena, which he calls synonymy. In line with Saussure's view, Barthes believed that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. This means there is no natural relationship between the symbol and the object it symbolizes. For example, the word "lion" is used to represent the king of the jungle for no particular natural reason; the word does not have to be "lion" but can be different in other languages ([Wahyuningsih, 2019](#)).

In their research, [Riwu & Pujianti \(2018\)](#) aim to explain the form of denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and myths in the film "3 Dara". This study uses qualitative descriptive with semiotic analysis from Roland Barthes. The results obtained from this study on the film "3 Dara" found the following findings: (1) The denotative and connotative meanings in this film provide us with an understanding of the importance of being polite and respectful to women and anyone. Whatever we sow in this world, be it words or good and bad attitudes towards others, we will reap it one day. (2) The myth that can be concluded in this study is when Affandy, Jay, and Richard came to a psychologist, and the psychologist claimed that they were experiencing Gender Diasyphora Syndrome, which is a symptom where a man slowly has changes in attitude and behavior as a woman. According to the research of [Utomo & Kusuma \(2025\)](#), The *Wedok* film is set in the period before 2004, in Java. This film provides an overview of the limitations of education for women in Java. *Wedok* talks about women's silence and educational gaps, which are interesting icons to study. This research is a study that uses a semiotic concept approach based on existing data. The discussion uses Roland Barthes' semiotic approach analysis in describing signs, including icons, gestures, and symbols in the *Wedok* film, so as to produce a conclusion. The study results are in the form of the meaning of the icons of women's emancipation found in the *Wedok* film.

This study examines the communication patterns between a husband and his sister-in-law contained in the film "Ipar Adalah Maut." This study analyzes signs and signifieds using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. After the meaning is obtained, the results collaborate with interpersonal and family communication theories. This study aims to explore more deeply how the interpersonal relationships depicted in this film reflect the challenges of communication within the family. Through semiotic analysis, researchers hope to provide meanings in the movie where cultural values and social norms influence interactions in family relationships and offer insights for efforts to improve the quality of family communication in society. Examining the film *Ipar Adalah Maut* with Roland Barthes' semiotic theory can be an interesting study because it contains many symbols, signs, and meanings that can be analyzed more deeply. Barthes' semiotic approach can reveal how this film builds meaning, forms social perceptions, and contains deeper ideological messages.

## Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with media text analysis and is reinforced by Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. According to [Abdussamad, \(2021\)](#)

qualitative methods are used to obtain in-depth data containing meaning. Meanwhile, according to [Samsu, \(2017\)](#) the descriptive method is a research method that attempts to describe the object or subject being studied according to what it is. The object of the study is the communication patterns between the husband and brother-in-law in the film "Ipar Adalah Maut." Primary data was obtained through direct observation by researchers of their interactions and scenes. In contrast, secondary data was collected from sources such as books and articles relevant to interpersonal communication. Data collection techniques were carried out through literature studies and documentation. According to West and Turner, data analysis was carried out using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach and the theory of interpersonal communication. This includes scene analysis by Aris as Nisa's husband and Rani as Nisa's sister-in-law. In the first stage, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is analyzed through scenes that describe the establishment of communication and intimate closeness that exceeds the general relationship between a husband and a sister-in-law.

## Results

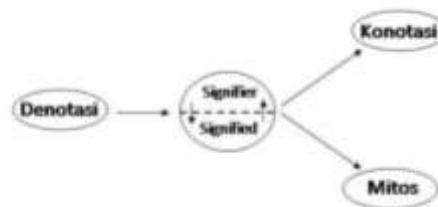


Figure 1. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory Concept Framework

(Sumber: [Sobur, 2001](#))

Barthes analyzes three things: denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. Denotative is the real meaning, while connotative, or the second meaning is the meaning contained in the sign or can be said to be another meaning of a sign. Then myth, myth is the untruth of the meaning of connotative. Myths develop in society because of the social and cultural effects on society itself ([Hidayatulla & Nisa, 2024](#)). Through the image below, the significance of the first stage is the relationship between the signifier and the signified in a sign to external reality. Barthes calls it denotation, which is the most real meaning of the sign. Connotation is a term Barthes uses to indicate the significance of the second stage ([Nugroho & Hamzah, 2018](#)). Meanwhile, according to [Sobur \(2001\)](#), Barthes also sees another aspect of marking: the "myth" that marks a society. According to Barthes, "Myth" is located at the second level of marking, so after the sign system is formed. Signifier-signified, the sign will become a new marker, which then has a second symbol and forms a new sign.

