

## Denotative and Connotative Meaning in *Divergent* Movie (2014): Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis

Dea Arianti<sup>1</sup>, Irman Nurhapitudin<sup>2</sup>, R. Myrna Nur Sakinah<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Jawa barat, Indonesia.

Correspondence: [deaarianti00@gmail.com](mailto:deaarianti00@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This research delves into the semiotic analysis of the five factions in the *Divergent* movie. By examining both the primary and secondary levels of signification, this study values embedded within the visual and narrative symbols of each faction. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, the research analyzes the signifier and signified associated with each faction. The data is then analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach; the Primary Significance Levels are as follows: At the primary order of signification, Erudite denotes people who have or show knowledge from academic study. Amity denotes people who are friendly. Candor denotes people who think openly and honestly. Abnegation denotes people who are unselfish. At the primary order of signification, Dauntless denotes people who are brave. The secondary order of significance means that people in the Erudite faction are analytical, know everything, and are logical. People in the Amity faction are nurturing, kind, harmonious, and always happy. People in Candor prioritize truth, honesty, well-structured, and following hierarchy. People in the Abnegation faction are inflexible, selfless, self-sacrificing, and responsible. People in the Dauntless faction are tenacious, protective, and fearless.

### Article History

Received: 08-March-2025

Revised: 17-April-2025

Accepted: 21-April-2025

### Keywords:

*Divergent* movie,  
Denotative, connotative,  
Roland Barthes,  
semiotics, signification.

© 2025 Dea Arianti, Irman Nurhapitudin, R. Myrna Nur Sakinah

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

## INTRODUCTION

One of the movies that successfully combines story elements with complex social themes is *Divergent* (2014), adapted from the famous novel by Veronica Roth. *Divergent* (2014) is set in a dystopian world where society is divided into five factions based on dominant characteristics. These divisions reflect the ways society categorizes individuals according to their social roles. The themes of identity and freedom are central in the movie, where the main character, Tris Prior, struggles against a system that seeks to limit her based on one category.

Like other movies (Dianiya, 2020; Nasirin & Pithaloka, 2022; Putri & Inayah, 2022; Vera, 2024), *Divergent* uses visuals and connotations to explore the concept of human identity, as well as the meaning hidden behind its

JED: Journal of English Development

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/jed.v3i01.5626>

technological elements. *Divergent* contains denotative and connotative meanings throughout its dialogs and complex visual elements to convey hidden messages such as identity, freedom, and inner conflict. A study of denotative and connotative meanings in *Divergent* movie, focusing on the five factions, would provide deep insight into how symbolism contributes to the understanding of the story, and therefore, this study focuses only on discovering the signs and symbols employed for explaining the five factions for two reasons: *first*, the factions are the limiting social identities that dictate people's role in society and, therefore, become the main sources of conflicts and struggles that foreground the whole story. *Second*, the factions are not explicitly and richly explained as *Divergent*, which refers to a person having the combinations of characteristics of the groups, is the main highlight of the movie. Thus, focusing the semiotic analysis on the factions could explain why and how each character is described to act and behave in such a way, aligning with the social construct in the movie.

Considering that the five factions are not robustly described, as the movie zooms in to the social struggle of the *Divergent* and the previous studies focus on various issues, such as gender (Maheswara & Prastiwi, 2023), feminism (Dari et al., 2020), and political power (Anggraeni, 2017) of the main characters and neglecting the factions, this study presents to explore more about the descriptions of the five factions using Barthes' semiotic theory (Barthes, 1968) to provide new insights into how symbolism contributes to the understanding of the story. Two research questions were formulated for this study: What are signifiers and signified of the five factions in *Divergent* movies within the primary order of signification? What are the signifiers and signifieds of five factions in *Divergent* movie within the secondary order of signification?

Focusing on these two research questions, this research aims to identify the primary order of signification to discover denotative meaning and the secondary order of signification to find out connotative meaning in *Divergent* movies, as well as their contribution to the story. This research is expected to provide new insights into semiotics study in popular media, especially in movies and enrich people's understanding of how symbolism contributes to the understanding of the whole story. Through this research, we conclude that the signs in *Divergent* depict specific values that reflect social and cultural issues. The signs of the five factions also contribute to the understanding of the whole story as they are the sources of tensions and struggles of the main character, whose *Divergent* identity is considered to deviate the norms.

