

## SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF CHINESE CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN THE FILM “OVER THE MOON”

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**Abstract (In English).** *This research aims to find out about the elements of Chinese culture contained in the film "Over The Moon", where this film itself is a film that takes themes from several elements of Chinese culture, namely the mythology of the Goddess Chang'E and the Moon Cake Festival. The type of research used is qualitative research, with a qualitative descriptive research method that uses Roland Barthes' Semiotic theory. The technique used to obtain the results of this research is to take data from the film "Over The Moon" in the form of scene footage and scripts contained in the film. The collected data will go through a process of identification, classification, analysis and description. The results of the research and discussion show that there are many elements of Chinese culture contained in the film "Over The Moon" directly or implicitly. The elements of Chinese culture contained in the film "Over The Moon" include many aspects such as food, festivals, mythology or stories that have been told for generations, pets, decorations and plants. After being explained using Semiotic theory where a scene is analyzed using the classification of signifier, signified, denotation and connotation, each scene captured has a meaning that is closely related to the broad and diverse elements of Chinese culture.*

**Keywords:** semiotics; film; Chinese culture

**Abstract (In Bahasa).** *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tentang unsur-unsur kebudayaan China yang terdapat di dalam film “Over The Moon”, dimana film ini sendiri adalah film yang mengangkat tema dari beberapa unsur kebudayaan China, yaitu mitologi Dewi Chang'E dan Festival Kue Bulan. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif, dengan metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif yang menggunakan teori Semiotika dari Roland Barthes. Teknik yang digunakan untuk memperoleh hasil dari penelitian ini adalah dengan mengambil data dari film “Over The Moon” berupa cuplikan adegan dan skrip yang terdapat dalam film tersebut. Data yang terkumpul akan melewati proses identifikasi, klasifikasi, analisis, dan deskripsi. Hasil penelitian dan pembahasan menunjukkan bahwa terdapat banyak sekali unsur budaya China yang terdapat di dalam film “Over The Moon” secara langsung maupun tersirat. Unsur-unsur kebudayaan China yang terdapat dalam film “Over The Moon” meliputi banyak aspek seperti makanan, festival, mitologi atau kisah yang telah diceritakan secara turun temurun, hewan peliharaan, hiasan, dan tumbuhan. Setelah dijelaskan*



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*dengan menggunakan teori Semiotika dimana sebuah adegan dianalisis dengan klasifikasi penanda, petanda, denotasi dan konotasi, setiap adegan yang ditangkap memiliki arti yang berhubungan erat dengan unsur kebudayaan China yang luas dan beragam.*

**Keywords:** Semiotika; Film; Kebudayaan China.

## 1. INTRODUCTIONS

Chinese culture is one of the oldest and most complex cultures in the world. The spread of this culture is widespread with customs and traditions that vary greatly between cities and provinces in China. Chinese culture is considered the dominant culture in East Asia. As one of the shoots of civilization, Chinese culture has had a major influence on philosophy, virtue, etiquette and traditions in Asia to this day. These things include language, ceramics, architecture, music, dance, literature, martial arts, culinary, fine arts, philosophy, economics, religion, politics and history have a global influence, while traditions and festivals are also celebrated, instilled and practiced by Chinese people all over the world. The festivals celebrated in China cannot be separated from the story behind why this festival should be celebrated, and why this festival can be something important to continue to celebrate.

The many stories told from generation to generation, especially about mythology that influence people's lifestyles, can be said to be a form of culture. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the meaning of mythology is the science of literary forms that contain sacred conceptions and tales about the lives of gods and spirits in a culture. Mythology can be called ancient myths which generally exist in the community in a region, then mythology is also defined as the science of myth. The nature of myths is usually fiction that cannot be proven true, so they tend to be considered a form of entertainment. While mythology is usually invoked to provide valid evidence regarding the truth of the stories, it can be said that the emergence of mythology was in prehistoric times and the stories were passed on by word of mouth. Whether from stories told from generation to generation or from many children's story books that tell about this legend, there is one popular mythology from China, namely a myth about the moon goddess named Chang'E.

In the myth of Goddess Chang'E, there is a story that she was cursed to live on the moon with a white rabbit as punishment for her husband's ambition to steal the elixir of immortality. These myths give a magical and fantastic dimension to Chinese culture, adding fascination and awe to the mythology. In the film "Over The Moon", this myth is reinforced through beautiful visualization and strong character depictions, bringing to life the story of Goddess Chang'E and providing a memorable experience for the audience. By enriching this myth through the medium of film, Chinese culture and the values contained in the Goddess Chang'E myth can continue to be passed on and understood by younger generations and the global community. The myth of Goddess Chang'E also has a deeper meaning, teaching the importance of loyalty, sacrifice and balance in life. The story of the Goddess Chang'E who lives on the moon as atonement for her husband's mistakes is a warning of the consequences of selfish actions and imbalance in humans' relationship with the universe. Through this myth, we are invited to reflect on the importance of maintaining harmony between humans and

nature, as well as the importance of maintaining moral values in everyday life. The myth of the Goddess Chang'E is an integral part of China's rich cultural heritage, and continues to inspire and teach future generations about the importance of maintaining harmony with nature and with ourselves.