The film *Ipar Adalah Maut* tells the story of a harmonious family consisting of Aris as a husband, Nisa as a wife, and a child named Raya. The journey of Aris and Nisa's love story began when they met in college, and since they started dating, these two people have been doing well. Feeling that they had found a match, Aris and Nisa finally decided to get married. Since getting married, this couple has been blessed with a daughter, Raya. The conflict begins when Nisa's mother leaves Rani to live with Nisa and go to college. After discussing the husband and wife, Aris finally allowed Rani to live together in one house with his wife and child. At first, their lives went normally until one day, there was intimate interpersonal communication between Aris and Rani. Based on

the analysis of the scenes in the film, it was found that Aris and Rani's interpersonal communication became a problem. To resolve the identification of the issues in this film, the researcher chose 6 (six) scenes that describe the message and core of the problem that will be analyzed using Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory:

#### Scene 41

→ Aris tells Rani to report to him if she feels uncomfortable in the campus environment. This is seen at minute 33:07 - 33:19.



#### Denotative Meaning:

A family consisting of Aris as husband and Nisa as wife, with a child named Raya and a sister-in-law named Rani, is having a dinner party outside the house. This also includes their child and sister-in-law, Rani. All members of the core family and one representative of the wife's family, namely Nisa's younger sibling, attended this dinner party. The dinner that was held looked delicious and calm because every family member felt happy. In the scene, it is also seen as a form of attention from Aris as a husband by ordering a special food menu for Nisa.

#### Connotative Meaning:

The dinner shown illustrates that the family environment formed by Aris and Nisa is a harmonious family that is seen when each plays a role well, such as taking time from their daily activities and establishing interpersonal communication. Through having dinner together, interpersonal communication will be based on each family member being intense and helping the wife, husband, and children to be open in communicating and instilling the value of honesty with each other. When Aris orders a special food menu for his wife, and Nisa responds happily and smiles, it indicates that the interaction between the husband and wife is good. This will form the reality of family communication, which functions in forming communication patterns and parenting patterns and vice versa.

#### Myth:

Understanding the connotation in the picture when the dinner was taking place, we can see that Nisa's sitting position is next to Rani. This contains the myth that Rani and Nisa have equal positions in front of Aris. Nisa should sit next to her husband to indicate that husband and wife are in a balanced position and have a different closeness to Rani. In contrast, Rani sits before them to suggest that Rani is not part of Aris and Nisa's nuclear family.

#### Scene 46

Rani experiences harassment and Aris secures her in minutes 41:16 - 41:40.



### **Denotative Meaning:**

After Aris successfully saved Rani from the harassment committed by her college friend, Aris took Rani into the car and tried to calm Rani, who was scared and confused. Rani's body reaction was seen shaking and full of blank stares. Seeing Rani's scared reaction, Aris hugged Rani and said, "You are safe with Mas." After Aris said that, Rani began to calm down a little, and her shock slowly began to subside.

### **Connotative Meaning:**

The hug Aris gives Rani is nonverbal communication. In this case, this nonverbal communication occurs in certain situations and has a clear purpose. Nonverbal communication occurs when Rani has just experienced harassment, and Aris hugs Rani as a form of attention to his sister-in-law, who is in shock. Aris communicated nonverbally through sad, concerned facial expressions and then moved his hands to hug Rani.

### **Myth:**

Emmert and Donaghy say that haptics or body contact are among the best ways to communicate personal attitudes. The frequency and duration of touch can indicate friendship and liking between the people doing it. For example, hugging and stroking the back of Aris to Rani.

### **Scene 50**

→Aris fixes the toilet tap in Rani's room at minute 46:38 - 49:03.



### **Denotative Meaning:**

Aris helped fix Rani's broken toilet. This happened when the house was quiet, so only the two were home. When Aris fixed it, the toilet tap leaked even more, and Rani tried to help Aris by approaching him to stop the water flow. When the water flow stopped, they were together and accidentally got close, so Aris kissed Rani.

### **Connotative Meaning:**

It can be seen when Rani panicked and approached Aris, paying more attention to Aris. When the water flow stopped, Aris and Rani were seen joking. The body language shown reflected a sense of comfort. Eye contact occurred, causing a sense of attraction between the opposite sex.

### **Myth:**

The myth identified here is a story or pattern of betrayal in the family or an illicit relationship commonly found in many stories or myths. In certain cultures or myths, illicit relationships (especially those involving in-laws) often depict a tragedy or deep moral consequences. This can be seen as violating family values and broader social norms. The myth that emerges may be related to the theme of betrayal in family relationships, where a relationship initially based on trust and affection ends in emotional damage and destruction. It symbolizes the tension between personal instinct and moral or social obligation and the impact of uncontrolled feelings in unexpected situations.

#### Scene 54

→ Aris & Rani go home together and stop by a hotel room at minute 51:14-54.48.