This study is essential because it explores the semiotic meanings of the five factions in the *Divergent* movie, focusing on their signifiers and signifieds at both primary and secondary orders of signification. These factions represent complex symbols indicating societal values and challenges. Each faction's values mirror real-world societal categories, such as selflessness, peace, honesty, bravery, and intellect. The central issue is understanding how *Divergent's* five factions operate as a semiotic system. While their primary

meanings are explicit, their secondary connotations carry complex social-cultural critiques that are often overlooked. These factions reflect broader societal issues such as identity, conformity, power, and the struggle between individuality and collective norms.

## THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Semiotics is the study of signs, symbols, and their meanings as a form of communication, particularly as components of language or other communicative systems (Chandler, 2007). The field encompasses the analysis of signs within both linguistic and non-linguistic systems and examines the connection between the signifier and the signified. Semiotics also considers interpretation through visual elements, body language, sound, and contextual factors. While closely related to linguistics, which specifically investigates language structure and meaning, semiotics extends its scope to include non-verbal sign systems (Danesi, 2010).

In semiotics, a sign is understood as anything that can convey meaning beyond its literal form, allowing it to communicate information to those who interpret or decode it. Signs can be perceived through various senses, including sight, sound, touch, smell or taste. Their meanings can be informational, like a word spoken with a clear purpose, or unintentional, such as a symptom indicating a specific medical condition. According to Saussure (1986), a sign is composed of two interconnected elements known as the signifier and the signified. In *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure (1986) describes the signifier as a physical form of expression, manifesting as sounds, characters, words, images, colors, or objects. Conversely, the signified relates to the content or concept being conveyed. A sign inherently combines the signifier and the signified to create meaning for the individual interpreting it. Signs can encompass various forms, such as colors, gestures, winks, and more (Danesi, 2010). The Saussurian tradition continues with Roland Barthes (1968), whose main idea is the distinction between denotation and connotation (Barthes, 1968). He states that when he reads signs and collections of signs, we can distinguish different types of messages. In semiotics, denotation and connotation describe the relationship between signifier and signified in the process of what Barthes (1968) calls as signification. That is, “the act which binds the signifier and the signified... whose product is the sign” (Barthes, 1968, p. 48).

Denotation, in Barthes' view, is the first order of the sign system, which consists of a chain of signifiers and signifieds (Wibisono & Sari, 2021). The denotation order produces explicit, direct, and definite signs. Denotation is the true meaning, which is socially agreed upon and whose references are realistic. In the context of denotation, the signifiers and signifieds work together to produce a clear and commonly understood literal meaning. In this order of signification, we are dealing with the sign as a basic meaning independent of context and subjective interpretation Barthes (1968). The denotative meaning of an image refers to its descriptive and literal meaning. For example, an image of

a heart in denotation refers to a symbol of an organ that pumps blood. In contrast, in connotation, a heart can be depicted as a symbol of love, compassion, deep emotion, and various other interpretations. For the art historian Erwin Panofsky, the denotation of a representational visual image is what all viewers from any culture and at any time would recognize the image as depicting (Panofsky, 1991).

Connotation refers to the “second order of signification,” (Barthes, 1968, p. 91) where the additional cultural meaning can be found in images or text. Before discussing connotation from Barthes’ perspective, we need to first understand the meaning of this word, “connotation is an idea suggested by a word in addition to its main meaning” (Stevenson, 2010). It is the implication evoked by words or statements and images over what they actually denote; also, ‘connotative signs can be personal and individual or general and universal’ (Cuddon, 1998). The term ‘connotation’ refers to the socio-cultural and personal associations (such as ideological, emotional, etc.) attached to a sign. These associations are often influenced by factors like the interpreter’s class, age, gender, ethnicity, and more. Connotation, as defined by Barthes (1968), is how signs function within this context. It describes the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of the users and the values of their culture (Fiske, 2010). This second order derives from the denotation where “the signifiers of connotation [or] connotators ... are made up of signs (signifiers and signifieds united) of the denoted system” (Barthes, 1968, p. 91). Following figure describes the orders of signification adapted from Barthes (1968, p. 93)

First order of signification	1. Signifier	2. Signified
	3. Denotative sign	
Second order of signification	4. Connotative signifier	5. Connotative signified
	6. Connotative sign	

Figure 1. Orders of Signification adapted from Barthes (1968, p. 93)

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative research aims to explain a particular social condition (Moleong, 2008). Roland Barthes’ semiotic analytical framework was used in this research to analyze the data.