From the story of the goddess Chang'E, the second biggest festival after the Chinese New Year was born, namely the Mooncake Festival or Mid-Autumn Festival. This festival falls every 15th day of the 8th month on the traditional Chinese calendar, where this moment is used to gather with family and enjoy moon cakes together. This festival itself was created to honor the goddess Chang'E who is said to be on the moon, according to mythological stories told from generation to generation thousands of years ago. In an effort to preserve culture and not want this story to be forgotten, one effort to do that is to create a media that can explain this story. Not only for people in China, but for everyone who watches it so they can understand the story and Chinese culture itself. One of the films based on the mythology about the goddess Chang'E is "Over The Moon".

"Over The Moon" is a computer-animated musical fantasy genre film released in 2020. The film was directed by Glen Keane and co-directed by John Kahrs, from a screenplay by Audrey Wells with additional screenplay material by Alice Wu and Jennifer Yee McDevitt. This film was produced by Pearl Studio and Netflix Animation, and animated by Sony Pictures Imageworks. "Over The Moon" tells the story of an adventurous girl named Fei Fei, who builds a rocket ship to meet the goddess Chang'E on the moon. But apart from telling about how Fei Fei's family continues the culture and story of the goddess Chang'E, there are many symbols- The symbols in this film tell about Chinese culture.

Symbols are used as a medium to convey a message or intention. Symbols have actually been around for a long time, where the origin of the word symbol itself comes from the Greek word *symbolos* which means 'sign' or more precisely, a sign that can explain something. The word symbol was then absorbed into various languages in the world, including Indonesian. Symbols or symbols are not just ordinary scribbles or drawings, but behind the symbols there is always a certain purpose or meaning.

Etymologically, semiotics comes from the Greek "simeon" which means "sign" and terminologically, semiotics can be defined as a science that studies a wide range of objects and events throughout culture as signs. The sign itself is defined as something, on the basis of previously incorporated social conventions, it can be considered to have something else. Van Zoest defines semiotics as the science of signs and everything related to them: how they function, their relationship with other words, their delivery and their reception by those who use them (Sobur, 2009:96). Semiotics is a scientific study of studying signs. The study of semiotics considers that social phenomena in society and culture are signs that have meaning, and in semiotics the systems and rules and conventions that enable these signs to have meaning are studied.

Based on this background, the problems raised in this research are Signifiers, Signifieds, Denotations, Connotations and Myths in the film "Over The Moon" which depicts Chinese culture.

## 2. METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive research, which places greater emphasis on observing phenomena that will be described and analyzed carefully. This approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior (Moleong, 2007:4). The data used in this research was obtained from the film "Over The Moon" which will be taken from scene footage, scripts or dialogue contained in the film. then the collected data will be identified and classified then analyzed and described using Roland Barthes' Semiotic studies.

## 3. RESEARCH AND RESULT

There are 10 symbols that the author found in this film which were used as objects of research as elements of Chinese culture in the film "Over The Moon", namely: Tiangou, Goddess Chang'E, Bungee Rabbit, Lantern, Stone Lion, Moon Cake, White Lotus Flower, Mooncake Festival, Jujube and Jade. These ten symbols are taken from scenes in the film "Over The Moon" in the order they appear in the film.

### 3.1 The Meaning of Denotation, Connotation and Myths Representing Chinese Culture

#### A. Tiangou



**Picture 1** Tiangou in movie "Over The Moon"  
(Source: <https://fb.watch/neEVYL6LoW/?mibextid=Nif5oz>)

**Table 1** Semiotic Analysis Picture 1 Tiangou

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Signifier | Tiangou (天狗)                                      |
| Signified | Heavenly Dog, a mythological creature from China. |

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Denotation  | Ma Ma (Fei Fei's mother) tells Fei Fei about the "Space Dog" who likes to chase comets and roll in stardust, and every night, this creature bites the moon.   |
| Connotation | Ma Ma (Fei Fei's mother) wants to tell Fei Fei about "Space Dogs" as a form of introduction to mythological stories from China from an early age. Fei-Fei's mother told about "Tiangou" so that Fei-Fei could understand this story well.   |
| Myth        | Ancient Chinese people believed that lunar eclipses were caused by celestial dogs that attempted to swallow the moon and kidnap children. Therefore, there is an ancient custom of making noise when an eclipse occurs, such as ringing bells, beating gongs, or setting off fireworks, so that the sky dogs are frightened and let go of the moon. Legend has it that Zhang Xian succeeded in driving away the dog so that to this day people worship him to ask for protection. |

The visual marker is Tiangou, a sky dog biting the moon. Tiangou is a large legendary dog that lives in outer space. He likes to bite the Moon, as Ma Ma (Fei Fei's Mother) said. The connotation of Tiangou is a chow chow dog, with orange fur and a blue tongue. He is said to be as big as the moon itself, but when he appears at the end, it is shown that the dog is only big enough to gnaw through a satellite. For the connotation sign As Ma Ma said, Tiangou sometimes likes to bite the moon, and that's how the moon phases exist. The myth is that when the moon is full, it's because Chang'E told Tiangou to spit it out.

