

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher explained the related literature review in the study which consist of a review of related studies, concepts, and theoretical frameworks.

2.1 Review of Related Studies

This research review was taken from several related literature reviews from other theses as principles or comparisons in this research. As such, review literature can serve to support research problems and help design methodologies.

Wulandari (2019) examined the representation of women in Indonesian young adult novels, namely *Balada si Roy: Joe* by Gol A Gong and *Ruang Hampa Prada* by Vevina Aisyahra. Using a qualitative approach, the study analyzed how women were portrayed through beauty standards, behavior, and sexuality within narrative constructions. The findings revealed that female characters were frequently represented within patriarchal constraints and Wulandari traditional gender expectations. This study is relevant to the present research because both focus on the construction of women in narrative texts. However, Wulandari's research examined literary works in the form of novels, whereas the present study focuses on the film *Anora* (2024). In addition, this study applies Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze denotation, connotation, and myth in women's narratives and gender representation.

Lusiana and Lukito (2020) investigated the representation of sexual violence against women in the Indonesian film *Like and Share* using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. The study explored how visual and narrative signs

portrayed women as victims within a patriarchal culture. The findings indicated that various cinematic signs reinforced gender inequality, victim-blaming, and the marginalization of women. This study contributes to the understanding of women's representation in film. Nevertheless, it differs from the present research in terms of theoretical framework and research focus. While Lusiana and Lukito employed Peirce's semiotic theory to analyze sexual violence, the present study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to examine women's narratives and gender representation in *Anora* (2024).

Wanli, Loisa, and et al (2018) explored feminist representations in the Indonesian film *Di Balik 98* through narrative analysis using postmodern feminist theory and Gillespie's narrative structure. The study demonstrated how female characters challenge traditional gender roles and act as agents of social change. Unlike the present research, which employs Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze denotation, connotation, and myth in *Anora*, Wanli et al.'s study focuses on narrative structure and feminist agency. However, their findings regarding the ability of films to challenge patriarchal norms provide valuable insights for examining whether *Anora* empowers or constrains its female characters within a gendered social context.

Sugihastuti (2015) analyzed gender injustice in Indonesian popular novels through a feminist literary criticism approach. The study revealed that female characters were frequently portrayed as materialistic figures or sexual objects, while narratives often reinforced negative stereotypes through various forms of sexual and psychological violence. In contrast, the present research applies Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze the narrative construction of women in *Anora*,

focusing on denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings rather than feminist literary criticism. Nevertheless, Sugihastuti's discussion of gender dynamics in narrative media provides a useful foundation for understanding how cultural narratives may reinforce or challenge gender norms.

Stewart (2017) examined the representation of female sexuality in East German DEFA youth films through narrative analysis. The study explored the tension between socialist ideology and patriarchal gender expectations, demonstrating that female characters were often portrayed as complex individuals while still being constrained by traditional gender norms. Although Stewart's research focuses on a different cultural and historical context, it offers valuable perspectives on how narratives shape perceptions of gender and female identity. In comparison, the present study investigates the representation of women in *Anora* using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to uncover meanings embedded in visual images, dialogue, characterization, and narrative elements.

Based on the previous studies, it can be observed that most researchers have focused on women's representation, gender inequality, feminist perspectives, and semiotic analysis in literary and cinematic works. These studies provide important insights into how women are portrayed and how cultural values influence gender representation. However, limited research has specifically examined the narrative construction of women in *Anora* (2024) through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, particularly by analyzing denotation, connotation, and myth. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by exploring how women's narratives are constructed through dialogue, actions, behavior, and characterization, as well

as how women are represented through the meanings produced within the film's narrative and visual elements.

2.2 Concept

In this concept, this study aims to investigate and critically evaluate the formation of female narrative construction and gender representation in the film "*Anora*".

