

### A Semiotic Analysis of Arthur's King Journey in Guy Ritchie's *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* (2017) Film

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#### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji makna simbolik perjalanan Arthur menjadi raja dalam film *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* (2017) karya Guy Ritchie. Latar belakang penelitian menyoroti pentingnya simbol dalam budaya dan media serta peran pendekatan semiotik untuk menafsirkan makna tersirat dalam film tersebut. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis tanda-tanda yang mencerminkan transformasi Arthur menjadi raja yang sah. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan semiotik Roland Barthes melalui sistem signifikasi: denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi elemen visual, audio, dan dialog dalam film. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 15 tanda dalam perjalanan Arthur menuju penemuan jati diri sebagai raja, yang tercermin melalui tanda-tanda ini yang terdiri dari objek, hewan, pengalaman mental, orang, dan mitos yang menyertai transformasi emosional dan spiritualnya hingga ia menjadi raja. 11 tanda utama yaitu *The Sword in the Stone* or *Excalibur*, *Water*, *Street*, *Nightmare*, *Prostitutes*, *Eagle*, *The Darklands*, *Vision*, *Lady of the Lake*, *The Mage*, dan *The Round Table*. Serta 4 tanda pendukung yaitu *Snake*, *Giant Bat*, *Giant Rats*, dan *Giant Wolfs*. Tanda-tanda tersebut mewakili konsep yang membentuk keseluruhan perjalanan Arthur menjadi Raja. Arthur yang tumbuh di jalanan berusaha untuk bebas dari bayang-bayang masa lalunya yang kelam dan tekanan takdir yang belum ia pahami.

**Kata kunci:** Arthur, Tanda, Denotatif, Konotatif, Mitos, Penandaan

#### ABSTRACT

This research examined the symbolic meanings of Arthur's journey to becoming king in the film *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* (2017) by Guy Ritchie. The background of this research highlighted the importance of symbols in culture and media, as well as the role of semiotic approaches in interpreting the implied meanings within the film. The purpose of this research is to analyze the signs that reflect Arthur's transformation into the rightful king. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method with a semiotic approach as proposed by Roland Barthes through the system of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth. Data were collected through the observation of visual, audio, and utterance elements in the film. The research findings indicated that there are 15 signs in Arthur's journey towards self-discovery as king that are reflected through these signs, which consist of objects, animals, mental experiences, people, and myths that accompanied his emotional and spiritual transformation until he became king. The 11 main signs include *The Sword in the Stone* or *Excalibur*, *Water*, *Street*, *Nightmare*, *Prostitutes*, *Eagle*, *The Darklands*, *Vision*, *Lady of the Lake*, *The Mage*, and *The Round Table*. Additionally, there are 4 supporting signs: *Snake*, *Giant Bat*, *Giant Rats*, and *Giant Wolf*. These signs represent the concepts that shaped the entirety of Arthur's journey to becoming king. Arthur, who grew up on the streets, strives to free himself from the shadows of his dark past and the pressure of a destiny he has yet to understand.

**Keywords:** Arthur, Sign, Denotative, Connotative, Myth, Signification

## A. INTRODUCTION

Signs and symbols have long been an important part of human communication, because meaning is conveyed not just through spoken or written language but also through visual and symbolic forms. In semiotics studies, a sign is understood as an element that carries a certain meaning according to the knowledge, values, and social experiences of a community. As every cultural practice carries its own meaning, signs often function beyond their physical form, representing a particular concept through social process (Siregar, 2022).

Ferdinand de Saussure is known as the father of modern linguistics, explaining how meaning is symbolically constructed within a language system. His semiotic system of structured signs enables us to uncover the meaning it represents. Meanwhile, Charles Sanders Peirce proposed his semiotic theory through his triadic model of representamen, object, and interpretant, emphasizing semiosis as a continuous process of meaning-making. This model has been used to examine how signs convey identity, gender equality, and the importance of self-discovery in contemporary media (Astari & Alamsyah, 2024).