Data collection procedure in this study was documentation method where the researchers generated the movie transcripts by transcribing and compiling them through watching the movie attentively. The researchers process the data sources directly from the source without going through intermediaries (Siswantoro, 2005). After doing a cross-check on the transcripts,

the researchers proceeded to the data analysis step, where Barthes' semiotic analytical framework was employed (Barthes, 1968, p. 93).

To analyze the data, the researchers first broke down the transcripts into smaller chunks where five clusters representing the five factions take form. Focusing on each faction, the researchers first analyzed the transcripts to determine the signifiers and signifieds denoting denotative signs. After the denotative signs representing each faction were extracted, the researchers went on the next step to unearth connotative signs. At this level, the denotative signs formed from the signifiers and signifieds at the first order of signification took a role as connotative signifiers at the second order of signification in which their signifieds were explored throughout the texts. Finally, the researchers interpret the findings based on researchers assumptions, beliefs, and interpretive stance (Creswell & Poth, 2018) so the findings of this study are highly influenced by the researchers' background knowledge, beliefs, and interpretive stance.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Primary Order Signifier and Signified of Factions in *Divergent* Movie

This section explains the five factions in *Divergent* movie, which set boundaries for social roles based on the characteristics of each party. In the movie, the factions are pictured as having certain characteristics. The factions are Erudite, Amity, Candor, Abnegation, and Dauntless.

Signifier	Signified	Primary Order of Signification Meaning (Denotation)
Word 'Erudite'	Erudite means <b>"having or showing great knowledge that is gained from academic study"</b> (Oxford Dictionary)	Academic Erudite Faction

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2010), the word 'Erudite' means 'having or showing great knowledge that is gained from academic study'. At the primary order of signification, Erudite denotes people who have or show knowledge from academic study. At this primary order, the word 'Erudite' becomes the signifier or the expression which signify the concept of signified. The signifier is the material form (a word, an image, etc.), while the signified is the concept it "evokes" (Barthes, 1968, p. 35). Meanwhile, 'having or showing great knowledge that is gained from academic study' becomes the signified or the content on which the signifier refers to. "The signifier is not a simple concept of sound or writing; it is a material form which is associated with a mental concept" (Barthes, 1968, p. 67).

Signifier	Signified	Primary Order of Signification
-----------	-----------	--------------------------------

		Meaning (Denotation)
Word 'Amity'	Amity means "a <u>friendly</u> relationship between people or countries" (Oxford Dictionary)	Friendly Amity Faction

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2010), the word 'Amity' means 'a friendly relationship between people or countries.' At the primary order of signification, Amity denotes people who are friendly. At the primary order of signification, the term 'Amity' acts as the signifier, representing the idea of harmonious relationships between individuals or nations. Concurrently, 'a friendly relationship between people or countries' is identified as the signified; the conceptual meaning tied to the linguistic expression refers to the sign in the union of a form and an idea.

Signifier	Signified	Primary Order of Signification Meaning (Denotation)
Word 'Candor'	Candor means "the quality of saying what you think openly and honestly" (Oxford Dictionary)	Outspoken Candor Faction

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2010), the word 'Candor' means 'the quality of saying what you think openly and honestly.' At the primary order of signification, Candor denotes people who think openly and honestly. In the primary order, the word 'Candor' serves as the signifier, denoting the concept of the signified. As Barthes explains, a denotative signifier simply denotes the concept of the signified, but it is always ready to serve as a connotative signifier (1968, p. 45). Concurrently, 'the quality of saying what you think openly and honestly' is the signified, representing the content to which the signifier refers.