2.2.1 Narrative

Narrative in recent academic discussions is understood as a structured system for organizing events and meaning through storytelling. Narrative is not only used in literature but also functions as a cognitive and cultural framework that helps individuals interpret reality and communicate social values. According to Abbott (2008), narrative consists of interconnected events that are presented in a meaningful sequence to create understanding and emotional engagement for the audience. This shows that narrative is not merely storytelling but also a structured method for shaping perception and experience.

Furthermore, narrative plays an important role in reflecting and constructing cultural identity and social ideology. Herman (2009) explained that narrative helps individuals understand social reality by organizing experiences into meaningful stories influenced by historical and cultural contexts. This perspective emphasizes that narrative is embedded with social meaning and power relations, making it an important tool for analyzing media and literary texts.

2.2.2 Narrative Construction

Narrative construction in recent studies is understood as an important strategy for shaping meaning and emotions through plot, characters, and perspective. Piper, So, and Bamman (2021) emphasize that narrative theory can be combined with computational approaches to identify story patterns and examine how narrative structures influence readers' experiences. This approach shows that narrative is not only an aesthetic form but also a systematic framework that functions to frame reality and shape audience interpretation.

In addition, contemporary research highlights the role of narrative construction in shaping identity and social representation. Basaraba and Cauvin (2023) found that transmedia storytelling creates space for conflicting narratives, allowing audiences to negotiate meaning within historical and cultural contexts. This demonstrates that narrative construction functions not only to deliver stories but also as a social instrument that organizes discourse, broadens participation, and strengthens collective understanding.

2.2.3 Gender

Gender is widely understood as a socially constructed concept that refers to roles, behaviors, attributes, and expectations assigned by society based on perceived sex differences. Butler (1990) argues that gender is not a fixed identity but is performed through repeated social and cultural practices. This means gender is shaped through social interaction and cultural norms rather than purely biological factors.

In addition, gender is often used as an analytical framework to examine power relations and inequality in society. Connell (2009) states that gender relations are produced and reproduced through social institutions such as family, education, and media. This perspective highlights that gender roles are dynamic and continuously negotiated within social and cultural contexts, making gender an important concept in analyzing social representation in media and literature.

2.2.4 Gender Representation

Gender representation is the symbolic construction of gender roles, identities, and relations in media. It does not merely depict men or women but also conveys ideologies that influence how audiences perceive masculinity and femininity (Evans & Smalley, 2018). In this way, films and other media can reinforce traditional stereotypes or challenge them, playing an important role in shaping social understandings of gender.

In film studies, gender representation is identified through visuals, dialogue, and characterization. These elements reveal ideological choices about how women or men are portrayed (Ross, 2019). By analyzing how characters are framed by the camera, how they speak, and how their relationships unfold, researchers can determine whether a film reinforces conventional gender roles or offers alternative perspectives.

2.2.5 Anora

Anora is understood as a contemporary film narrative that explores themes of social class, identity, and interpersonal relationships. The film tells the story of a young woman working as a stripper who becomes involved in a sudden marriage

with the son of a wealthy Russian oligarch. Baker (2024) presented a realistic portrayal of social inequality, economic power, and personal autonomy through character-driven storytelling. This demonstrates how film narrative can reflect broader social structures and class dynamics in modern society.

Moreover, *Anora* can be analyzed through social and gender perspectives. Smith (2024) explained that contemporary cinema often portrays female characters navigating systems of economic and patriarchal power. Through its narrative structure and character development, *Anora* provides commentary on women's agency, vulnerability, and resistance within social hierarchies and cultural expectations. This makes the film relevant for discussions about narrative cinema and social representation.

