

# Representation of Women's Loyalty Values in the Film Pilgrimage by Bw Purba Negara (Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes)

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## ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** movie; In the 2017 Asean International Film Festival and Award, Ziarah received four awards, including Best Screenplay (BW Purba Negara), Best Actress (Ponco Sutyem), Best Director (BW Purba Negara) and Best Film. The film is a drama genre that tells the story of a character named Mbah Sri, a 95-year-old woman who is looking for her husband (Prawiro Said) because he never came home and never even heard from him after saying goodbye to the Second Military Aggression war in 1984. The storyline is entirely based on Mbah Sri as the heir to the memory of the historical events experienced by her husband. This study uses a qualitative approach using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. Semiotic analysis is a way or method to analyze and give meanings to symbols that contain a package of symbols, symbols, messages or texts. This research uses a qualitative approach using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. In conclusion, the representation of women's loyalty values in the film Ziarah by BW Purba Negara is depicted through the actions and characteristics of couples who are still loyal even though their partners have no news. Mbah Sri still thinks about her partner and tries to find her again at all costs. He did not give up on the search process until he finally rediscovered his true love in his old age.



## Introduction

Film is a popular cultural product that represents and constructs the life of a society. This view implies the position of the film as a recording or reflection of the social reality of society (Wiraputra & Pristica, 2023). Film is a powerful medium of mass communication, not only as a means of entertainment but also for counseling and education. In lectures, lighting or education often uses film as an auxiliary tool to provide explanations (Putri & Nurhajati, 2020).

The film Ziarah by director BW Purba Negara was released on May 18, 2017, and in 2016 the film Ziarah received an award from the Indonesian Film Festival in the category of Best Screenwriter (Al Mufidah, 2023). In the 2017 Asean International Film

Festival and Award, Ziarah received four awards, including Best Screenplay (BW Purba Negara), Best Actress (Ponco Sutiyem), Best Director (BW Purba Negara) and Best Film. The film is a drama genre that tells the story of a character named Mbah Sri, a 95-year-old woman who is looking for her husband (Prawiro Said) because he never came home and never even heard from him after saying goodbye to the Second Military Aggression war in 1984 (PARTA, 2016). The storyline is entirely based on Mbah Sri as the heir to the memory of the historical events experienced by her husband (Ningrum, 2016).

Mbah Sri faithfully waited for her husband who said goodbye to go to war in the Second Dutch Military Aggression. Before going to war, the husband advised her that if she did not return from the war, it meant that she would die on the battlefield. The event was Mbah Sri's last meeting with her husband. For many years Mbah Sri lived in solitude, she chose to be widowed until her old age (Awaliah & Wibawa, 2022). In her solitude she saw several women her age die and were buried right next to her husband's grave, Mbah Sri thought so, her determination was even more determined to continue looking for her husband's grave and hoped that in the future she could be buried next to her loved ones (Sugihartati, 2017).

In her story, Mbah Sri continues to wait and look for the whereabouts of her husband's grave. Mbah Sri met a veteran soldier who knew her late husband. The soldier said that Prawiro died shot by Dutch soldiers in 1949. With incomplete information, Mbah Sri still tried to find her husband's grave. At the age of 95, Mbah Sri found her bright spot. During the trip, Mbah Sri met many people who helped trace her story, Mbah Sri not only walked through the history of her love story but also through the history of her nation. The wounds of the heart and the wounds of the nation that are increasingly raging are a reality that must be accepted (Komalawati, 2017).

For many years, Mbah Sri with loyalty and waiting for her husband until her struggle in the process of finding her husband had to be paid for by reaping deeper and deeper wounds. However, in the end, Mbah Sri had to accept the harsh reality when she found her husband's gravestone next to another woman's tombstone who turned out to be his second wife. Really, from any angle, this will feel very painful. Whatever the form, a breakup will not be pleasant for both parties, both for men and women with various consequences. Even with the excuse of a good farewell, especially if the form of farewell without news feels like a wound that has no cure.