Signifier	Signified	Primary Order of Signification Meaning (Denotation)
Word 'Abnegation'	Abnegation means "the act of not allowing yourself to have something that you want; the act of <u>rejecting something</u> " (Oxford Dictionary)	Unselfish Abnegation Faction

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2010), the word 'Abnegation' means 'the act of not allowing yourself to have something that you want; the act of

rejecting something.’ At the primary order of signification, Abnegation denotes people who are unselfish.

Signifier	Signified	Primary Order of Signification Meaning (Denotation)
Word ‘Dauntless’	Dauntless means “ <b>not easily frightened or stopped from doing something difficult</b> ” (Oxford Dictionary)	Brave Dauntless Faction

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2010), the word ‘Dauntless’ means ‘not easily frightened or stopped from doing something difficult.’ At the primary order of signification, Dauntless denotes people who are brave. In the primary order, the word ‘Dauntless’ serves as the signifier, which is the form or expression that conveys the concept of the signified. The relationship between the signifier (the word ‘Dauntless’) and the signified (the concept it refers to) forms the complete sign. In this case, ‘Dauntless’ symbolizes bravery and fearlessness. Meanwhile, ‘not easily frightened or stopped from doing something difficult’ represents the signified, the meaning or content to which the signifier refers. The signifier is the physical form (the word), and the signified is the mental concept or idea it evokes (Barthes, 1968).

### Second Order Signifier and Signified of Factions in *Divergent* Movie

This section explains the shift from the primary to the secondary order of signification, where the signs produced from the signifiers and signifieds in the primary order turn into the signifiers in the secondary order. These new signifiers at the secondary order then signify a new “content” that acquires meaning from content-driven interpretations influenced by social and cultural factors (Barthes, 1968, p. 92). In other words, they produce connotative meanings that evolve from the first-order signification, as illustrated by figure 1 below.

First order of signification	1. Signifier	2. Signified
	3. Denotative sign	
Second order of signification	4. Connotative signifier	5. Connotative signified
	6. Connotative sign	

Figure 1. Orders of Signification adapted from Barthes (1968, p. 93)

*Abnegation: from unselfish to inflexible, selfless, self-sacrificing, and responsible.*

In the primary order, Abnegation denotes people who are unselfish. Yet, at the secondary order, Abnegation connotes ‘inflexible,’ ‘selfless,’ ‘self-

sacrificing,’ and ‘responsible.’ Datum 12 below explains how the denotative meaning of ‘unselfish Abnegation’ expands into ‘inflexible Abnegation.’

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
12	My faction is Unselfish Abnegation. The others all call us "stiffs."	Unselfish Abnegation Faction.	Being stiff.	People in Abnegation faction are inflexible.

Unselfish Abnegation Faction is signified by being stiff. This illustrates the Abnegation faction strongly adheres to the principles of simplicity and self-sacrifice without much room for change or compromise. At a secondary order of signification, this means people in the Abnegation faction are inflexible, explained by the idea that they are very rigid in adhering to their values. This explanation resonates with Datum 12 above. The term stiffs describes outsiders’ perception of Abnegation members as rigid, inflexible, and highly disciplined in adhering to the principles of selfless.

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
13	We lead a simple life... selfless, dedicated to helping others.	Unselfish Abnegation Faction	Being selfless and dedicated to helping others	People in Abnegation faction are selfless.

Unselfish Abnegation Faction in the first order of signification is further signified by being selfless and dedicated to helping others in the second order of signification. This reflects the value of the Abnegation faction, which focuses on self-sacrifice to serve others. At a secondary order of signification, it means that people in the Abnegation Faction are selfless, whose dedication to helping others becomes their priority. This illustrates that self-sacrifice and dedication to helping others are the main characteristics of individuals of the Abnegation Faction. This explanation was derived from Datum 13 above. As the statement asserts, a simple lifestyle and dedication to serving others are the main principles that define Abnegation.

Abnegation also connotes ‘self-sacrificing’. As seen in datum 14 below, the ‘unselfish Abnegation’ shifts its meaning into ‘self-sacrificing Abnegation.’



Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
14	We even feed the Factionless... the ones who don't fit in anywhere.	Unselfish Abnegation Faction	Care to others.	People in Abnegation faction are self-sacrificing.