Roland Barthes developed Saussure's semiotics theory by emphasizing the signification system through a cultural approach. His semiotic theory is essential to reveal meaning in various cultural texts, including films, advertisements, and literary works (Barus et al., 2025). In Barthes' view, signs operate on two levels of meaning: denotation refers to a literal and general meaning, and connotation refers to a cultural meaning that arises from a broader social context (Siregar, 2022). According to Fachrezy and Nafsika (2025), Barthes' semiotic approach reinforces how visual elements in signs represent cultural, ideological, and internal conflict in a narrative.

Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is an appropriate approach for research aimed at uncovering how Arthur's journey toward becoming king is reflected through the signs that appear in the film. Its primary purpose is to explain the meaning of the signs associated with Arthur's journey toward his destiny as king. This study serves as an application of Barthes' system of signs in film studies, emphasizing that human society is rich with signs that carry social, cultural, and spiritual meanings. Furthermore, this research is expected to assist readers and other researchers in understanding how signs function in visual literary works such as films and serve as a reference for semiotic studies in other literary genres. Due to the broad scope and symbolic richness of this study, the analysis is limited to signs directly related to Arthur's journey as the central narrative toward becoming king.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Film as Literature

Films are considered a type of literary work because they share similarities in aesthetic aspects and in conveying ideology, beliefs, values, culture, or other aspects of human thought through creative expression. (Totawad, 2019). Films are different from literary works that rely on language as a communication tool, as they combine visual and audio elements, creating a multisensory experience and allowing for more collective interpretation (Petrie & Boggs, 2012), while still employing narrative structures such as plot. According to Freytag in Griffith (2011), a plot has five main stages: exposition, which gives general information and introductions, rising action that highlights the start of the conflict, climax with tension and conflict resolution, falling action that eases the tension, and resolution where the conflict gets sorted out. This point is that

film can be examined through semiotics, the study of signs derived from the Greek term *sēmeion*, which means a sign or symbol that represents something beyond itself (Siregar, 2022). Signs operate within an open system of communication shaped by cultural meanings and mental associations (Hall, 1997), and according to Saussure's theory, each sign consists of a signifier (form) and a signified (concept), which together function as a system of signification to reveal messages and meanings represented in films (Barus et al., 2025).

## 2. Semiotics of Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes later developed Saussure's semiotic ideas into a broader framework by introducing two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. Denotation is the literal or objective meaning of a sign, as commonly understood within a culture. Connotation is the additional meaning that arises from cultural, ideological, social, political, or certain value systems. Barthes explained that signs within a culture not only convey direct messages but also create myths, such as collective beliefs or ideologies built through a system of signs (Barus et al., 2025). For example, in an image of a French magazine, Paris Match, a young black male soldier saluting the French flag denotes patriotism at the denotative level, but at the connotative level, the image implies French imperialism or national power over a colonized African (Hall, 1997). Barthes' theory helps narrow the scope of meaning, thereby facilitating the revelation of how signs operate visually as representations of ideology and culture.

## 3. Step to Recognize a Sign

In film analysis, signs can be mere signs without meaning and signs with symbolic value; these signs play a crucial role in forming a deeper meaning beyond the visible narrative. According to Petrie and Boggs (2012), signs or symbols in films can be recognized through the following aspects:

- a. Repetition refers to the recurring appearance of an object or motif that signifies symbolic value (Petrie and Boggs, 2012).
- b. Value by the character is signified through displays of emotional attachment or special attention to an object (Petrie and Boggs, 2012).
- c. Context relates to the relationship of signs with cultural background, setting, or time (Petrie and Boggs, 2012).
- d. Visual, auditory, and musical emphasis, such as lighting, camera angles, color, or audio that strengthened the importance of the sign (Petrie and Boggs, 2012).
- e. The pattern or symbolic development, where the sign may seem simple at first, but it gains deeper meaning as the film progresses (Petrie and Boggs, 2012).
- f. Symbolic value in conflict, which depicts the opposition of abstract concepts such as good versus evil or power versus freedom (Petrie and Boggs, 2012).
- g. Visual metaphor, which involves indirectly comparing two different things to convey a deeper meaning and enhance symbolism (Petrie and Boggs, 2012).