2.2.6 Synopsis of Film ‘*Anora*’

“*Anora*”, a film directed by Sean Baker and winner of the Palme d’Or at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, presents a story of love, social class, and the search for identity through the character Ani “*Anora*” Mikheeva. Ani is portrayed as a young Russian immigrant living in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, a neighborhood known for its large community of people from Russia and other post-Soviet states. She works as an exotic dancer to support herself, symbolizing the struggles of the diaspora as they navigate the harsh realities of life in the United States while maintaining connections to cultural and linguistic traditions. Ani’s life changes dramatically when she meets Ivan, the son of a wealthy Russian oligarch, who initially hires her for one night. Their brief encounter develops into an impulsive romance that culminates in a sudden marriage in Las Vegas, resembling a modern

Cinderella tale within a harsh reality. However, Ani's happiness is soon threatened when Ivan's family discovers the marriage and attempts to annul it, judging her profession and social status as disgraceful. This conflict unfolds into a powerful reflection on the tension between love, personal freedom, social stigma, and the dominance of economic elites. As noted by Festival de Cannes (2024), Baker's realism offers a vivid portrait of an immigrant's struggle against powerful structures, while Murray and Rantala (2024) emphasize the film's ability to connect intimate narratives with broader social critique. The film's success at Cannes thus affirms its global recognition and the universality of its themes.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

In this section, writer explained the theories related to this research, namely how Roland Barthes' semiotic theory can be applied to understand the narrative construction of women in the film *'Anora'* and how this influences gender representation in the film.

2.3.1 Roland Barthes' Theory

Roland Barthes' semiotic theory offers a three-level model of meaning consisting of denotation, connotation, and myth. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a sign, what is directly shown through images or dialogue in a film. Connotation adds another layer, where cultural values, emotions, and social associations shape how audiences interpret the same signs beyond their surface appearance. Myth, as the deepest level, works ideologically by naturalizing social constructs so they appear unquestionable and universal (Barus, Aisyah, Siregar, & Risnawaty, 2025; Suwandi, 2021). This model provides a systematic framework

for analyzing narratives because it allows researchers to trace how visual elements, dialogue, and characterization move from descriptive details into symbolic and ideological representations. In this sense, Barthes' theory does not only uncover hidden cultural meanings but also serves as a methodological tool to examine how women's narratives and gender representation are constructed within film texts.

2.3.2 Narrative Construction

Narrative construction in film is closely related to visual elements, which serve as the primary means of conveying meaning. Lighting, composition, and camera angles create emotional nuances that guide the audience's interpretation. Bordwell and Thompson (2017) emphasize that cinematography is not merely a technical aspect but a representational strategy that reinforces themes and conflicts within the narrative.

In addition, dialogue functions as a device that drives the plot while also revealing identity and ideology. Herman (2018) explained that language in film can either reinforce stereotypes or challenge them through subversive forms of communication. Thus, dialogue does not only advance the storyline but also shapes the discursive framework that deepens narrative construction.

Characterization completes the process of narrative construction by presenting complex representations of human experience. According to Monaco (2020), film characters operate on both aesthetic and ideological levels, expressed through gestures, expressions, and personal development. In this way, characterization

becomes a crucial medium for articulating the social and cultural messages embedded within cinematic narratives.

2.3.3 Women in the Film

Women in film are frequently represented as visual signs imbued with layered meanings. Barthes' semiotic framework (Barthes, 2012), as further elaborated by Adiningsih and Hastasari (2020), highlights the role of denotation and connotation in shaping cultural myths around femininity. These signs function not only to reflect societal values but also to reinforce them through repetition and normalization. In many contemporary films, female characters are still positioned within the dynamics of the male gaze, emphasizing sexuality and visual appeal. Thus, the semiotic approach enables an understanding of these depictions not merely as descriptive imagery, but as ideological constructions that communicate implicit cultural messages about gender and power.

Beyond visual representation, women are often depicted through *sexist language and stereotypical roles* that reflect entrenched patriarchal norms. They are frequently portrayed as passive, vulnerable, or victimized figures within social and narrative structures (Adiningsih & Hastasari, 2020; Putri, 2024). For example, in *Marlina Si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak*, female characters encounter marginalization as well as verbal and physical violence. From a Barthesian perspective, such portrayals perpetuate the "patriarchal myth," reinforcing dominant ideologies through both narrative and visual sign systems.

