

## Analysis Meaning of Maui Tattoos in the 2016 *Moana* Movie (Roland Barthes)

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### Abstract

The factor that attracts people's attention from the *Moana* film is the culture that is raised in the *Moana* film is so thick and oriental. Many hidden messages contained in the film *Moana* di *Tato* Maui character because it has a close relationship with the mythology of the Polynesian nation. The purpose of this study was to determine the meaning of the tattoo using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis theory. Roland Barthes' semiotic theory used is a denotation, connotation and myth meaning system. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach. There are interview results as triangulation, the results of the analysis use the source triangulation method. Interviews were conducted at the Disney Studio Studio Head storyboards which were supported by data in the form of documents and literature with semiotic experts. The results of this study are the meaning of Tattoos on the Maui character shows a denotative meaning regarding the achievements and life journey of a demi-human Maui. The connotative meaning of a Maui character tattoo is to convey the true character of Maui using tattoo symbols in Polynesian culture. Maui character tattoos create a myth in the form of a message that the creator wants to convey to the public about the positive value of the demi-god Maui mythology.

**Keywords:** tattoo, *Moana*, semiotic Roland Barthes, Maui, Polynesian.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2016 Disney released a 3D animated film entitled *Moana*. Tells the story of *Moana* who was chosen by the god of the ocean to return the heart of *Te Fiti* which was stolen by *Maui*. *Maui* is a demigod who wreaks havoc on the ocean. As a result of *Maui*'s actions resulted in the birth of the demon *Te Ka*. The depiction of *Moana*'s film by providing a Polynesian cultural background is able to provide a serious but relaxed storytelling interspersed with tickling comedy. One of the elements that support it is the depiction of a good character. Character refers to a person, aka the actor of the story. In character design semiotics, there are 6 basic forms that make up a character design, namely representation, realism, idealism, culture, personification, and shape (Marshal, 2007).

The depiction of characters by adding cultural elements is very important, according to Marshal (2007) Cultural codes can be considered as the most important and necessary component for character design. This is due to the strong psychological relationship that individuals have with objects, clothes, and attributes in their environment. So the meaning or message conveyed by the character design will indirectly play a role in shaping one's perception of the intent and message to be conveyed by the film. A filmmaker can present ideas which are then converted into a system of signs and symbols to achieve the desired effect (Sobur, 2003).

In *Moana*'s film, the visual element of *Maui*'s character is found to be unique, which has tattoos all over his body. The character of *Maui* has a cultural impression that is closely

related to the culture of the Polynesian nation. Polynesian tattoos are a form or way of telling a story about their owner. Polynesian tattoos also give them protection or strength from bonds created with other creatures (Gemori, 2011). Most tattoos on Maui characters have the meaning of explaining the relationship between the choice of symbols, positions, and tattoo illustrations.

The above encourages researchers to research further about the meaning of Maui character tattoos. The research will focus on tattoos on the upper chest, stomach, upper back, and lower back on the Maui character which will be explained about the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to be able to examine more deeply the message that the character designer wants to convey through tattoos. Maui character.

## 2. METHOD

This study will use a qualitative descriptive method with a semiotic approach. Data was collected by observing the film *Mona*, interviewing semiotic expert Mr. Arif Budi Prasetya who is a lecturer from Brawijaya University Malang and Disney Studio's Head storyboard artist Jeff Ranjoo, and library documents in the form of writing or pictures. The data that has been collected was analyzed using the semiotic analysis method of Roland Barthes.

Maui film tattoos were selected using purposive sampling. The criteria used in the sample selection is that the tattoo is shown in its entirety in one scene and from a different position. Based on these criteria, the main tattoos on the Maui character were selected, namely tattoos on the upper chest, stomach, upper back and lower back.



**Figure 1. Right chest tattoo, left chest tattoo, stomach tattoo, left upper back tattoo, upper back tattoo, right upper back tattoo, lower back tattoo.**

This study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis technique to reveal the meaning contained in the Maui character tattoo. Semiotics Roland Barthes divides meaning into two stages, namely denotative and connotative, denotative is the first level of meaning, connotative and myth is the second level of meaning.