## 4. Previous Studies

Several previous studies have applied Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to analyze signs in different media and cultural contexts as the foundation of this research. Fadhilah (2022) studied *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*, identifying symbols that represent Bilal bin Rabbah's journey of faith against slavery within the context of Islamic history. Limbong (2023) analyzed *All Too Well: The*

*Short Film* to reveal signs symbolizing love, loss, and emotional vulnerability in Taylor Swift's personal narrative. Siregar (2022) examined the Betawi wedding tradition *Palang Pintu*, uncovering cultural signs that reflect Islamic values and local identity. Although these studies employ a descriptive qualitative approach and Barthes' semiotic framework, their objects and cultural focuses differ. In contrast, this study analyzes a Western epic fantasy film, emphasizing symbolic representations of Arthur's journey to the throne within a mythological narrative.

## C. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the semiotic signs present in Guy Ritchie's film *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* (2017). This approach was chosen because it provides an in-depth understanding of the meanings contained within a cultural phenomenon through interpretation, observation, and contextual description. The qualitative method is employed to interpret the meanings of signs in the film, drawing on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which emphasizes the system of signification in the formation of cultural meanings.

The object of this research is the film itself, which has a duration of 126 minutes and is available on the streaming platform MAX. The primary data sources for this study encompass the visual, audio, and speech elements related to the characters and signs in Arthur's journey toward his destiny as king. The researcher collected data through observation techniques by repeatedly watching the film and carefully examining it. Subsequently, the researcher highlighted cinematic elements that presented meaningful signs and classified the data into three main categories: visual signs, auditory signs, and verbal signs (speech). Each identified sign was then categorized based on its relevance to Arthur's journey according to Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and placed in a data table displaying the visual and audio narrative context elements.

In analyzing the data, the researcher conducted three stages according to the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and distinguished the data by focusing on visual, audio, or utterances relevant to the signs. The data display stage was carried out by presenting the simplified data table before arranged in Roland Barthes' system of signification, which includes three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. In this process, each sign was analyzed based on the relationship between the signifier and the signified, as well as how its meaning developed into a myth system representing certain ideologies. In the final stage, conclusion and verification were drawn by reviewing the entire analysis to ensure intersubjective consensus and confirming the validity of the findings through the alignment between the signs, context, and the semiotic theory applied.

## D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study identifies several findings and subsequently systematically discusses them. Based on various types of data, eleven main signs and four supporting signs were found that had significance in Arthur's journey to his throne. Above all the 15 signs, *The Sword in the Stone* or *Excalibur*, *Water*, *The Darklands*, *The Snake*, *Vision*, *Lady of the Lake*, and *The Mage*, become the most influential signs that reflect Arthur's spiritual journey toward leadership. The following sections present and argue these points.

## 1. The Sword in the Stone or Excalibur

**Table 1. Arthur pulled the sword from the stone (31:38 - 32:12)**

Visual Key Element	Reinforced with a slow-mo effect, the sword drawn by Arthur radiated a bright light, causing the animals to become uneasy, and the ground around him trembled like a minor earthquake.
Audio	<i>The Born King</i> soundtrack by Daniel Pemberton.
Tone and Rhythm	Melancholic, Dramatic, Uplifting, Epic, Powerful, Hopeful, Accelerating.

### a. Denotation

Based on the Britannica (n.d.), The Sword in the Stone or Excalibur is represented as a special sword embedded in a stone and given by the Lady of the Lake.

### b. Connotation

A special sword that is embedded in a stone, forged by Merlin, and gifted by the Lady of the Lake, possessing great power in the hands of a chosen individual. This sword is not merely a weapon, but a symbol of greatness and legitimacy that only Arthur is worthy of wielding divine power through great responsibility and sacrifice. Excalibur represents the affirmation of the true identity of a king.