Tiangou refers to the years in the animal year cycle of the Chinese calendar. Each year in this cycle is represented by an animal, and there are legends that associate each animal with certain characteristics. "Dog Tiangou" refers to the year in which the animal "Dog" and "Tiangou" (protective goddess) collaborate in protecting and bringing good luck to people in that period. The Chinese calendar and its accompanying legends have deep cultural significance in Chinese society.

The Tiangou philosophy is about the belief in the patron goddess of the earth and agriculture in Chinese culture. Tiangou, also known as Mazu or Tian Hau, was revered as a sea goddess who protected fishermen and sailors, as well as an agricultural goddess who looked after harvests. This belief reflects the close connection between Chinese people and the sea and nature, as well as the importance of agriculture in their lives. The coloring uses colors that are widely used in Chinese mythology, namely red, yellow, green and blue.

## B. Goddess Chang'E



**Picture 2** Goddess Chang'E in movie "Over The Moon"  
 (Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/JKDSHRMzXKnEjaUcA>)

**Table 2** Semiotic Analysis Picture 2 Goddess Chang'E

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Signifier   | Chang'E (嫦娥)  |
| Signified   | Moon Goddess of Chinese Mythology. She became a goddess after drinking the longevity potion that her husband Hou Yi got. Before Chang'E became a goddess, the earth was filled with ten suns. People are tormented by the heat of the world.  |
| Denotation  | In Chinese tradition and mythology, Goddess Chang'E symbolizes various aspects such as beauty, purity and grace. He is also often associated with the romantic story between Chang'E and the legendary archer, Houyi. These legends illustrate many themes such as loyalty, love, and sacrifice.  |
| Connotation | This connotation arises from the story of Goddess Chang'E who seeks happiness and freedom through the drink of immortality. It can be interpreted as a symbol of the human desire to seek happiness and fulfillment in life. Goddess Chang'E is often associated with nature and the moon. This connotation can describe humans' connection to nature, as well as the search for spiritual meaning and connection with the wider world. |
| Myth        | On the night of the full moon in the eighth month of the lunar calendar, people celebrate the story of Chang'E by eating mooncakes and celebrating family togetherness. The legend of Goddess Chang'E contains many moral messages, symbolism, and reflections on aspects such as love, sacrifice, and connection to nature. It has been part of Chinese culture for centuries.   |

The visual marker is Goddess Chang'E. Chang'E is a tall, light-skinned woman with very long hair. She looked very beautiful with long black hair and shining brown eyes. Chang'E's connotation signifies benevolent and gentle, graceful like a swan landing on a calm lake. She was one of the most beautiful and graceful women before turning into a goddess. Signifies her connotation When Fei Fei and Chin meet her, Chang'E adopts a self-centered personality. He

seems cruel, vain, obsessive, and cruel. Chang'E hopes that everything will go perfectly, but she gets annoyed when things don't go her way. He seems to like the Lunettes because they look after him and support him. This is likely due to her status as a goddess. Chang'E is known to be very competitive in facing challenges. The myth is that some children in China still believe that Chang'E still lives on the moon. On autumn festival nights when the full moon shines children will recognize Chang'E's silhouette on the moon.

The Moon Goddess Chang'E has a very important role in Chinese tradition. He is one of the central figures in the Mooncake Festival or "Mid-Autumn Festival" which is celebrated every year on the 15th day of the 8th month in the Chinese calendar (usually falls in September or October in the Gregorian calendar). During the Mooncake Festival, Chinese people celebrate the beauty and diversity of the universe and honor the Goddess Chang'E.

This tradition involves eating mooncakes, which are moon-shaped cakes filled with various types of fillings such as nuts, lotus seeds, or eggs. This moon cake symbolizes family unity and unity, as well as the relationship between humans and the universe. In some versions of the legend, Chang'E is also given the attribute of being the protector of love and marital relations. She is often considered the epitome of beauty, gentleness, and prosperity. In practice, Goddess Chang'E is a symbol of Chinese culture and spirituality who continues to be remembered and celebrated in various traditional forms, including art, literature and festivals.

### C. Bungee Rabbit



**Picture 3** Bungee Rabbit in movie "Over The Moon"  
 (Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/eX34RPcYVrXwtMWi7>)

**Table 3** Semiotic Analysis Picture 3 Bungee Rabbit

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Signifier  | Bungee Rabbit  |
| Signified  | Bungee is Fei Fei's pet rabbit which she received as a gift from her mother. He became Fei Fei's loyal friend wherever he went, including when he decided to go to the moon to meet Goddess Chang'E. |
| Denotation | The rabbit in this film is a friend and companion of the main character, Fei Fei. The rabbit is named "Bungee" and he is Fei Fei's pet rabbit. Bungee has a unique and                               |