Unselfish Abnegation Faction is signified by being care to others. This illustrates the nature of the Abnegation faction, which is willing to put aside its own needs for the sake of others as shown by data 14 above. At a secondary order of signification, it means that people in the Abnegation Faction are self-sacrificing, as described by their action of helping those who are marginalized by feeding the outcasts.

In addition to being self-sacrificing, Abnegation also connotes 'responsible'. As seen in datum 15 below, the 'unselfish' Abnegation shifts its meaning into 'responsible Abnegation.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
15	Because we're public servants... we're trusted to run the government.	Unselfish Abnegation Faction	Being trusted to run the government	People in Abnegation faction are responsible.

Due to their unselfish nature, Abnegation is delegated and trusted to run the government. This reflects Abnegation's value of putting the interests of others above personal interests in running governmental administrative business. This secondary order of signification, as shown in datum 15 above, displays a connotative meaning of Abnegation as being entities that fit the public servant role as they could be unselfish and putting aside personal ambitions so that they are trusted by the rest of the community to run the government.

*Erudite: from academic to analytical, knowledgeable, logical and valuing knowledge, and smart*

In the primary order, Erudite denotes people who have or show knowledge from academic study. With this, we can say Erudite faction are 'academic'. Yet, in the secondary order, Erudite connotes 'analytical', 'knowledgeable', 'logical

and valuing knowledge', and "smart." Datum 1 below explains the denotative meaning of 'Academic Erudite' shifts connotatively into 'analytical' Erudite.

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
1	Erudite can tell the truth because we have the facts.	Academic Erudite Faction.	Can tell truth based on facts.	People in Erudite faction are analytical.

The Academic Erudite Faction expands its meaning into analytical because of its ability to tell the truth based on factual information. At this secondary order of signification, people in the Erudite faction obtain the connotative attribute of analytical because analytical people are those who can find truth from facts. Their identity and values are tied to an analytical mindset, where information and critical thinking are prioritized, as illustrated from the data above.

In addition to being analytical, Erudite also connotes 'knowledgeable.' As seen in datum 2 below, the 'academic Erudite' shifts its meaning into 'knowledgeable Erudite.

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
2	They know everything.	Academic Erudite Faction.	Knowing everything.	People in Erudite faction knowledgeable.

The academic Erudite Faction is signified by knowing everything, a secondary order of signification. This means that people in the Erudite faction are knowledgeable. This idea is captured in the quote from Datum 2, reflecting the Erudite reputation for intelligence and their pursuit of understanding in all areas of life.

Moreover, Erudite also connotes 'logical and valuing knowledge.' As seen in datum 3 below, the 'academic Erudite' expands its meaning into 'logical and valuing knowledge Erudite.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
3	The smart ones, the ones who value knowledge and logic...are in Erudite.	Academic Erudite Faction.	Being logical and valuing knowledge	People in Erudite are logical and valuing knowledge.

The Academic Erudite Faction is signified by being logical and valuing knowledge, reflected in how a secondary order of signification refers the faction as logical and valuing knowledge. Their analytical mindset makes logic a principle of their identity. This is supported by the quote from Datum 3.

Finally, Erudite also connotes 'smart'. As seen in datum 4 below, the 'academic Erudite' shifts its meaning into 'smart Erudite'.

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
4	The smart ones, the ones who value knowledge and logic...are in Erudite.	Academic Erudite Faction	Smart one	People in Erudite are smart

Based on the data above, the academic Erudite shifts its meaning into the smart Erudite. Although academic and smart have different meaning, the second order of signification, which relies on the context, is able to shift the meaning and creates connotation. In this case, Erudite connotes smart, referring to the ability to employ knowledge effectively.