### c. Myth

Excalibur symbolizes the divine authority of kingship, where true power is not inherited through worldly means but is established by divine will. This parallels the concept of Christ's leadership, which is spiritual and salvific, with His authority deriving from God's will and transcending worldly structures of power (Revelation 17:14). Guy Ritchie (2017) also interprets the drawing of the sword as a symbol of the rediscovery of personal strength and authority. Thus, Excalibur becomes a myth of spiritual leadership, where power arises from the alignment of destiny, inner strength, and the will of God.

## 2. Water

**Table 2. Young Arthur escaped assassination and was lost in the river (10:53 – 11:55)**

Visual Key Element	The establishing shot depicts a burning Camelot as a result of a coup during the night. The camera then shifts to a young Arthur being swept down a river in a small boat. With a high-angle and long shot, the boat appears to be carried by the current until it eventually brings Arthur to the prostitutes in Londinium as day begins to break.
Audio	<i>King Arthur: Legend of the Sword</i> soundtrack by Daniel Pemberton.
Tone and Rhythm	Suspenseful, Dramatic, Uplifting, Epic, Powerful, Hopeful, Steady.

### a. Denotation

Based on Collins Dictionary (n.d.), water is defined as a clear and thin liquid that all animals and humans need to live; it is colorless and tasteless when pure. It falls from clouds as rain and flows into rivers and the sea.

### b. Connotation

Water represents the power of the cosmic guardian who participates in the salvation of Arthur before and after he is chosen as a leader by guiding, testing, and healing his soul through transformative moments.

### c. Myth

Water embodies a symbolic narrative about the cosmic cycle that perpetually circulates, called Life, the transcendental force that governs the balance between endings and beginnings, destruction and resurrection. The parallel between Arthur's journey and the Christian narrative of Moses in the Book of Exodus reinforces that water serves as an instrument of salvation as well as the beginning of destiny, representing a leader destined to liberate his people from oppression.

## 3. The Darklands

**Table 7. The Darklands world visualization (51:34 - 56:43 )**

Visual Key Element	Most often using high-angle shots, Arthur is depicted in dark, silent, and mysterious regions, isolated from civilization and filled with terrifying creatures not found in the world of ordinary humans. The landscape comprises dead forests, misty ravines, large caves of ancient architectural ruins, and giant bones, as well as human remains, particularly skulls, scattered extensively. The sky above is perpetually overcast, as if to prevent sunlight from ever touching the ground.
Audio	<i>The Darklands</i> soundtrack by Daniel Pemberton.
Tone and Rhythm	Dark, Suspenseful, Tense, Haunting, Mysterious, Scary, Depressing, Accelerating, Pulsating, and Chaotic

### a. Denotation

The Darklands represent the same concept of Otherworld or Avalon, a liminal space separate from the human realm but often intersecting with it, a place inhabited by supernatural beings, ancestral spirits, fairies, witches, giants, and forces of nature that transcend the laws of the ordinary world. A place that can only be accessed for a spiritual journey or a grand destiny (Daimler, 2024).

### b. Connotation

The Darkland illustrates Arthur's internal journey filled with challenges, fears, and struggles against himself. A mystical realm where trials and challenges need to be endured as part of a spiritual journey and self-discovery. A series of inner consciousness represented like animals (snake), giant creatures (bats, rats, wolves), ancient ruins, and a dark, foreboding atmosphere. All these elements create an image that Arthur is undergoing a process of soul cleansing and confrontation with his dark side, as a prerequisite for creating space for self-acceptance of his destiny and the new role that has arrived at his doorstep.

### c. Myth

The Darklands symbolized a process of purification and rebirth of the self. This place functions as a spiritual field where Arthur undergoes a symbolic death of his old identity to be reborn as a new figure worthy of wielding Excalibur and leading his people. This myth bears similarities to Jesus being tested in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11), teaching that true leadership requires suffering, the courage to confront one's deepest fears, and full awareness of one's identity and responsibilities. Arthur also faces suffering and inner struggles as a spiritual test toward true leadership. The wilderness and the Darklands symbolize a liminal space for the process of self-awareness, where leadership necessitates the courage to confront fear and solitude to discover a deeper meaning in life.