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
|             | adorable appearance, with a bright blue color and big eyes. The rabbit denotation refers to the character Bungee, who is a cute, entertaining pet character who becomes Fei Fei's close friend on her journey.   |
| Connotation | Although Bungee is a cute and adorable character, he also takes part in dangerous adventures with Fei Fei. This can be interpreted as a symbol of courage and readiness to take risks to achieve goals. Overall, the connotation of rabbits in "Over The Moon" depicts more than just a pet character. It represents deep emotional and moral aspects of the story, as well as providing an additional dimension to the relationship between humans and animals. |
| Myth        | In Chinese culture, rabbits are often associated with creativity, wisdom and fertility. In the context of the film, this rabbit character could be a representation of these concepts. Rabbits are often associated with the moon in Chinese culture, and both symbols often appear in the Mooncake Festival. In Chinese art and literature, rabbits are often depicted as symbols of wisdom, gentleness, and kindness.  |

Visual marker of a cute white rabbit. Bungee starts out in the film as a very young rabbit, he was given to Fei Fei before his mother died, as he continued to grow and mature to his current age. The signifier of Bungee's connotation is Fei Fei's pet rabbit. He now lives on the moon with Jade. Bungee drops a potion on him, giving him magical powers, the ability to shoot beams from his ears. Connotation markers As time goes by, Bungee travels to the moon with Fei Fei, and meets Jade along the way, after coming into contact with her potion, she is granted the ability to shoot electrical beams (or other forms of it) in her ears. His ears are now colored pink at the tips. The myth of rabbits in Chinese cultural beliefs has wisdom and creativity.

In the film "Over The Moon," the rabbit refers to a pet character named Bungee. Bungee is a blue furred rabbit who becomes Fei Fei's loyal friend. Fei Fei is a girl who believes in the legend of the Moon Goddess Chang'E and builds a rocket to reach the Moon . Bungee has a cute and adorable role in this film. He is Fei Fei's best friend and companion in her adventures in the fantasy world of the Moon Of course, this is one of the character elements that plays an important role in bringing the story and relationships between characters to life in the animated film "Over The Moon".

#### D. Lantern





**Picture 4** Lantern in movie "Over The Moon"

(Source: <http://www.ruthlessreviews.com/47369/over-the-moon-netflix/#>)

**Table 4** Semiotic Analysis Picture 4 Lantern

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Signifier   | Lantern   |
| Signified   | A type of lantern usually made of paper with a candle inside, usually made as decoration.   |
| Denotation  | Fei Fei was running towards her house, and on the way to her house, there were lanterns hanging between the houses.   |
| Connotation | The local people where Fei Fei lives put up lanterns as decorations, for the Mooncake Festival / Autumn Festival celebrations that they will be holding in the near future. (After this scene, Fei Fei will go to help her parents make moon cakes which will then be sold).  |
| Myth        | Lanterns are synonymous with the Mooncake Festival/Autumn Festival where Chinese people believe that lanterns are a symbol of luck, fortune and happiness, where local people believe that by putting up lanterns, they will get good luck, luck, fortune and happiness, as a form of gratitude for peaceful life. Lanterns have been around since the Han Dynasty, originally for lighting purposes, then used for prayer. |

Visual marker Fei Fei was amazed when she saw the colorful lanterns that looked beautiful. The connotation of lanterns is often associated with celebrations, joy and traditions such as the Lantern Festival. On the eve of the Mid-Autumn Festival, Fei Fei's family put it up. Lanterns can also symbolize lighting at night and provide light in the darkness. The Myth In Chinese culture, lanterns are often associated with the Lantern Festival or Yuanxiao Festival (元宵節) which celebrates the first use of lanterns to ward off evil creatures. There is a myth about a monster called Nian (年獸) who came during the Spring Festival and lanterns were used to chase him away. It is also a symbol of hope and desire for a better year for Fei Fei's family.

The philosophy of lanterns in Chinese society often symbolizes hope, happiness and good luck. Lanterns can also represent spirit and unity in Chinese culture. Chinese people often use lanterns as part of Chinese New Year celebrations and other festivals. The shape and color of the lanterns also have deep symbolic meaning in their traditions and beliefs. The shape, color and use of lanterns in Chinese society have deep symbolic meaning.

- 1) Lantern Shape
  - Round Lanterns symbolize completeness and unity, as well as a representation of the earth and sky.
  - Dragon Lantern represents strength, luck and courage.
  - Flower Lanterns depict beauty, tenderness, and growth.
  - Animal Lanterns Various animals symbolize different characteristics and meanings, such as birds symbolizing freedom.
  - Character Lanterns contain messages of hope, happiness and enthusiasm.
- 2) Lantern Color
  - Red is a symbol of luck, happiness and prosperity. Gold symbolizes prosperity, wealth and glory.
  - Green represents hope, growth, and prosperity.
  - Blue is a symbol of peace, purity and wisdom.
  - White represents purity and spirituality.
- 3) Use of Lantern
  - In Chinese New Year celebrations, lanterns are used to welcome the new year with new hopes and ward off evil spirits.
  - In the Lantern Festival, lanterns are lit to celebrate the lantern festival on the first full moon in the Chinese calendar.
  - In Death and Lantern Festivals, lanterns can also be used in ceremonies honoring ancestral spirits.

Overall, lanterns in Chinese society reflect beliefs in luck, spirituality, and cultural values passed down from generation to generation. The shapes and colors of lanterns carry deep symbolic messages in celebrations and important events. The use of red and golden yellow for Indonesian Chinese New Year celebrations is indeed festive. This celebration is a momentum for the Chinese community to pray to their ancestors and gather with family. The red color of each decoration and clothing symbolizes happiness and prosperity, while the golden yellow color symbolizes majesty or authority in celebrating the New Year.