*Candor: from outspoken to prioritizing truth honesty, structured and hierarchiecal, and blunt*

In the primary order, Candor denotes people who think openly and honestly. With this, we can say Candor faction are 'outspoken'. Yet, at the secondary order, Candor connotes 'prioritizing truth, 'honesty', 'well-structured', and 'following hierarchy' Datum 9 below explains how the denotative meaning of 'outspoken Candor into 'prioritizing truth Candor'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
9	Candor value... honesty.	Outspoken Candor Faction	Valuing honesty	People in Candor faction are prioritizing truth

The outspoken Candor Faction is signified by valuing honesty. This reflects Candor's principle of prioritizing truth and openness above all else. At the secondary order of signification, it means that Candor is an honest faction that has the courage to tell the truth. This is one of the main characteristics of individuals in the Candor group as portrayed in the movie and strengthened by its description uttered by other factions. Datum 9 above illustrates how other factions see Candor as the faction which "value... honesty", and this principle makes the faction prioritizes the truth above anything else.

In addition to prioritizing truth, Candor also connotes 'structured and following hierarchy.' As seen in datum 10 below, the 'outspoken Candor' shifts its meaning into 'structured and hierarchical Candor.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
10	Candor value .... order.	Outspoken Candor Faction	Valuing order.	People in Candor faction are structured and hierarchical.

The outspoken Candor faction in the primary order turns out to be structured and hierarchical. In the secondary order of signification, this meaning extends to the understanding that people in the Candor faction are highly structured, adhering to a strict hierarchy and system of rules. This secondary meaning aligns with the data observed in the statement "Candor values order," reinforcing how their commitment to honesty is intrinsically tied to maintaining societal organization and discipline.

Finally Candor also connotes 'veracious'. As seen in datum 11 below, the 'outspoken Candor' shifts its meaning into 'veracious Candor.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
11	They tell the truth, even when you	Outspoken Candor Faction	Telling the truth in every circumstance.	People in Candor faction are veracious.

	wish they wouldn't.			
--	------------------------	--	--	--

Outspoken Honest Candor Faction is also signified by telling the truth in every circumstance. As shown in datum 11, Candor is well-structured faction that don't hesitate to convey the truth directly, without further ado in every circumstance. In a secondary order of signification, it connotes Candor as the veracious faction that always say the truth even when it is uncomfortable to hear. This explanation resonates with Datum 11, asserting that Candors are veracious.

*Amity: from friendly to nurturing, kind, harmonious, and always happy.*

In the primary order, Amity denotes people who are friendly. Yet, in the secondary order, Amity connotes 'nurturing', 'kind', 'harmonious' and 'always happy.' Datum 5 below explains how the denotative meaning of 'friendly Amity' into 'nurturing Amity.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
5	Amity farm the land.	Friendly Amity Faction.	Farming the land	People in Amity faction are nurturing.

The friendly Amity Faction is signified as those who love farming the land in the secondary order of signification. Considering the settings of the movie, Amity action of farming the land connotes nurturing action because the faction is portrayed not only as people who take care of the land but also as individuals who care for and nurture their community as a whole through their main jobs. This explanation resonates with Datum 5, which illustrates how other factions describe Amity, whose their farming activities symbolize their nurturing nature.

In addition to being nurturing, Amity also connotes 'kind'. As seen in datum 6 below, the 'friendly Amity' shifts its meaning into 'kind Amity.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
6	They're all about .... Kindness.	Friendly Amity Faction.	Being kind	People in Amity faction are kind.

The friendly Amity Faction is signified by being kind. This illustrates Amity's values of emphasizing kindness and friendliness when interacting with others.

At the secondary order of signification, this means that people in Amity are kind. This suggests that kindness is not just an individual trait but also a collective characteristic of the entire Amity faction. This explanation resonates with Datum 6 which emphasizes Amity's kindness in every aspect of their lives.

Amity also connotes 'harmonious.' As seen in datum 7 below, the 'friendly Amity' shifts its meaning into 'harmonious Amity.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
7	They're all about .... Harmony.	Friendly Amity Faction.	All about harmony.	People in Amity faction are harmonious.

The friendly Amity Faction is signified by all about harmony. This reflects Amity's value of prioritizing peace and balance in life. At the secondary order of signification, this means that people in Amity are harmonious. In other words, they live in harmony and actively embody harmony within their community. This explanation resonates with Datum 7, which explains that Amity is completely oriented towards the principle of harmony, both in their relationships with humans and nature.