#### Denotative Meaning:

After returning from campus, Aris and Rani went home together. Suddenly, Aris stopped in front of a hotel, and Rani asked, "What are we doing here, sir?" Aris answered anxiously, "If you don't want to, let's go home," Rani held Aris' hand while answering, "I want to, sir." At that time, Aris immediately booked a hotel room for the two of them to have sex; Aris and Rani took turns and secretly went to the hotel room that had been booked, and the two of them met in the room and had sex.

#### Connotative Meaning:

Aris' apparent anxiety when he stopped in front of the hotel showed his desire to meet Rani in a closed room immediately. When the intimate relationship occurred, Rani was seen to be highly willing to accept Aris. They both had sex consciously and based on mutual consent.

#### Myth:

In myth, this action can be seen as a reflection of stories about betrayal or illicit relationships in many cultures. The act of having sex outside of marriage or with someone who is "supposed" to be considered family can evoke images of morality, taboos, and social consequences. In many myths or folktales, illicit relationships are often accompanied by tragic consequences or deep disappointment and even sacrifice the integrity of the husband and wife's household. This may indicate that Aris and Rani's actions are not only about their satisfaction but will also impact violating social and moral norms.

#### Scene 77

→ Rani starts to get jealous of Aris' treatment of Nisa at time 1:14:41 - 1:15:50



### Denotative Meaning :

When the situation began making Nisa increasingly suspicious, Nisa, Aris' wife, had time to go to campus to check her husband's whereabouts. This made Aris and his sister-in-law Rani's lunch plan fail. Aris and Rani met in the car when they finished talking to Nisa. In that scene, Aris reminded Rani to start being careful, such as not sending messages at home and deleting them on their cell phones so they wouldn't be found out. Rani begins to show jealousy towards Aris' treatment of Nisa by asking, "What do you think of Rani? Rani feels like she's just an outlet". Then Aris convinced Rani to be patient and said that Rani had given a new color to her life.

### Connotative Meaning :

Rani looked very jealous and upset when talking to Aris in the car about the clarity of their relationship. Aris used verbal and nonverbal communication, such as holding Rani's hand and embracing her, to convince Rani that Aris seriously had feelings for her. Both parties consciously did this.

### Myth :

Romanticism of Forbidden Relationships as an Escape from Life. This scene creates a myth that forbidden family relationships can be considered an escape route to finding new meaning or color in life. Rani's dialogue, questioning her position in the relationship, and Aris's gestures, which try to convince her, represent the romanticization of the act of betrayal. This myth normalizes the narrative that such relationships can be justified for emotional reasons, even though they morally and socially violate family values.

### Scene 85

→ Mr. Junaedi finds out about this affair and reprimands and advises Aris at minute



47:09.

### Denotative Meaning:

After learning about the affair, Mr. Junaedi (Aris's co-worker) approached Aris. Mr. Junaedi gave a straightforward warning and advised Aris not to play around with relationships, not to cheat, and what the consequences of an affair are, from the

destruction of a household to death. Mr. Junaedi said, "Don't let your brother-in-law's trash become death."

### **Connotative Meaning:**

Mr. Junaedi, although known for being a jokester, shows his firm and wise side in this scene. The straightforward warning he gives implies that he has a deep concern for the social and moral impacts of Aris's actions. His reprimand reflects the social norm that an affair is a destructive behavior that goes beyond personal matters and can affect the honor of the family as a whole. Aris' reaction, which was initially relaxed but then turned nervous and panicked, emphasizes how the reprimand raised Aris' awareness of his mistakes and risks. This also shows Aris' fear of the consequences, both socially and in his relationships.

### **Myth:**

This scene builds the myth that infidelity is not only a moral violation but also an act that carries major consequences to the point of destruction, both emotionally and physically. Mr. Junaedi's strong message, "Don't let your brother-in-law become deadly," emphasizes the real dangers of illicit relationships that damage the foundations of family and social values. This myth reinforces the narrative that infidelity is an act that not only threatens personal relationships but can also trigger wider conflicts, bringing losses to all parties involved. Through this warning, the scene implies that secrets will not last long, and the truth will eventually be revealed, getting serious and inevitable consequences.

### **Conclusion**

The main objective of this study is to determine the family conflict and communication patterns formed between the husband and brother-in-law in the film *Ipar Adalah Maut*. The communication pattern forms the main conflict between Aris and Nisa's family. This study has succeeded in answering the research objectives. The study results indicate that harmonious communication between husband and wife will still be disturbed by the presence of a third person, which in this film is the brother-in-law himself. This study shows that family conflict does not only come from within the husband and wife but family conflict and discord can come from outside. Rani's presence shows that the brother-in-law is not a member of the nuclear family, which should only consist of the position of father, mother, and child. The factors that influence the conflict occur because the communication pattern between Aris and Rani has exceeded the norm. The analysis of six scenes shows that the established communication is beyond the limits of social life norms and has the potential to invite discord in Aris's nuclear family.

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