#### E. Stone Lion



**Picture 5** Stone Lion in movie "Over The Moon"

(Source: [https://youtu.be/0d4W4SlrANq?si=S-JwB1CfU\\_msDKQY](https://youtu.be/0d4W4SlrANq?si=S-JwB1CfU_msDKQY))

**Table 5** Semiotic Analysis Picture 5 Stone Lion

|           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| Signifier | Stone Lion |
|-----------|------------|

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Signified   | A stone statue shaped like a lion which is a decoration for buildings with traditional Chinese architecture. A pair of stone lions is usually placed in front of the gates of imperial palaces, Buddhist temples, monasteries, pagodas, emperor's tombs, offices and residences of high-ranking officials, and to decorate bridges, parks, hotels and restaurants..  |
| Denotation  | Fei Fei passed by the stone lion statue and patted it.   |
| Connotation | The lion as the "king of the jungle" and "king of wildlife" means that the lion is used as a symbol of the country, a symbol of courage, power and nobility. Guardian lions are also believed to be a traditional symbol of power and protection found not only guarding temples but also important institutions in China, including banks, government offices, and hotels. By seeing Fei Fei patting him, this indicates that Fei Fei believes that by doing so, he will get protection.  |
| Myth        | In China, lion statues became known in line with the arrival of Buddhism via the Silk Road. Lions and other rare animals began to be imported as palace pets during the reign of Emperor Wu of Han. In the emperor's palace, lion statues were placed in front of palace buildings and tombs as protective deities. Even though the Chinese already knew the actual physical shape of lions, stone lion makers mixed stone lion designs with Qilin designs or other animals in Chinese legend to become the stone lion model that it is today. |

Visual marker of a stone lion statue on a typical Chinese building. The connotative markers of stone lion statues are often placed at the entrance of a home or business as a symbol of protection and to maintain positive energy. They are considered powerful guardians and symbolize the power to fight negative energy. The connotative sign of the stone lion is considered to bring good luck in Chinese tradition. They are believed to bring good fortune and good luck to their owners. So in front of Ba Ba's (Fei Fei's father) shop there is a stone lion for good luck. In many stories, the stone lion statue is considered a loyal guardian creature. They protect a home or business from all kinds of dangers, including attacks by supernatural creatures. Stone lion statues are often found in shops and temples as a symbol of protection and good luck.

The Stone Lion, or "Stone Lion" in English, has important philosophical meaning in Chinese culture. The Stone Lion is a lion statue that is often placed at gates or important buildings as a symbol of protection, strength and good luck.

The philosophy behind Batu Lion is as follows:

- 1) The Stone Lion is considered a guardian who protects a house or building from negative energy and danger. These statues are placed at entrances as a form of physical and spiritual protection, creating a safe boundary between the outside and inside worlds.
- 2) Stone Lions are often considered to bring good luck. Facing the two lion statues towards each other is considered to invite good luck and protect against bad energy that may enter.

- 3) The lion is considered a symbol of strength, courage and authority. The Stone Lion statue represents firmness and authority, giving the message that the owner of the building has a respected and respected position.
- 4) The Stone Lion also reflects the principles of Yin and Yang in Chinese culture. The male lion is considered to represent the active and strong element, while the female lion represents the passive and gentle element. The combination of the two creates a harmonious balance. Overall, the Stone Lion contains many philosophical meanings that reflect protection, luck, strength and authority in Chinese culture. The statue is also an important part of traditional Chinese architecture, reflecting the close relationship between symbolism and everyday practice.

#### F. Moon Cake



**Picture 6** Moon Cake in movie "Over The Moon"

(Source: <http://www.ruthlessreviews.com/47639/over-the-moon-netflix/#>)

**Table 6** Semiotic Analysis Picture 6 Moon Cake

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Signifier   | Moon Cake (月餅)   |
| Signified   | Traditional Chinese food, a must at autumn festival celebrations.  |
| Denotation  | Ma Ma (Fei Fei's mother) teaches little Fei Fei to make moon cakes together. These are all Fei Fei's memories with Ma Ma when she cooked for Ba Ba's cake shop supplies. Shop customers really like Ma Ma's mooncakes which have a distinctive and unique taste. The two customers at Fei Fei cake shop said "We need 5 more, or maybe 12 because my cousins are coming. And you know how they are, they really like these cakes. So, I think you should give me 20 more!" |
| Connotation | The two customers at the Fei Fei cake shop wanted to share mooncakes (a symbol of happiness, where the taste of mooncakes is delicious and healthy) to their cousin, as a form of festival celebration. Also as a form   |

|      |   |
|------|---|
|      | of doing good, namely sharing and wishing health to others. Giving mooncakes as a gift is also intended as a way to strengthen relationships.   |
| Myth | <p>Mooncakes are a symbol of wholeness, as well as a way of showing gratitude and offering to the gods for the blessings of a bountiful harvest. With this, Chinese people will eat moon cakes together on this festival, as a form of gratitude to the gods for the blessing of an abundant harvest.</p> <p>Moreover, there is a unique fact behind mooncakes, namely that it is better to cut and share, whereas eating a whole mooncake is considered strange and impolite. That's why it has to be shared with other people, like the customer at the Fei Fei cake shop who wanted to share this cake with his cousin. (Because that's how it should be, according to their culture).</p> |