Finally, Amity also connotes 'always happy.' As seen in data 8 below, the 'friendly Amity' shifts its meaning into 'always happy Amity.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
8	They're all about .... Always happy.	Friendly Amity Faction.	Always happy	People in Amity faction are always happy

The friendly Amity Faction is signified by always happy. As seen in Datum 8, Amity is described as the always happy faction which underscores that Amity Faction is committed to always creating and maintaining an atmosphere of happiness as part of their identity.

*Dauntless: from brave to tenacious, protective, and fearless*

At the primary order, Dauntless denotes people who are brave. Yet, at the secondary order, Dauntless connotes 'tenacious,' 'protective,' and 'fearless.' Datum 16 below explains how the denotative meaning of 'brave Dauntless' shifts into 'tenacious Dauntless'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
16	Dauntless never give up.	Brave Dauntless Faction.	Never give up.	People in Dauntless faction are tenacious.

Brave Dauntless Faction is signified by never give up. This reflects the strong, resilient, and unyielding character of the Dauntless faction. In the secondary order of Dauntless, it means that people in Dauntless faction are tenacious, in which never giving up is the hallmarks of individuals in the Dauntless faction, who always face challenges with courage. This explanation resonates with Datum 16 above. It reinforces the identity of Dauntless as a group that never gives up, no matter how big the obstacles they face.

In addition to being tenacious, Dauntless also connotes 'protective.' As seen in datum 19 below, the 'brave Dauntless' shifts its meaning into 'protective Dauntless.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)
19	And then there's Dauntless. They're our protectors, our soldiers, our police.	Brave Dauntless Faction.	Protectors, soldiers, police.	People in Dauntless faction are protective.

Brave Dauntless Faction are signified by protectors, soldiers, and police. This reflects the shifted meaning of Dauntless as a faction that protects and maintains security and order. In the secondary order of signification, people in the Dauntless faction connotes protective characteristics. This suggests that protecting and safeguarding are the main characteristics of individuals in the Dauntless group. This explanation resonates with Datum 19 above, confirming that the Dauntless are explicitly identified as the protectors of society, ready to maintain security with courage and dedication.

Dauntless also connotes 'fearless.' As seen in data 20 below, the 'brave Dauntless' alters its meaning into 'fearless Dauntless.'

Datum	Datum	Signifier	Signified	Secondary Order of Signification Meaning (Connotation)

20	Some people think Dauntless are crazy... which, they kind of, are	Brave Dauntless Faction.	crazy	People in Dauntless faction are fearless
----	---	--------------------------	-------	--

Brave Dauntless Faction is signified by being crazy in doing something that other factions are afraid to do. This reflects the Dauntless as a group whose fear level is above that of others. In the secondary order of signification, people in the Dauntless faction connote a fearless identity, where other factions describe them as crazy because they will do something other factions are afraid to do so. It is illustrated by the data above, where other factions think that Dauntless is fearless by using the word 'crazy.'

The constructed symbolism representing the five factions showcases what Barthes calls cultural myth (Barthes, 1972), in which the significations of the five factions naturalize cultural phenomena. In the movie, the significations naturalize the idea (and myth) of a stratified society in which a person belonging to a faction should function in society based on its designated roles. This idea derives from the myth constructed by and reinforcing the dominant ideologies (Barthes, 1972) in which those who are brave, for example, are only suitable for social functions that do not require friendliness, unselfishness, outspokenness, and academics that become the benchmark of the other factions. This constructed symbolism explicitly reflects social and cultural issues in the movie as the *Divergent* main character, who has the traits of the five factions, faces tensions and struggles because her identity is considered to deviate from both society and culture.

In addition, the symbolism of the five factions contributes to the understanding of the story. The existence of the five factions engenders identity markedness (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Those who are not in line with the factions, like the *divergent*, are thought to be marked because they deviate from society and culture, while those who are in line with the faction, like the general populace, are considered unmarked. Shall this symbolism is not formed, understanding the whole story will be difficult. The audience will most likely be confused with what aspect of the movie the main character is struggling with. The main character's deviation will also be unclear if the competing symbolism is absent. Thus, we conclude that the signs in the movie describe specific values that reflect social and cultural issues while, at the same time, contributing to the understanding of the whole story as they are the source of tensions and struggles of the main character, whose *Divergent* identity is considered to deviate the norms.