Nevertheless, modern cinema increasingly presents women as *agents of change*, demonstrating autonomy and resilience. Female characters may begin as

sexualized objects but progressively assume central roles that challenge oppression and injustice (Putri, 2024). This duality illustrates that women in film can be understood as either *objectified beauty* or *feminist icons*, contingent on the cultural and narrative context shaping their representation. Applying Barthes' semiotic analysis provides a nuanced framework for decoding the ideological depth of this portrayal, highlighting the intersection of gender, culture, and cinematic narrative in constructing meaning.

2.3.4 Narrative Elements Constructed by Bordwell & Thompson (2017)

1. **Narration:** Narration is the way a story is presented in a film, which is how the story is delivered to the audience through its structure, plot, and other cinematic techniques. Narration can be linear or non-linear and can use various techniques such as flashbacks, flashforwards, and more.
2. **Story:** The story is the sequence of events that form the narrative in a film. A story can be fiction or non-fiction and can have a theme, characters, conflict, and resolution. The story in a film can be told through narration, dialogue, and action.
3. **Plot:** The plot encompasses the arrangement of events that constitutes the narrative in a film, which comprises the introduction, conflict, climax, and resolution.
4. **Character:** Characters are the entities that participate in the narrative. They may be protagonists, antagonists, or supporting figures who contribute to the progression of the plot and the expression of the themes.

5. **Setting:** The setting denotes the temporal and spatial context in which the narrative unfolds. The setting can significantly affect the atmosphere and narrative framework, as well as the interactions among characters.

2.3.5 Gender Representation

Gender representation refers to how media depicts the roles, identities, and relationships of men and women, influencing social perceptions of gender norms and expectations. In films, it appears through characterization, dialogue, interactions, and visual storytelling, which may reinforce traditional stereotypes, such as women as passive or supportive figures and men as dominant or heroic characters. Balanced gender representation is essential for promoting inclusive social understanding, reducing bias, and increasing critical awareness among audiences (Smith, Choueiti, & Pieper, 2020). By examining gender representation, researchers and viewers can understand how films shape social constructions of gender. Analyzing these portrayals provides insight into how media narratives influence perceptions of masculinity, femininity, and societal roles, highlighting the importance of fair and diverse representation in storytelling.

Identifying gender representation in films involves analyzing characters, dialogue, interactions, and narrative patterns. One approach is analyzing female characters to evaluate their presence, roles, and narrative significance (Lauzen, 2021). Trope analysis helps detect recurring patterns, such as the “damsel in distress” or the “strong male hero,” which reinforce traditional gender norms (Gala, Khursheed, Lerner, O’Connor, & Iyyer, 2020). Visual elements, including framing, camera angles, costume, and character placement, are also examined to assess agency and complexity. These methods allow researchers to determine

whether films reproduce or challenge gender stereotypes, providing insight into the social impact of representation. Overall, systematic analysis reveals how narrative and visual choices influence audience perceptions of gender roles.

2.3.6 Identification of Women's Representation in Narrative

Based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, films convey meaning through signs that operate on denotative, connotative, and mythic levels. In the film "*Anora*", the construction of women's narratives can be analyzed through visual elements, dialogue, and characterization, which together shape specific gender images. Visual elements such as lighting, camera angles, and costume convey connotative messages about women's social positions, often emphasizing vulnerability or domestic roles. Dialogue that underscores dependence on men or normalizes gender stereotypes reinforces traditional perceptions. Characterization, including the decisions and interactions of female characters, functions as a medium to express social ideologies that limit women's roles, as highlighted by Sakinah (2024) and Fanaqi (2025). This analysis contributes to answering the first research question regarding how women's narratives are constructed through visual elements, dialogue, and characterization.

Barthes' theory also provides a lens for interpreting the mythic layer within narratives, which reflects ideologies hidden beneath connotative meanings. In "*Anora*", the denotative aspects—such as the actions or dialogue of female characters—can be interpreted connotatively as reflections of gender norms. Myth emerges when the depiction of women consistently reinforces traditional roles such as caregiver, supporter, or passive figure, thereby reproducing patriarchal ideology. This perspective, as discussed by Wardah (2022), enables researchers to

assess not only what women do in the story but also how their social meanings are constructed and communicated through visual and linguistic media. In other words, Barthes' framework provides a way to understand gender representation on both ideological and cultural levels while addressing the second research question about how gender is represented in the narrative.