Visual marker Little Fei Fei with Ma Ma learning to make moon cake. Marking the connotation of the Fei Fei family tradition, Moon cake is often a symbol of family gatherings as many families gather to celebrate the Full Moon Festival and share moon cakes together. Significant connotation Because its shape resembles the moon, moon cake can also be associated with lunar symbolism, which in many cultures is considered to have deep meaning, such as fertility and enlightenment. Mythically, mooncakes are also often associated with family symbolism, especially during the Full Moon Festival where Fei Fei's family gathers to celebrate together. The round shape of mooncakes is said to symbolize family unity.

Mooncakes or also known as "Mooncakes" have deep philosophical meaning for Chinese society. This cake is generally consumed during the Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations or also known as the Mooncake Festival. The philosophy behind this cake is related to the symbolism of family, unity, and hope. The round shape of mooncakes symbolizes unity and completeness, often interpreted as a united family.

Mooncakes come in a variety of shapes, but the most common shape is round or circular and measures around 8 to 10 centimeters in diameter and 3 to 4 centimeters in thickness..

This cake usually has a surface decorated with beautiful moldings, creating intricate and artistic patterns. The cake's diverse fillings, such as red beans, lotus seeds, or lotus eggs, reflect diversity in unity, teaching the importance of accepting differences. Usually, in each mooncake there is a "happy full moon" which symbolizes the family uniting under the light of the full moon. It is also a symbol of hope for a bright future. Overall, Moon Cakes are not just a delicious food, but also carry deep meanings about family, unity, diversity and hope in Chinese culture..

## G. White Lotus Flower



**Picture 7** White Lotus Flower in movie "Over The Moon"  
 (Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/fQ6qPguM6gBZTMZk7>)

**Table 7** Semiotic Analysis Picture 7 White Lotus Flower

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Signifier   | White Lotus Flower  |
| Signified   | An aquatic plant, usually purple, pink, or white.   |
| Denotation  | Fei Fei and Ba Ba (Fei Fei's father) are putting white lotus flowers in the river, letting them float away.   |
| Connotation | Fei Fei and Ba Ba (Fei Fei's father) describe Ma Ma (Fei Fei's mother) as the lotus flower, (where Fei Fei's mother is considered "beautiful" like a flower) where they let Ma Ma go. (In the story, Ma Ma died of illness).  |
| Myth        | As the name "Nymphaea" arose from "Nymph" from Greek mythology, this flower is believed to be the spirit of a goddess who inhabits bodies of water. According to legend, the lotus flower is a star that fell from the sky, into the water, and became a flower.<br>The lotus flower has been loved by Chinese people for a long time, and is one of the important flowers in Chinese culture. Moreover, because many Chinese people are Buddhists, in that case, the lotus flower means purity and peace.<br>This flower is also described as a flower which means enlightenment because its beautiful blooms can emerge from the mud. |

The visual marker of the lotus flower is a symbol of Ma Ma (Fei Fei's mother) having died. Lotus flowers often have connotative markers related to beauty, purity, and spirituality in Chinese culture, such as Fei Fei wishing for Ma Ma to return. In some cultures, the lotus symbolizes the concept of rebirth or reincarnation because the flower sinks at night and blooms again in the morning, similar to the cycle of life. The myth of the lotus flower as a symbol of reincarnation is the return of someone who has died and cannot be reborn into the world like Fei Fei's hope for Ma Ma..

The lotus flower has been loved by Chinese people for a long time, and is one of the important flowers in Chinese culture. Moreover, because many Chinese people are Buddhists, in that case, the lotus flower means purity and peace. This flower is also described as a flower which means enlightenment because its beautiful blooms can emerge from the mud.

For Chinese people, the lotus flower for Chinese people has several meanings, such as:

- **Purity and Resurrection**  
Lotus flowers grow from the mud and mud at the bottom of the pond, but bloom beautifully on the surface of the water. It is interpreted as a symbol of purity and awakening through attachment to the physical world. In Chinese culture, it teaches about how we can grow and develop in difficult and non-ideal conditions.
- **Wisdom and Calm**  
Lotus flowers bloom gracefully on the surface of the calm water. It symbolizes calm and wisdom in facing challenges and overcoming obstacles in life. In the midst of crowds and chaos, the lotus flower teaches the value of remaining calm and taking wise action.
- **Spiritual Enhancement**  
The process by which a lotus flower grows from beneath the mud to the surface of the water is likened to an individual's spiritual journey. It represents the transformation from an unconscious state to higher knowledge and enlightenment.
- **Perseverance and Beauty**  
Lotus flowers need time to grow and bloom beautifully. It teaches the importance of perseverance and dedication in achieving goals. Just as the lotus flower produces beautiful flowers, one must strive diligently to achieve a better quality of life.

