

## CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Films are often regarded as a powerful tool for mass communication due to their audio-visual nature. This characteristic allows messages to be conveyed in a short amount of time. Generally, society views films merely as a form of entertainment. However, films serve a broader purpose in communication by delivering information or messages to the public.<sup>1</sup> Films themselves can influence society, shaping perceptions, expressions, emotions, and even behavior. The messages conveyed in films are presented to the audience through symbols and signs that reflect the ideology of their creators.

Today, people still perceive films merely as a form of entertainment, focusing only on their surface aspects. However, there is a deeper meaning behind films that remains unexplored. This hidden meaning can be uncovered through a semiotic approach.<sup>2</sup> Semiotic analytical method used to explore the meaning embedded within signs. In the context of this study, the film *Just Mom* represents the meaning of a mother's love as a form of unconditional affection, expressed through sacrifice, care, and loyalty to her children.

One of the themes often explored in films is family relationships, including motherly love. This theme is highly relevant today as it addresses modern society's emotional and social needs of modern society. Amid modern life, which is increasingly individualistic, stressful, and fast-paced, this theme serves as a reminder of the importance of family bonds, particularly the warmth and empathy of a mother's love.

---

<sup>1</sup> Rahmatullah Rasyid Winarko, "Makna Kasih Sayang Ayah dalam Film Keluarga Cemara," *Sahafa Journal of Islamic Communication* 2, no. 2 (January 18, 2020): 125, <https://doi.org/10.21111/sjic.v2i2.4086>.

<sup>2</sup> Ridho Ramdhani and Yudistira Setia Nugraha, "Analisis Semiotika Puisi 'Hatiku Selembar Daun' Karya Sapardi Djoko Damono," *Khirani: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 1, no. 1 (2023): 41–49.

This statement is supported by previous research findings, which highlight that family affection, especially from mothers, is reflected in unconditional love. A mother serves as a tangible example of how love and compassion can overcome all obstacles.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, *Just Mom* by Jeihan Angga is a film that highlights the theme of motherly love with an emotional approach and complex characters. In this film, the mother-child relationship is portrayed literally and explores expressions of love beyond biological ties, such as affection for individuals considered as one's own children. This representation is presented through a unique perspective that sets it apart from the depiction of motherhood in other films. In the story, this is illustrated through the character of Siti (the mother), who loves Murni (a person with a mental disability condition) as if she were her biological child.

The 2022 film "*Just Mom*" is a family drama based on the novel titled "*Ibu, Doa yang Hilang*" written by Bagas Dwi Bawono. The film is produced by Hanung Bramantyo and directed by Jeihan Angga. It stars Christine Hakim, Ayushita, Ge Pamungkas, Niken Anjani, and Toran Walbro. This film tells the story of Siti, a mother who feels neglected by her children, who are preoccupied with their own work and lives. Amid her loneliness, Siti meets Murni, a person with a mental health condition (ODGJ), and takes the initiative to care for her, despite strong opposition from her children. The film showcases the beauty of Yogyakarta, particularly the Prambanan Temple, which serves as a backdrop for the filming. *Just Mom* has received nominations and awards from several film festivals, including the Jakarta Film Week and Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival. The film can be seen as a reminder for children and in-laws to always make time for their parents. It also highlights an important theme about a mother's love that accompanies us throughout

---

<sup>3</sup> NURAI SYAH, "ANALISIS PESAN KASIH SAYANG IBU DALAM FILM AIR MATA DI UJUNG SAJADAH," *Skripsi Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau*, 2024.

our lives. With a runtime of 88 minutes, the film offers an engaging and heartfelt experience for the audience.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, this film contains many messages that need to be explored and discovered, as it depicts a realistic social life in society, such as love, sacrifice, sincerity, resilience, and gratitude.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, this study is conducted to understand how the meaning of motherly love is represented in the film *Just Mom*. Representation is important to analyze because it holds cultural values that can influence societal views.<sup>6</sup> In this context, it affects the public's perception of the role of mothers in daily life.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher believes that this study is essential because motherly love is a theme closely related to Indonesian society, which has a strong family-oriented culture. As a work of art, *Just Mom* not only serves as entertainment but also as a reflection of the cultural values within society.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, a deeper understanding of how motherly love is represented can offer new insights into how films can influence public perception and understanding of humanitarian themes, particularly motherly love within the family.

Previous studies have explored the theme of motherly love in films, still, they often focus solely on the narrative or emotional aspects without delving deeper into the meaning of the visual and symbolic signs used. Additionally, prior research usually falls into the stereotype of the mother as a perfect figure. In contrast, *Just Mom* offers a more complex and realistic perspective, yet there has been limited research on how the representation of motherly love is constructed in the film through a semiotic approach. Therefore, the researcher aims to fill this gap by

---

<sup>4</sup> Vinny Shoffa Salma, "'Just Mom', gambaran kasih dan perjuangan seorang ibu," August 3, 2023, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/3665271/just-mom-gambaran-kasih-dan-perjuangan-seorang-ibu>.

<sup>5</sup> Stri Agneyastra Dite, "Representasi Identitas Jawa Pada Cerita Maya (Film Maya Daya Raya) Melalui Analisis Unsur Sinematik: Mise En Scene," *TONIL: Jurnal Kajian Sastra, Teater Dan Sinema* 20, no. 1 (2023): 8–20.