However, Mbah Sri is a woman who believes in true love. As he always said to his grandson, "The voice is kuwi raiso ailang. I am ki percoyo, Simbah kakung is disare'ke neng kono." (The voice is always ringing. I believe, Simbah Kakung was buried there). Her trust and belief are what can lead her to meet and meet her husband. At the end of the story, it is told how disappointed this elderly woman was after her long journey ended at a cemetery, where Prawiro's grave turned out to be side by side with the grave of his other wife. His heart was so painful, the wait he had been hoping for turned out to be not reality. He tried to control his feelings, all he could do was pray and sprinkle flowers on the two tombs with a sore heart.

Of course, it is not easy to take a stance like Mbah Sri, forgiveness requires open-mindedness. But no matter how heavy it is, forgiveness must be done. From here we can emulate the wise attitude of Mbah Sri, who has the generosity to forgive her past, forgive her husband, and make peace with the situation. She lives as a woman who is indeed steadfast in her loyalty to her partner and believes in hope. Unconditional love or selfless love is a depiction of Mbah Sri's love for her husband, this is touching. A sincere love without physical touch is how Mbah Sri believed until her old age. Overall, the pilgrimage is a spectacle that can disturb feelings. A lesson in unusual love stories, and lost memories in history.

Loyalty is not a relationship that happens automatically but a bond that requires a long process. A process that metamorphoses ordinary friendships into bonds that are very difficult to separate. Equality in a relationship is the feeling of being the same as others, as human beings are not high or low, even though there are differences in certain abilities, family backgrounds, or attitudes towards others showing themselves to be higher or better than others because of status, power, intellectual ability, wealth or beauty.

The striking character representation system in the film *Ziarah* is projected by Mbah Sri's figure. The characterization of the main character shows gestures, facial wrinkles, and the use of short sentences that seem authentic and the dialogues are full of life philosophy. Based on this background, the researcher is interested in describing the values of women's loyalty shown in the *Ziarah* Film through the semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes.

## **Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. Semiotical analysis is a way or method to analyze and provide meanings to symbols that contain a package of symbols, symbols, messages, or texts. The text referred to in this relationship is all forms and systems of symbols (signs) both found in the mass media (such as various television shows, print media caricatures, films, radio plays, and various forms of advertising) and those found outside the mass media (such as paintings, sculptures, temples, monuments, fashion shows, and cooking menus at a food festival). The business of semiotic analysis is to trace the meanings transported by the text in the form of signs. In other words, it is the meaning of symbols in the text that is the center of attention of semiotic analysis (Pawito, 2008).

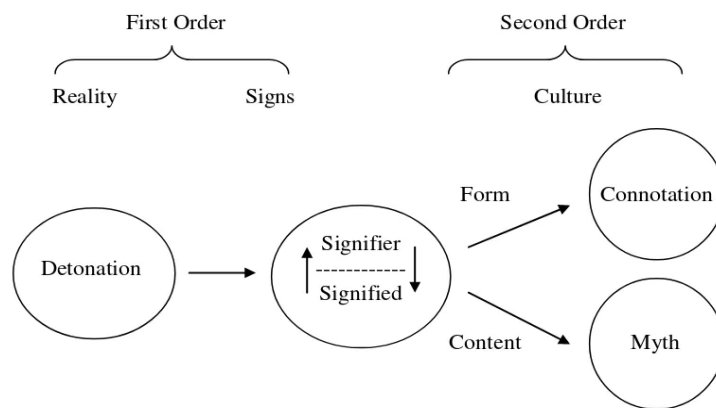
## **Results and Discussion**

Danesi in his book entitled *Message, Sign, and Meaning* explains that "Semiotics is a science that tries to answer the question referred to by 'x' which can be anything, from a word or sign to an entire composition of music or film. The range 'x' bias varies, but the underlying properties that formulate it do not" (Ferrandina et al., 2010). It can be interpreted that semiotics is the drawing of conclusions but it will not always be what is interpreted the same as what will be discussed in other ways, because in semiotics there is a denotative meaning and there is also a connotative meaning.

"In Barthes's concept, connotative signs not only have additional meanings but also contain both parts of the denotative sign that underlie their existence. This is Barthes's contribution to the refinement of Saussure's semiology, which stops at marking at the denotative level". So that this study aims to explain and describe how the denotative, connotative, and mythical meaning of loyalty in the film Ziarah.