**Table 1. Analysis Table**

Object Study	Denotation Meaning	Connotation Meaning	Myth Meaning
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### 2.1 Denotation

According to Harimurti Krisdalaksana (as cited in Sobur, 2009) defines denotation as the meaning of a word or group of words based on a straightforward designation of something outside of language or based on certain conventions and is objective.

## 2.2 Connotation

The connotative meaning is the second stage of the meaning process in Roland Barthes' semiology. Connotation is the level of signification that explains the relationship between the signifier and the signified in which it has an unreal, non-original, and indirect meaning.

## 2.3 Myth

According to Budiman (as cited in Sobur, 2009) said that in the framework of Barthes, connotation is identical to the ideological operation which he calls a myth and serves to provide justification for dominant values that apply in a certain period.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Denotation

The denotative meaning of the Maui character tattoo displays the meaning in the form of symbols used by Polynesian people in making a tattoo. The symbols in Maui's tattoos are arranged into an illustration that depicts information that can be conveyed to the audience.

(1) On the tattoo, Maui's right chest is trying to attract a sun with all his might using a giant hook that binds the sun and it can be seen that the sun is trying to fight in the opposite direction with a wrinkled facial expression. There are stickmen gathered at the bottom cheering. Beneath it is a triangular pattern lined up like a shark's tooth. (2) The tattoo on Maui's left chest is lifting a cloud that has a circular pattern, above it is a dark sky with stars, and a triangular pattern that resembles a bird flying in a row. At the bottom there is a pattern to form a hill or mountain that is used as a foothold. (3) The tattoo on Maui's abdomen above the tunnel carries a giant hook in his right and left hands carrying fireballs, as if showing it off to the fire god Tangaroa who is a fire guardian figure. He pointed at Maui annoyed by the action done with an expression full of anger. (4) In the upper left back tattoo illustration Maui is on a canoe pulling the island from the seabed using a giant fishing hook above the waves in a spiraling pattern with the sun in the upper left corner. (5) On the upper back tattoo, the location is on the seafront or the beach at night with calm waves and there is also a coconut tree or palm tree on the right. There is Maui's mother who is on the beach with her arms stretched out in front of her, throwing baby Maui into the sea. (6) The illustration of the tattoo on Maui's right back and the hook that was thrown and fell helplessly because it was blown away by a giant female demon that exceeded the island below, the demon has long hair and arms raised as if to blow furiously depicted on the woman's face. (7) The lower back tattoo illustration shows the figure of Maui holding a weapon in the form of a giant shining hook, below which there are people who raise their hands up as if worshiping or performing rituals for the human figure above with a fence between the two human images. It seems to show the difference between the two on the side there is a limiting wave pattern. The illustration draws a ritual that is often carried out and is a custom in an area not far from the sea or the coast of the rising waves.

### 3.2 Connotation

Meaning of connotation On Maui's left chest tattoo as a leader figure symbolized as Enata trying to slow the pace of the sun so that humans get more daylight and prosperity, in Polynesian culture the sun is a symbol that represents prosperity, passion, leadership, and

greatness. On Maui's tattoo there is also a Matau or fishing hook which is a symbol of promise, Hal is a representation of his promise to his mother complaining because the day is running faster and Maui promises to try to slow down the sun because he is sure of his strength, which is represented by a shark tooth symbol or in Bahasa Indonesia. Polynesian Niho Mano. The position of this tattoo is also found on the upper chest which has the meaning of respect, kindness, and sincerity to his parents.

The tattoo on the right chest shows that he is a protective figure for the population and society which is described by Maui as lifting clouds/waves that suppress humans and other living things so that they can move freely as they wish, in Polynesian culture Va'l means clouds/waves represent a death because the Polynesian people believed that people would not return to the sea. The symbol of the Ofai or terraced stone (hill) has a meaning of achievement, which means that Maui has succeeded in returning the sky to its original position, which is one of the achievements on the way. This is a form of Maui's kindness to help one another which is symbolized by a line of birds. The position of this tattoo is also found on the upper chest which has the meaning of respect, kindness, and sincerity to all people and living things around them.