In Chinese culture, lotus flowers are also often associated with symbolism in Buddhism, because the lotus is a flower that often appears in stories of Buddha's life. The lotus flower that Fei Fei and her father think of is Fei Fei's mother, who is beautiful and has good nature. With this flower too, Fei Fei and her father hope to let go of Fei Fei's mother, and gain enlightenment about what happened to them.

#### H. Mooncake Festival



**Picture 8** Mooncake Festival in movie "Over The Moon"  
(Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/fQ6qPguM6gBZTMZk7>)

**Table 8** Semiotic Analysis Picture 8 Mooncale Festival

|           |                         |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Signifier | Mooncake Festival (中秋节) |
|-----------|-------------------------|

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Signified   | The Mooncake Festival, also known as the “Mid-Autumn Festival” or Zhongqiu Festival, is a traditional festival celebrated by many Chinese and East Asian communities on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar. This celebration coincides with the bright full moon at night.   |
| Denotation  | Fei Fei's family gathered to celebrate the Mooncake Festival eating together at a round table.   |
| Connotation | By eating together to welcome the new year, the moment of eating together itself becomes a symbol of good hopes for the coming year.   |
| Myth        | For Chinese people, having dinner with family during Chinese New Year is the most anticipated celebration of the year. That's when fellow family members hope to get rid of bad luck and disaster and bring prosperity in the new year. To start, the extended family will gather at a round table to eat various foods. The round table tradition itself is synonymous with Chinese culture, which likes to share the food served on the table. With a round table shape, everyone can take food without having difficulty reaching. Apart from that, the round shape makes it easier to chat and creates a warmer atmosphere between family members. |

Visual marker Fei Fei's family is gathering at a round table to eat together to celebrate the autumn moon festival. Mooncakes are often decorated with beautiful and colorful designs. The appearance of moon cakes in films can be a connotative marker of the tradition and beauty of the Moon Festival celebration. Moon cakes are often served and shared with the family. In many stories, this can be a connotative sign of the importance of family unity and love between Fei Fei family members. The Myth The story of Chang'E, the Moon Goddess, is often related to the Moon Festival. He is said to have lived on the moon after taking an immortality pill. Some stories also link it to mooncakes, either creating them or sharing them with children on earth.

The Mooncake Festival, also called the Zhongqiu Festival (中秋节) in Chinese, has a rich philosophy in Chinese society. The Mooncake Festival is usually celebrated in mid-autumn, when the full moon is bright. It symbolizes a family reuniting and uniting, like the light of a full moon illuminating the darkness of the night. The round shape of the moon cake also symbolizes completeness and family unity. Celebrating the bountiful harvest of autumn. Mooncakes, which are usually made from ingredients that represent crops such as grains and nuts, are a symbol of wealth and blessings bestowed by nature.

The Mooncake Festival has ties to the legend of the Moon Goddess, known as "Chang'E". This goddess is associated with the full moon and has deep spiritual significance in Chinese culture. Round tables are considered to accommodate more balance and equality between everyone sitting around them. There are no dominant corners or sides, so everyone has an equal position and can interact more easily.



## I. Jujube



**Picture 9** Jujube in movie "Over The Moon"  
 (Source: <https://youtu.be/0d4W4SlrANq?si=PniXsRYuVBj4ZIZO>)

**Table 9** Semiotic Analysis Picture 9 Jujube

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Signifier   | Jujube   |
| Signified   | Chinese red dates, they taste sweet, are usually used to make desserts.  |
| Denotation  | Fei Fei returns home and sees Ba Ba (Fei Fei's father). Fei Fei wants to make a dish from Jujube fruit. Fei Fei said "Jujube? We never use Jujube. That's not one of mom's recipes." then Ba Ba replied "I was thinking we could try something new to honor our guests." and it turned out that the guest was Ba Ba's future wife, or Fei Fei's future stepmother. |
| Connotation | Ba Ba (Fei Fei's father) wants to try making a new dish with Jujube fruit that he has never made before, and from "trying something new", this symbolizes that Ba Ba is about to open himself up to get out of his comfort zone and change..   |
| Myth        | In Chinese culture, Jujube represents wealth, prosperity and fertility. It is also a symbol for something to come or happen soon because the word jujube in Chinese sounds similar to "beginning".<br>红枣 = Hóngzǎo = Red Dates.<br>早 = Zǎo = Earlier / beginning.  |

Visual marker of jujube fruit as an ingredient for making moon cake. The connotation marker Fei Fei sees Ba Ba (Fei Fei's father) preparing jujube fruit as an ingredient for filling moon cakes. Jujube fruit is often used in making mooncakes to give it a sweet taste and distinctive texture. Jujube, also known as Chinese red date or "red date," is often processed into a paste or jam that is used as a filling in mooncakes. Signifying the connotation of the moon cake festival, Fei Fei's father wants to sell moon cakes which have a variety of different flavors. A combination of jujube paste and other ingredients such as seeds is sometimes used to create a variety of flavors in mooncakes. Apart from that, jujube can also be used to provide a naturally sweet taste to mooncake dough. So, jujube is one of the traditional ingredients that is often used in making mooncakes.