This is also in line with Guy Ritchie's (2017) view, *The Darklands* depicts the confrontation of humans with the demons of their own making, whether it be trauma, fear, insecurity, or ego. Arthur's battle is not only physical but also spiritual, a struggle to release dependence on recognition and status to find an authentic self. Through the transmutation of values, the dark side within him is not destroyed but transformed into new virtues. Thus, *The Darklands* becomes a symbol of existential transformation that gives rise to Arthur as a mature leader aware of his humanity.

#### 4. Snake

**Table 8. A Snake is chasing Arthur in The Darklands (51:44 – 51:52)**

Visual Key Element	Arthur was startled by the appearance of a snake that hissed and quickly pursued him into the cave. The snake drew closer while attempting to attack, causing Arthur to fall and collapse in panic.
Audio	<i>The Darklands</i> soundtrack by Daniel Pemberton.
Tone and Rhythm	Dark, Suspenseful, Tense, Haunting, Mysterious, Scary, Depressing, Accelerating, Pulsating, and Chaotic

##### a. Denotation

Based on Collins Dictionary (n.d.), the denotative meaning of snake is defined as a long, thin reptile that has scales on its skin and no legs.

##### b. Connotation

The snake is depicted as a dangerous animal that instills fear in Arthur. The snake represents fear, weakness, and his unpreparedness to accept his destiny as king, while also reflecting trauma and feelings of unworthiness stemming from his past. However, as the film's narrative progresses, the connotative meaning of the snake transforms. From merely being a symbol of fear in the *Darklands*, the snake evolves into a symbol of hidden strength, rebellion, and liberation. The snake, which later protects Arthur and destroys Vortigern's army, symbolizes the inner power that has long been suppressed within him. This power is not evil but rather a wild instinct and courage to defy tyranny, both internally and externally. Thus, the snake becomes a symbol of Arthur's inner strength, freeing him from the shackles of self-doubt as well as Vortigern's oppression, while also reflecting the cunning and rebellious nature that ultimately shapes him into a true leader.

##### c. Myth

The snake symbolized Arthur's identity as Pendragon. This concept is derived from Christian beliefs, where the serpent in the Book of Genesis and in the Book of Revelation is called the great dragon. And Arthur's last name, Pendragon, literally means head of the dragon in Celtic (Collins, n.d.). Thus, accepting the snake is tantamount to accepting his title as the descendant of the rightful Uther Pendragon, the sovereign heir who reclaimed his kingdom by acknowledging all his shortcomings as a human and the struggle to realize his inherent potential. The destiny of Arthur Pendragon bears a resemblance to Jesus in Christian belief. Arthur, too, must confront the serpent as a symbol of his journey to acknowledge his shortcomings and confront trials to fulfill his great destiny, as Jesus also fully embraced His humanity, learning obedience through suffering (Hebrews 5:8). Although without sin, Jesus experienced human weakness and struggles in the process of fulfilling the Father's will. Thus, Arthur's journey

reflects Christ's human struggle: both accept their own limitations while steadfastly striving to accomplish the divine destiny predetermined for them.