Furthermore, gender representation in "*Anora*" can also be understood through the interaction between narrative perspective and character power. Barthes emphasizes that cinematic signs—including lighting, costume, and dialogue—function as carriers of ideology that shape audience perception. The placement of female characters in specific spaces, the selection of colors, and the delivery of dialogue all communicate impressions of dominance or subordination. This semiotic analysis, as shown in the works of Sakinah (2024), Fanaqi (2025), and Wardah (2022), allows researchers to identify how the film constructs and conveys gender narratives, as well as how women's representation may affirm or challenge social norms. Thus, Barthes' theory serves as an essential tool for understanding the construction of women's narratives and gender representation in "*Anora*".

2.3.7 Gender Theory

Gender theory provides an essential foundation for understanding how gender identities, roles, and power relations are constructed and represented within film narratives. Fundamentally, gender is understood not as a biological fact but as a social and cultural construct shaped by historical, ideological, and institutional forces (Butler, 1990). This perspective emphasizes that femininity and

masculinity are produced through repeated social practices, behaviors, and discourses that become normalized over time.

One of the central frameworks in gender theory is feminist theory, which highlights how patriarchal systems reinforce unequal power relations between men and women. Liberal feminism, as explained by Tong (2009), focuses on equal opportunities and advocates for fair representation as well as greater agency for women in media. Radical feminism, according to Firestone (1970), views patriarchy as a fundamental structural force and argues that media frequently reproduces oppression through stereotypical or sexualized portrayals of women. Postmodern feminism, drawing from Butler (1990), challenges any fixed or essential notion of womanhood and maintains that identity is fluid, performative, and shaped by intersecting categories such as class, ethnicity, and sexuality.

In film studies, one influential concept associated with gender theory is the male gaze introduced by Laura Mulvey (1975). This concept argues that mainstream cinema often frames women through a visual perspective that objectifies them, aligning the camera with heterosexual male desire. Through this gaze, women become passive subjects of visual pleasure rather than active agents within the narrative. This theory is particularly relevant to *Anora*, as the film consciously challenges and subverts objectifying portrayals of sex workers by presenting Ani's experiences from her own perspective rather than through voyeuristic framing.

Furthermore, gender role theory (Eagly, 1987) explains how societal expectations shape behaviors associated with masculinity and femininity. Media

often reinforces these expectations by depicting women as emotional, dependent, or domestic, and men as rational, dominant, or authoritative. By analyzing Anora through this lens, the researcher can assess whether the film reproduces or disrupts traditional gender norms through its characterization, dialogue, and visual storytelling.

Overall, gender theory serves as a critical tool for examining how Anora constructs and communicates meanings related to femininity, masculinity, and power. It allows researchers to uncover ideological messages embedded in the narrative and to understand how the representation of gender contributes to wider cultural discourses.

2.3.8 Story

Story in film is the sequence of events that forms the narrative. It includes the themes, characters, conflicts, and resolutions conveyed through narration, dialogue, and action, whether in fictional or non-fictional form (Bordwell & Thompson, 2017). A story serves to connect the audience with human experience through an organized narrative structure, often reflecting cultural or moral values (Ryan, 2015). Thus, the story is the core of a film, which not only entertains but also stimulates the thoughts and emotions of the audience.

2.3.9 Plot

The plot within a film serves as a fundamental component that shapes the narrative surrounding women. Bordwell and Thompson (2017) assert that narrative structure not only delineates the order of events but also affects the audience's perception of characters. In numerous films, women are frequently

relegated to secondary roles or act as catalysts for male characters' conflicts. This tendency can result in a limited representation of women's experiences, where they are merely depicted as objects within the storyline. In contrast, when the plot positions women in more proactive roles, it can enhance the audience's understanding of the intricacies and resilience of women across various contexts.