Roland Barthes was a structural thinker who adhered to Saussure's semiotic theory. Barthes mentioned him as a figure who played a central role in structuralism in the 90s and 70s. He argues that language is a system of signs that reflect the assumptions of a certain society at a certain time. According to Barthes, there are two systems of meaning, namely Connotative and Denotative. Connotation, even though it is the original nature of the sign, requires the reader's activeness to function. Barthes extensively reviews what is often called the second system of meaning, which is built on top of other systems that have existed before. Literature is the clearest example of a second-level system of meaning that is built on the same linguistic system as the first system. This second system is called connotative by Barthes, which in his *Mythologies* is expressly distinguished from the denotative or system of meaning (first order).

In Barthes' framework, the connotation is synonymous with the operation of ideology, which he calls mythical and serves to express and provide justification for the dominant values that prevail in a certain period. As in the myth, there is a three-dimensional pattern of markers, signs, and signs. While the second level is a myth. In myths, we again find three-dimensional patterns of markers, signs, and signs. Here's Barthes' description of "*Two Order Signification*":



**Gambar 1. Two Order Signification Roland Barthes**

Barthes argues that Sarrasine is woven into the code of rationalization, a process similar to that seen in the rhetoric of fashion signs. The five codes that Barthes reviewed are:

1. Hermeneutic code or puzzle code  
It revolves around the reader's expectation to get the "truth" to the question that arises in the text.
2. Kode Semik (Makna Connotative)

Offering many sides, in the process of the reading process, the reader composes the theme of a text.

3. Symbolic Code

It is the most distinctive aspect of fictional coding that is structural.

4. Proairetic Code (Action Logic)

The main equipment of the text that people read, meaning that all texts are zero narrative.

5. Gnomonic Code (Cultural Code)

Which arouses a certain body of knowledge. This code is a textual reference to objects that are already known and codified by culture

The purpose of Barthes' analysis, according to Lechte, is not only to build a very formal classification system of narrative elements, but more to show the most plausible action, the most convincing detail, or the most interesting puzzle. Roland Barthes designed a systematic model, with which the negotiation process, ideas of meaning, and interactivity can be analyzed. At the heart of Barthes' theory is the idea of two orders of signification.

Barthes explained that the significance of the first stage is the relationship of the marker and the sign in a sign to the external reality. Barthes calls it denotation. Connotation is the point that Barthes uses for significance to both. This describes the interaction that occurs when a sign meets the feelings or emotions of the reader and the values of its culture. In the significance of the second stage related to content, the sign works through the myth.

Barthes argued that the most important way myths work is to naturalize history. This points to the fact that myths are the products of a social class that has gained dominance in a particular history: the meaning disseminated through myths must carry history with them, but its practice as a myth makes them try to deny it and present the meaning as natural, not historical or social.

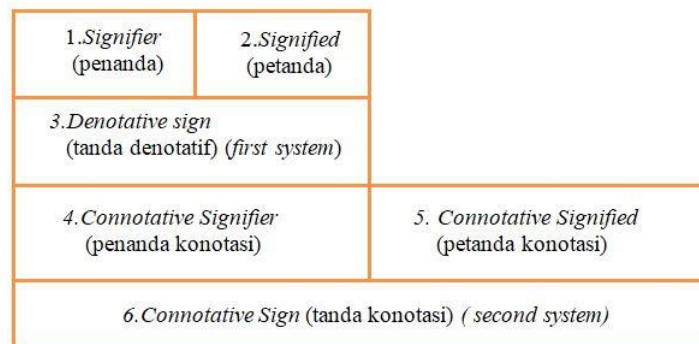
6. Denotation The meaning of denotation is the main initial meaning of a sign, text, and so on. At this stage, it explains the relationship between the signifier and the signified in the sign, and between the sign and its referent object in its external reality. Barthes calls it denotation. Denotation refers to what common sense believes, is the ultimate meaning of a sign.

7. Connotation Connotation is a term that Barthes used to describe one of the three ways signs work in the second stage of sign signification. Connotation describes the interaction that occurs when a sign meets the feelings or emotions of the user and the values within their culture. For Barthes, the main factor in connotation is the marker of the connotation. Barthes argues that in photographs at least, the difference between connotation and denotation will be obvious. Denotation is what is photographed, connotation is how the process of taking the photo is.