## 5. Vision

**Table 12. Arthur's last vision during the final fight with Vortigern (01:48:52 01:52:35)**

Visual Key Element	A close-up shot of Arthur got knocked out by Vortigern, with one hand holding Excalibur. A flash cutting and intercutting flashbacks to Arthur's tragic past, where Uther was defeated by Vortigern, followed by a close-up of young Arthur. Arthur views the past not from a third-person perspective but as part of the events themselves. And then followed by a conversation between Uther and Vortigern before concluding with a close-up shot of Uther gazing intently at Arthur, who has closed his eyes, while delivering a message expressed through a voiceover without showing it being articulated by his lips. A high-angle shot focuses on Excalibur as it is thrown upward before being lodged into Uther, only to be stopped by Arthur in the end. This is then accompanied by a close-up shot of them, with Arthur looking at Uther in confusion, fear, and sadness. Uther, on the other hand, gazes at Arthur with a more stable and assured expression. The scene then shifts to Arthur waking from his unconsciousness, with Excalibur glowing even with just one hand. It concludes with a close-up shot and <u>unnatural camera movement depicting the epic battle between him and Vortigern</u> .
Audio	Without a soundtrack during the vision segment, only the sounds of battle, the surroundings, and conversation. This is followed by <i>The Power of Excalibur</i> by Daniel Pemberton after awakening from the vision.
Tone and Rhythm	Epic, Aggressive, Exciting, Magical, Hopeful, Dramatic, Accelerate, Fast, Pulsating, and Decelerate.

### a. Denotation

Based on Collins Dictionary (n.d.), vision is defined as a mental picture of a possible situation or state of affairs, in which you imagine how things might be different from the way they are now.

### b. Connotation

Vision is not only understood as a mental image, but also as a supernatural mechanism that connects Arthur with his past, awakening his awareness of his true self, and guiding him to accept his destiny as the chosen king. Vision becomes a bridge between time, memory, and destiny, signifying the process of Arthur's self-formation beyond ordinary experiences. The meanings represented through vision include truth as a revelation of hidden past realities, acceptance as the courage to face old wounds, legacy through his father, enlightenment when, after experiencing the vision, Arthur rises for the benefit of the people, and self-discovery as the result of an inner journey.

### c. Myth

Vision shapes a broader cultural and ideological construct in the form of revelation. In this context, vision functions as a myth that conveys that true power does not stem from physical ability, but from the process of inner enlightenment, when one becomes aware of their true self, destiny, and role in life. In this film, such a revelation serves as a form of divine legitimacy for Arthur's leadership. This aligns with the concept of revelation in other contexts, especially within Christian belief, where generally every prophet receives an encounter with God through visions in dreams as a means of divine communication, except for Moses, who experienced revelation

directly from God. (Numbers 12:5-8).

## 6. Lady of the Lake

**Table 13. Lady of the Lake intervened as Arthur tried to escape his destiny  
(01:31:40 – 01:32:50)**

Visual Key Element	A close-up of Excalibur being grasped by the hand of the Lady of the Lake. The camera focuses on an exhausted Arthur in the mud, his hand is reached by the Lady of the Lake and pulled into it. And then, the background transitions to a lake, where Arthur panics and tries to escape. A wide shot shows Arthur with the Lady of the Lake in the lake in the middle center frame, followed by a close-up of the Lady's face as she speaks to him. Arthur then briefly closes his eyes, transitioning to a vision of the destruction of Londinium, with the Lady of the Lake cradling a deceased child. Arthur opens his eyes and returns to the lake. A close-up shot of the Lady of the Lake delivers her message before Arthur runs out of breath and closes his eyes, followed by a view of Excalibur glowing in the water. The scene concludes with Arthur's hand pulling Excalibur from the mud, different from where he had previously discarded it in the lake.
Audio	<i>Lady of the Lake</i> (soundtrack) by Daniel Pemberton.
Tone and Rhythm	Melancholic, Dark, Uplifting, Dramatic, Serious, Low, Accelerating, and Intense.

### a. Denotation

The Lady of the Lake is defined as a semi-divine creature beyond the mortal realm who serves as the giver of Excalibur, protector of King Arthur, and a symbol of magical feminine strength in Arthurian legend, Merlin's female counterpart (Pasiut, 2023).

### b. Connotation

Lady of the Lake is a female who exists in the lake or water realms and has magical power. Her appearance is the intervention by a higher power, as well as the experience of death and rebirth experienced by Arthur. Here, death is not physical, but symbolic. Arthur dies as the king of the street who rejects responsibility and is driven by revenge in his fight against Vortigern. And reborn as a knight and as an honorable king who has enlightened and embraced his destiny.