2.3.10 Character

Female characters in cinema are often influenced by entrenched stereotypes. Gill (2007) notes that many films portray women through conventional archetypes such as mothers, lovers, or victims, which constrains their representation. These characters often lack emotional depth or substantial development, diminishing the likelihood of the audience forming an emotional connection with them. Nevertheless, when films depict female characters with greater complexity-such as heroines who challenge societal norms-they can serve as powerful and inspiring role models for viewers. Consequently, fostering more diverse and authentic characterizations can aid in transforming prevailing narratives.

2.3.11 Setting

The setting of a film plays a crucial role in shaping the narrative construction of women. McRobbie (2004) highlights that the physical and social contexts in which female characters operate can affect their roles within the story. For example, environments that underscore gender inequality can exacerbate the obstacles faced by female characters, whereas settings that promote freedom and empowerment can facilitate character development. A well-crafted setting can offer a richer context for female characters, enabling them to engage with their

surroundings in more significant ways. Therefore, examining the setting in films is essential for comprehending how women's narratives are constructed and expressed.

2.3.12 Uniqueness of the Film '*Anora*'

The film *Anora* (2024) possesses several unique characteristics that distinguish it from other contemporary works addressing gender, class, and marginalized identities. One of its key strengths lies in Sean Baker's signature realist style, which integrates non-professional actors, handheld cinematography, and location-based shooting to create a naturalistic and immersive narrative (Bordwell & Thompson, 2017; Monaco, 2020). Baker's filmmaking approach emphasizes authenticity, particularly in portraying the lives of individuals who exist on the margins of society, such as sex workers, immigrants, and working-class communities. This realism contributes significantly to the film's emotional depth and narrative intensity.

In terms of popularity, *Anora* achieved international recognition after winning the Palme d'Or at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, marking Baker's rise as a prominent figure in global cinema. The film received critical acclaim for its bold depiction of immigrant struggles, power relations, and gendered vulnerabilities within a capitalist society (Festival de Cannes, 2024; Murray & Rantala, 2024). Such recognition underscores its importance as a cultural artifact that resonates with diverse audiences.

The uniqueness of *Anora* is also reflected in its characterization. Ani, the protagonist, is portrayed with complex layers that combine resilience,

vulnerability, agency, and emotional depth. Her character challenges common stereotypes of sex workers, presenting a woman who navigates structural oppression while maintaining a strong sense of autonomy (Gill, 2007; Hooks, 2000). Baker's nuanced approach positions Ani not merely as a victim but as a dynamic figure negotiating survival in a system defined by power and economic inequality.

Furthermore, the plot structure of *Anora* blends comedic elements with social realism, creating a hybrid genre that enhances its thematic richness. Unlike traditional romantic or drama films, *Anora* intertwines humor, tragedy, and socio-political critique, reflecting what Bordwell (2008) describes as narrative complexity, in which storytelling deviates from conventional patterns to highlight deeper ideological tensions.

This uniqueness, seen through its global recognition, realist aesthetic, multi-dimensional characterization, and innovative narrative structure, reinforces *Anora* as a compelling text for analyzing narrative construction and gender representation.

2.4 Semiotics Theory

Roland Barthes, as cited in Pratama (2018), developed a semiotic framework that emphasizes the concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth to interpret signs within cultural and social contexts. Denotation refers to the literal, surface-level meaning of a sign, while connotation encompasses the additional, culturally influenced meanings that a sign may evoke. Myth, as the highest level of

signification, transforms these meanings into naturalized cultural narratives that shape societal beliefs. For instance, a simple image of a rose (denotation) may carry connotations of love or passion and, at the mythical level, reinforce romantic ideals in society. Barthes' theory highlights how signs are not merely representations but are embedded with ideological implications that influence perception and behavior. Through this layered analysis, Barthes demonstrates how cultural artifacts perpetuate dominant ideologies by presenting constructed meanings as natural truths.