<sup>6</sup> Rio Febriannur Rachman, "Representasi Dalam Film," *Jurnal Paradigma Madani* 7, no. 2 (2020): 10–18.

<sup>7</sup> Maria Renata Winahyu, Sunarto Sunarto, and Muhammad Bayu Widagdo, "INTERPRETASI FAMILY VALUES PADA FILM KELUARGA CEMARA," *Interaksi Online* 12, no. 4 (2024): 203–19.

analyzing the representation of motherly love in *Just Mom* through a semiotic approach.

The figure of a mother is considered to play an essential role in the family because a child's healthy development is often influenced by the love and affection provided by the mother. On the other hand, the role of providing protection and a sense of security to children is also expected to be fulfilled by the mother.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, a mother is often recognized for her great sacrifices for her children. However, there are cases where the role of the mother is not fulfilled correctly, where a mother, who should provide comfort and safety to her child, instead engages in heinous acts that tarnish that role. For example, in Jagakarsa, South Jakarta, a young child was slammed to the ground and died from a brain injury caused by the mother.<sup>9</sup> Another crime occurred in Kediri, East Java, where two siblings were brutally murdered by their own mother.<sup>10</sup> A more tragic case took place in Palembang, South Sumatra, where a mother slit her child's throat with an ax due to her disappointment with the child being born male.<sup>11</sup>

Semiotic analysis is one approach that can be used to understand the meaning behind the phenomena present in a film. In this study, *Just Mom* is represented as a film that embodies the sense of a mother's love, referencing Roland Barthes' theory. Barthes' semiotic approach focuses on uncovering a phenomenon from three aspects: denotation, connotation, and myth. In this study, the film is analyzed through each scene that contains elements representing motherly love, and

---

<sup>8</sup> Rizki Anindia Putri and K Y S Putri, "KONSTRUKSI PERAN IBU PADA POSTER FILM BIRD BOX (ANALISIS SEMIOTIKA CHARLES S. PEIRCE)," no. 159 (2021).

<sup>9</sup> wildan noviansah, "Balita Di Jaksel Yang Dibanting Ibu Kandung Hingga Tewas Alami Gegar Otak," Detik News, August 7, 2024, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-7477551/balita-di-jaksel-yang-dibanting-ibu-kandung-hingga-tewas-alami-gegar-otak>.

<sup>10</sup> Esti widiyana, "Kakak-Adik Kediri Dibunuh Ibu, Ini Faktor Wanita Rentan Kena Gangguan Jiwa," September 5, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/jatim/berita/d-7524990/kakak-adik-kediri-dibunuh-ibu-ini-faktor-wanita-rentan-kena-gangguan-jiwa>.

<sup>11</sup> Tim Detik Sumut, "Sadisnya Ibu Gorok Bayi 18 Hari, Kecewa Anaknya Laki-Laki," September 24, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/sumbagsel/hukum-dan-kriminal/d-7555292/sadisnya-ibu-gorok-bayi-18-hari-kecewa-anaknya-laki-laki>.

then, using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, the denotative, connotative, and mythic meanings within those scenes are revealed.

This theory is still highly relevant today, as supported by research findings that show the representation of family communication in the film *Backstage* is conveyed through signs displayed in the attitudes, expressions, and behaviors of each family member.<sup>12</sup> Other research findings also indicate that the denotative and connotative meanings of the father's character in the film *Keluarga Cemara* suggest that a father will always strive to provide peace and comfort to his family members, as demonstrated through several of Abah's actions, such as offering tenderness and affection, explaining what is right and wrong, giving attention, and appreciating the talents and potential of his children.<sup>13</sup>

Based on these facts, the researcher is interested in conducting a study, which is also the title of the thesis: “**On Mother's Love: Using Barthes's Semiotic Approach In Film *Just Mom* by Jeihan Angga (2022)**”

## 1.2. Scope and Problem Formulation

To make the research more focused, the scope of the study is defined by analyzing each scene related to a mother's love for her child using Roland Barthes' semiotics. This way, semiotics can examine various scenes, including the following:

- a) What are the scenes that represent motherly love in the film *Just Mom* (2022)?
- b) How is Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis applied in the film *Just Mom* (2022)?

---

<sup>12</sup> Siti Cahaya Lestari, “Representasi Komunikasi Keluarga Dalam Film *Backstage* (Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes)” (PhD Thesis, UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, 2024).

<sup>13</sup> Winarko, “Makna Kasih Sayang Ayah dalam Film *Keluarga Cemara*.”

### **1.3. Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- a) To identify the scenes that represent motherly love in the film *Just Mom* (2022).
- b) To analyze Roland Barthes' semiotic approach in the film *Just Mom* (2022).

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 Academic Significance**

This research aims to expand, develop, and enrich knowledge through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. As a medium for conveying messages, film is expected to contribute positively to the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Communication Science. It enriches theoretical understanding in the field of cinematics and film, particularly in designing representations of a message.

#### **1.4.2 Practical Significance**

This study can provide insights to readers and practitioners in the field about effective ways of portraying motherly love and affection in visual narratives. By understanding the semiotic elements of design and representation in cinematography, directors can create works that more accurately reflect details and demonstrate social sensitivity in expressing cultural values and the ideological messages they wish to convey.