### c. Myth

The Lady of the Lake shapes the myth of divine intervention, the belief that great heroes are not born solely from personal effort, but through the intervention of supernatural forces that guide them. The figure of the Lady of the Lake embodies this myth. She plays a crucial role in Arthur's transformation and symbolizes the legitimacy of power derived from spiritual affirmation, rather than violence or ambition. In Arthur's journey, the Lady of the Lake marks a turning point that awakens, guides, and confirms his destiny as a true king. It is this divine intervention that transforms Arthur's story into a legend, while death and rebirth serve as a process of preparing him. This event parallels the story of Jesus' baptism in the Christian faith, where the Holy Spirit descends on the Jordan River to affirm His identity and mission (Matthew 3:13–17). Like Jesus, Arthur experiences a transformative moment that signifies rebirth and confirms his destiny through divine intervention.

## 7. The Mage



**Figure 1. The Arrival of the Mage in the Rebellion's safe house.**

### a. Denotation

Based on the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), a mage is defined as a person who has magical power or who has studied for a long time and has a lot of knowledge.

### b. Connotation

The Mage is depicted as a wise female figure with a profound connection to nature and the spiritual realm. The Mage, with her striking blue color robe, is not merely a sorceress but a symbol of spiritual guidance (Conroy, 2004), playing a crucial role in Arthur's journey to discovering his identity as a king. She serves as a mentor and guide, providing direction and understanding in Arthur's transformation from a street leader to a true ruler of the kingdom. Thus, the Mage embodies wisdom, feminine values, a supervisor, as well as the role of a catalyst for transformation and a bridge between the mundane and the divine. The Mage represents the concept of guidance and a mediator between humans and spiritual forces. Through her actions, she signifies divine will and emphasizes the importance of feminine wisdom in balancing Arthur's masculine power and purpose, while her ability to control nature underscores her role as a sacred guide who safeguards and directs Arthur's transformative journey.

### c. Myth

The Mage symbolized divine guidance. Its presence in the narrative mythologizes Arthur's journey, suggesting that his path to the throne is not merely a political change but also a spiritual calling. The myth constructed through The Mage illustrates that true leadership is guided by higher powers, characterized by wisdom, justice, and a moral compass connected to the divine order. The role of the Mage sending Arthur to the Darklands is parallel to the guidance of the Holy Spirit towards Jesus in Christian belief. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit and was led into the wilderness to face temptation and begin His ministry (Luke 4:1). Symbolically, the Mage serves a similar function in directing Arthur, opening self-understanding, and guiding the path of his leadership and destiny. Although differing in a literal sense, the Holy Spirit is divine, and The Mage is a supernatural mentor, emphasizes the vital role of spiritual guidance for Arthur with divine power.

## D. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the film King Arthur: Legend of the Sword (2017) using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, it can be concluded that Arthur's journey towards his destiny as king is not merely a tale of heroism, but a process of identity transformation rich with spiritual, moral, cultural, and social meanings. These fifteen signs discovered in Arthur's journey not only depict

the path to becoming a ruler of a kingdom but also a master of oneself. Each sign carries both denotative and connotative meanings that reflect Arthur's inner struggles and self-discovery guided by divinity. The myths created from these signs present Arthur's story as one enriched with the spiritual and cultural values of Pagan and Christian beliefs.

Researchers recommend that future researchers utilize Barthes' semiotic theory with a focus on the character Vortigern, as the main antagonist, who also carries numerous signs with ideological meanings that are intriguing to explore more deeply. Furthermore, a feminist theoretical approach can also be employed to examine the roles of female characters such as the Mage, the Lady of the Lake, and the prostitutes, who play significant roles in shaping Arthur's morality and transformation. This approach can enrich the understanding of gender representation as well as the spiritual and cultural values that shape the narrative of leadership in the film.

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# **Ilmu Budaya**

**Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya**

e-ISSN 2549-7715 | Volume 10 | Nomor 1 | Januari 2026 | Halaman 31—42  
Terakreditasi Sinta 4

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