Barthes' semiotic theory, as discussed in Sari (2019), revolves around the interplay of denotation, connotation, and myth to decode the meanings embedded in signs. Denotation provides the straightforward, objective description of a sign, such as a photograph of a flag representing a nation. Connotation adds subjective, socio-cultural interpretations, like patriotism or national pride, while myth elevates these meanings into widely accepted cultural narratives that seem self-evident (Widodo, 2020). For example, an advertisement featuring a family dining together may denote a meal but connote warmth and togetherness, with the myth reinforcing traditional family values as universal truths. Barthes' framework reveals how signs manipulate perceptions by embedding ideological messages within everyday objects, encouraging individuals to accept constructed realities without questioning their cultural or historical origins.

2.4.1 Denotation

According to Barthes, denotation refers to the literal or surface meaning of elements in a text or media, observable explicitly without additional interpretation

(Stam, 2015). In the film *“Anora”*, denotation is represented through visual elements, dialogue, and characterization of female characters. For instance, the character Ani is depicted wearing glamorous clothing and heavy makeup while working as a sex worker, which literally indicates her profession and social status. Close-up shots of Ani’s facial expressions during client interactions convey anxiety and tension, while camera angles highlight the hierarchy between Ani and wealthy male clients. Ani’s dialogue mentioning societal pressure to always appear attractive, and her interactions with other female characters discussing family responsibilities, also constitute denotative elements. Ani’s mother emphasizing female obedience to domestic norms further reinforces literal gender representation. As Barthes (1977) emphasizes, denotative analysis allows researchers to identify how women are explicitly portrayed and how their narratives are constructed through visuals, dialogue, and characterization. Denotation thus serves as a solid foundation for further interpretation of implied meanings and gender ideology, addressing the first research question on how female narratives are constructed through visual and verbal elements.

2.4.2 Connotation

Connotation refers to the additional or implied meaning that emerges after analyzing the literal meaning, as Barthes (1977) explains in his semiotic framework. In *“Anora”*, connotation is evident when viewers interpret Ani’s identity, emotions, and roles beyond literal facts. For example, the scene where Ani looks at a mirror before meeting a client, with soft lighting and close-up shots, implies vulnerability and insecurity. Dialogue between Ani and her friend about the pressure to look attractive suggests that women are judged based on

appearance and adherence to social norms. Ani's mother emphasizing domestic roles further implies that women should conform to traditional expectations. Ani's gestures, expressions, and interactions with men reinforce her subordinate position. As Mulvey (2014) highlights, connotative analysis helps researchers understand how film constructs audience perception of female identity, gender stereotypes, and social roles that are not explicitly stated in dialogue. This approach also addresses both research questions, explaining how female narratives are implicitly constructed and how gender representation is portrayed through implied social and cultural messages.

2.4.3 Myth

Myth represents the ideological layer that emerges from connotation and works to normalize stereotypes, values, and social norms, as Barthes (1977) explains in his semiotic theory. In "*Anora*", myth becomes evident when Ani is consistently depicted as submitting to decisions made by economically powerful men. For instance, the scene where Ani accepts a client's instructions without objection implies the ideology that women should be passive. Dialogue emphasizing the prioritization of family over personal aspirations constructs a myth of the "*ideal woman*" within a patriarchal society. Scenes that place Ani in domestic spaces while discussing personal issues further reinforce social norms that confine women to emotional and domestic spheres. As Berger (2013) notes, myth analysis reveals how film does not merely represent reality but actively shapes and sustains gender ideology. This is particularly visible in "*Anora*", where female identity is presented within boundaries that appear natural but are ideologically constructed. Similarly, Mulvey (2014) highlights how cinematic

conventions reinforce dominant ideologies through repetition, positioning women as objects of meaning rather than agents of action. This analytical approach addresses the second research question regarding gender representation in narrative, by connecting literal, implied, and ideological meanings to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's roles and positions as represented in the film.