The illustration on the belly has the meaning that Maui becomes a role model or guide for the Polynesian people who describe himself learning the art of making fire from Tangaroa who is a fire-creating demon, fire is a source of light that is used to illuminate dark nights which can be interpreted as guide or light in the dark. The demon Tangaroa is in the underworld or in Polynesian language called Lalotai, this is done by Maui because humans cannot see in the dark of night and he gives fire to humans, at night the night will be very dark without light for humans so Maui gives fire as light in at night for human use as a light source.

Maui as a baby figure has been considered a gift by gods and also humans which is symbolized by a coconut tree, a coconut tree in Polynesian culture has the meaning of blessing, abundance, and prosperity. But in the story Maui was born with an imperfect physique, it made her mother plan to throw Maui away by throwing her into the sea, this in medical science is a condition where a mother suffers from depression after giving birth because she has a disabled child and has a disability. worry too much, this is symbolized by the symbol character Enata or a woman who has messy hair and also Va'l, namely the sea / waves or in Indonesian is a resting place.

This tattoo has a connotation meaning as a form of failure which is symbolized by Matau which means a falling fishing hook. In Polynesian culture the symbol Matau has the meaning of prosperity, abundance and good luck. Maui was knocked down because he fought the giant Teka which was symbolized as Enata or a large human, in Polynesian culture Enata besides having the meaning of relative, it also has the meaning of being an opponent or enemy if the position is reversed. In this tattoo there is also a symbol of Ofai or hill here which can be interpreted as Maui has a different level with the Teka demon. This tattoo also shows Maui's death which is symbolized by Va'l in Indonesian which means through or waves that represent death.

The tattoo illustration depicts the power of Maui, the tattoo illustration shows Maui pulling an Ofai or hill, it can be interpreted that Maui during his life journey always tries to achieve something with his strength even though it is close to death, death here is symbolized by waves or Va'i. In the illustration there is also a symbol of Moau in Indonesian which means mountain, this symbol represents stability, direction and an island. The island that Maui Pulls then becomes the destination and direction for the sailors that he pulls for human prosperity which is symbolized by the symbol of the sun. In this tattoo there are also symbols of Enata and Matau which are connected to each other, this symbol represents the meaning of knowledge, intelligence and represents a promise.

The illustration on the lower back tattoo depicts the heyday represented by the Enata symbol and the connected matu, Maui is respected and worshiped by the Polynesian people, this is shown by the Enata symbol underneath, in Polynesian culture the Enata symbol is used to describe relatives or close people. Maui is respected for always protecting humans from evil things, this is symbolized by Tiki eyes which have the meaning of protection from all directions, and evil things are symbolized by waves or waves that represent death.

### 3.3 Myth

On the left chest tattoo forms a myth that the Maui figure is made a role model as a leader in society who provides prosperity and protection to the community.

On the right chest tattoo forms a myth in one's life that one must help each other, especially the strong to help the weak, by having mutual respect and sincerity.

The tattoo on the abdomen forms a myth that Maui is a role model for the Polynesian people, a brave Maui figure who can lead humans to a bright path.

On the back of the bag forms a myth that children are a gift, even though they have limitations, they still have to be appreciated and given love.

On the right back it forms a myth that the Polynesian people believe that Maui is a figure they worship because of his goodness and one of them is Maui's sacrifice for humans in order to live eternally but ultimately failed.

On the left back, it forms a myth that the Polynesians are able to sail the seas and are spread out thanks to Maui, who has created a brand of islands scattered in the Polynesian archipelago.

The lower back forms the myth of Maui so worshiped in its heyday where he was a leader, strong, kind, sincere, and also highly respected by the community. This is also still true to this day that Maui is a role model for the Polynesian people.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Tattoos on the Maui character show a denotative meaning regarding the achievements and journey of the demigod Maui's life. The connotative meaning of a Maui character tattoo is to convey the true character of Maui using tattoo symbols in Polynesian culture. Maui character tattoos create a myth in the form of a message that the creator wants to convey to the public about the positive value of the demi-god Maui mythology.

Suggestions are addressed to further researchers in order to be able to examine tattoos as a whole in order to reveal deeper and broader meanings, thus the message that the creator wants to convey will be clearly accepted by Polynesian people and outsiders.

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