## Conclusion

This study's results show that the five factions in the *Divergent* movie represent meaning packaged through two orders of signification. In the primary order,



each faction has a literal meaning based on what is seen. Abnegation, Erudite, Candor, Amity, and Dauntless signified the literal attributes attached to the faction, which are unselfish (Abnegation), academic (Erudite), outspoken (Candor), friendly (Amity), and brave (Dauntless). However, in the secondary order, the signification of each faction carries cultural associations that reflect the social division of the movie's dystopian society. This creates connotative meanings, which can be interpreted as identity struggles or ideological control in a dystopian society. Thus, this analysis shows that the five factions in *Divergent* have a double meaning: denotative as literal representations of human nature and connotative as symbols of the social structures in the dystopian society. This research uncovers the literal and symbolic meaning of the faction system in the movie script by using a semiotic approach. This conclusion confirms that the representation of the five factions is not just a narrative element but also a tool for conveying complex social and ideological messages.

## REFERENCES

- Anggraeni, R. F. (2017). *The portrayal of political power in divergent (2014) film* UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta: Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora, 2017].
- Barthes, R. (1968). *Elements of Semiology*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.  
<https://books.google.co.id/books?id=OVJhOA6iWxEC>
- Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. Hill and Wang.  
<https://books.google.co.id/books?id=jP-DBAAAQBAI>
- Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2004). Language and Identity. In *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* (pp. 369-394). Blackwell.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470996522.ch16>
- Chandler, D. (2007). *Semiotics: The Basics*. Taylor & Francis.  
[https://books.google.co.id/books?id=utd\\_AgAAQBAI](https://books.google.co.id/books?id=utd_AgAAQBAI)
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4 ed.). SAGE Publication.
- Cuddon, J. A. (1998). *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Penguin Books.
- Danesi, M. (2010). *Pesan, Tanda, dan Makna: Buku Teks Dasar Mengenai Semiotika dan Teori Komunikasi*. Jalasutra.
- Dari, W., Lubis, F. K., & Hasibuan, J. R. (2020). Feminism in Veronica Roth's Movie "Divergent". *Linguistica*, 9(3), 339-346.
- Dianiya, V. (2020). Representation of social class in film: Semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes film parasite. *Profetik: Jurnal Komunikasi*, 13(2), 212-224.
- Fiske, J. (2010). *Introduction to Communication Studies* (3rd Edition ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203837382>
- Maheswara, R., & Prastiwi, Y. (2023). Gender Stereotypes by Presenting a Female Protagonist Portrayed in the "Neil's Burger Divergent (2014)" Movie. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 11(3), 907-916.
- Moleong, L. J. (2008). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Remaja Rosdakarya.

- Nasirin, C., & Pithaloka, D. (2022). Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes Konsep Kekerasan Dalam Film The Raid 2 Berandal. *Journal of Discourse and Media Research*, 1(01), 28-43.
- Panofsky, E. (1991). *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (C. S. Wood, Trans.). Zone Books. (Die Perspektive als 'symbolische Form')
- Putri, A. F., & Inayah, A. (2022). A Semiotic Analysis of Aladdin Movie by Using Roland Barthes Theory. LUNAR,
- Saussure, F. (1986). *Course in General Linguistics* (R. Harris, Trans.; C. Bally, A. Sechehaye, & A. Riedlinger, Eds.). Open Court.  
<https://books.google.co.id/books?id=ynFDILyixR0C>
- Stevenson, A. (2010). Oxford Dictionary of English. In *Oxford Dictionary of English*.  
[https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001/m\\_en\\_gb0265130](https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001/m_en_gb0265130)
- Vera, Y. (2024). A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF OPPENHEIMER MOVIE USING BARTHES'S THEORY UIN RADEN INTAN LAMPUNG].
- Wibisono, P., & Sari, Y. (2021). Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes dalam Movie Bintang Ketjil Karya Wim Umboh dan Misbach Yusa Bira. *Jurnal Dinamika Ilmu Komunikasi*, 7(1), 30-43.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32509/dinamika.v7i1.1406>