Jujube is a fruit that comes from the Ziziphus tree. This fruit is usually golden brown in color and has a distinctive sweet taste. Jujube is also known as "red date" or "Chinese date." This fruit is often dried and eaten as a snack or used in traditional medicine. In Chinese society, jujube has a deep symbolic meaning in various aspects of life. Some of the philosophies associated with jujube include:

- Yin and Yang balance  
In traditional Chinese medicine, jujube is considered to have balanced properties between Yin (feminine principle) and Yang (masculine principle), so it can help maintain energy balance in the body.
- Family harmony  
Jujube is often associated with family harmony and close relationships. This fruit is used in celebrations such as Chinese New Year as a symbol of unity and strong relationships between family members.
- Wealth and Prosperity  
The round, golden brown shape of jujube is considered a symbol of wealth and prosperity. Therefore, jujube is often given as a gift on important occasions or to celebrate moments of happiness.
- Health and Vitality  
Jujube is also associated with health and vitality. Due to its high nutritional content, this fruit is thought to increase energy, improve the immune system, and strengthen the body as a whole.
- Tranquility and Peace of Mind  
Some traditions associate jujube with peace of mind and relaxation. This fruit can be used in herbal concoctions to help relieve stress and overcome sleep disorders.

#### J. Jade



**Picture 10** Jade in movie "Over The Moon"  
(Source: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=kReUOR7UreQ&feature=shared>)

**Table 10** Semiotic Analysis Picture 10 Jade

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Signifier | Jade |
|-----------|------|

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Signified   | Jade is a type of natural rock that usually has a green color and is considered a gemstone. It is a type of mineral known as jade mineral, which consists of two different types of minerals: jadeite and nephrite. Jade has had cultural and historical significance in various cultures around the world, especially in China and Mesoamerica. Many consider it to have spiritual value, symbolism, and aesthetic value.  |
| Denotation  | Denotatively, in the film "Over The Moon" jade is a green stone that has a distinctive light and shine. This jade is a physical object that is the focus of the story, because Fei Fei believes that the legend about the Moon Goddess who lives on the Moon will come true if she proves it by finding the lost jade. This jade becomes the catalyst for Fei Fei's journey to the Moon and represents her powerful goal to reconnect her family and prove the existence of the Moon Goddess.   |
| Connotation | In the film "Over The Moon" jade has a special meaning as the main symbol of the relationship between Fei Fei and her deceased mother. The Jade Stone also symbolizes Fei Fei's faith and belief in the legend that she wants to prove. During Fei Fei's journey to the Moon, jade plays an important role in moving the plot along and depicting the deep meaning of family and hope.  |
| Myth        | In Chinese culture, jade has a deep and important symbolic meaning. Jade is considered a sacred stone and has spiritual value and magical powers. In Chinese culture, jade symbolizes good luck, immortality, beauty and prosperity. This stone is also considered to protect against negative energy and disease. Apart from that, jade is also often associated with the concept of yin and yang and the relationship between heaven and earth. In the Chinese view, jade represents harmony and balance in the universe. In the context of traditional Chinese myths or stories, jade often has a magical or mystical role, such as granting strength to its owner or having connections with supernatural beings. |

The visual signifier of the Jade that Goddess Chang'E wears as a hair ornament has great power. Connotation markers Jade is often used in jewelry because of its beauty. It can also have connotations with beauty and elegance. Goddess Chang'E uses it as a decoration in her beautiful hair as a symbol of the power she has. Connotations: Jade is often used in jewelry because of its beauty. In this context, Jade can be a symbol of luxury and beauty. The myth of Jade is with love and trust in relationships. Like Goddess Chang'e's true love for her partner Houyi.

Jade has deep philosophical significance in Chinese culture and in many East Asian societies. It symbolizes various concepts and values valued in Chinese tradition, such as balance and harmony. It depicts the philosophy of Yin and Yang, which represents harmony and fusion between opposing forces. It is considered to have powerful and calming energy at the same time.

It reflects the idea of having a stable and strong inner strength, while remaining calm and compassionate. Jade is often associated with luck, happiness and prosperity. People believe that owning Jade can bring good luck, help create a good life, has the ability to protect its owner from negative energy and helps maintain both physical and mental health..

Jade is also considered to have long-lasting and immortal properties, reminding people to value goodness and long-term values in life. These philosophies have become ingrained in various aspects of Chinese culture and still play an important role in various celebrations and traditions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Conclusions based on semiotic analysis of Chinese cultural elements in the film "Over The Moon" from a researcher's perspective, it can be concluded that this film succeeds in depicting Chinese culture through the use of consistent and relevant symbols. There are 10 symbols that the author found in this film which were used as objects of research as elements of Chinese culture in the film "Over The Moon", namely: Tiangou, Goddess Chang'E, Bungee Rabbit, Lantern, Stone Lion, Moon Cake, White Lotus Flower, Cake Festival Moon, Jujube and Jade. Symbols such as the moon symbol, traditional Chinese costumes, as well as depictions of places, visually depict China's unique and interesting cultural identity. In this film, Chinese culture is symbolized by exploring cultural values, such as respect for ancestors, the celebration of the Mooncake Festival, and the importance of family ties. These symbols contain deep meaning and provide the audience with a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

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