8. The second way in which the second way in which the signs in the second order work is through myths. Its usual usage is words that show the distrust of its users. Barthes

uses the myth as the person who believes it, in the true sense. A myth is a story in which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature.

Connotations and myths are the main ways in which signs work in the order of the two signs, that is, the order in which the interaction between the sign and the user or the community is most active. One of the important areas that Barthes explored in his study of signs is the role of the reader. The connotation, although it is an intrinsic nature of the sign, proves the activeness of the reader to function. Myths, by Barthes, are referred to as speech types. He also emphasized that myth is a communication system, that he is a message. This allows us to view that myths cannot be an object, concept, or idea; Myth is a way of signification, a form. Everything can become a myth as long as it is presented by a discourse. In myths, we once again find three-dimensional patterns that Barthes calls markers, signs, and signs. This can be seen in the map of Barthes' sign quoted from the book *Semiotics of Communication*, by Alex Sobur:



**Figure 2. Roland Barthes Sign Map**

From the Barthes map above, it can be seen that the denotative sign (3) consists of a marker (1) and a marker (2). At the same time, however, a denotative sign is also a connotative marker (4). In other words, it is a material element: it is only when you recognize the sign of the "lion" that connotative things such as self-esteem, ferocity, and courage become possible. So, in Barthes's concept, connotative signs not only have additional meanings but also contain both parts of the denotative sign that underlie their existence.

The application of Roland Barthes' sign map in the following scene is a representation of the values of loyalty in the pilgrimage film:



**Figure 3 Mbah Sri hopes to find her husband's grave.**

In picture 3, the level of denotation lies in the dialogue conveyed by Mbah Sri which is a hope that she dreams of, namely if she dies, she hopes to be buried next to her husband's grave. Connotatively, the author interprets that Mbah Sri is so in love with her husband until the end of her life or as long as she wants to be with her husband. The scene refutes the myth that if a woman is abandoned by her partner without news, the wife may not have the patience to live her own life and finally decide to remarry. But this does not apply to Mbah Sri, she never gives up on finding and rediscovering her true love.



**Figure 4**

**Mbah Sri finds her husband's grave which turns out to be next to his new wife.**

At the level of denotation, the scene above depicts a stunned Mbah Sri in front of two graves, the grave of her husband (Pawiro Sahid) and next to it with a headstone written Sutarni Pawiro Sahid, her husband's new wife. This scene is interpreted connotatively as a form of Mbah Sri's resignation in seeing the reality that happened. It turned out that her husband, who she had been looking for, remarried during the war, and what stirred Mbah Sri's feelings more was the grave of the two of them next to each other. Of course, her hope that if she dies, she wants to be buried near her husband is destroyed instantly. It breaks the myth that love or loyalty will disappear with age or for some reason, in this scene Mbah Sri must feel the endless pain of love but finally make peace with reality.

## Conclusion

For many years, Mbah Sri with loyalty and waiting for her husband until her struggle in the process of finding her husband had to be paid for by reaping deeper and deeper wounds. However, in the end, Mbah Sri had to accept the harsh reality when she found her husband's gravestone next to another woman's tombstone who turned out to be his second wife. Really, from any angle, this will feel very painful. Whatever the form, a breakup will not be pleasant for both parties, both for men and women with various consequences. Even with the excuse of a good farewell, especially if the form of farewell without news feels like a wound that has no cure.

Her trust and belief are what can lead her to meet and meet her husband. At the end of the story, it is told how disappointed this elderly woman was after her long journey ended at a cemetery, where Prawiro's grave turned out to be side by side with the grave of his other wife. His heart was so painful, the wait he had been hoping for turned out to be not reality.

The representation of women's loyalty values in the film *Ziarah* by BW Purba Negara is depicted through the actions and characteristics of couples who are still loyal even though their partners have no news. Mbah Sri still thinks about her partner and tries to find her again at all costs. He did not give up on the search process until he finally rediscovered his true love in his old age. Mbah Sri's love does not fade as she gets older, even the bitter reality she faces when she finds her husband's grave makes her reconcile with the situation. Loyalty is determination, and obedience (in family, friendship, slavery, and so on). Through loyalty, a relationship or relationship will be established harmoniously, because it is based on awareness and willingness to obey each factor that is used as an object to be loyal.



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