

Symbols of Rebellion in *Along for the Ride* (2022): A Semiotic Analysis

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi pemberontakan melalui simbol-simbol dalam *Along for the Ride*, dengan fokus pada bagaimana remaja menghadapi ekspektasi sosial dan berbagai batasan yang membentuk pembentukan identitas serta mendorong tindakan resistensi dan ekspresi diri. Analisis ini menggunakan kerangka semiotika Roland Barthes, yang meliputi denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui penayangan berulang film, identifikasi simbol-simbol yang relevan, serta analisis adegan penting, objek, latar, dan tindakan karakter yang didukung oleh dialog. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi dua belas simbol utama pemberontakan, yaitu sepeda, tradisi sekolah, Colby, TIP, Clementine's, pencarian (quest), Hot Dog Party, kopi, tempat membaca, Abe's Bike Shop, pakaian karakter, dan pesta prom. Pada tingkat denotatif, simbol-simbol tersebut muncul sebagai elemen yang terlihat dalam narasi; pada tingkat konotatif, simbol-simbol tersebut menandakan resistensi terhadap ekspektasi orang tua, tekanan akademik, dan norma sosial sekaligus merepresentasikan kebebasan, eksplorasi diri, dan individualitas; dan pada tingkat mitos, simbol-simbol tersebut memperkuat keyakinan budaya bahwa masa remaja merupakan fase transisi di mana individu menantang batasan dan membangun kembali jati diri mereka. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemberontakan dalam film tersebut tidak hanya ditampilkan sebagai bentuk penentangan, tetapi sebagai proses bermakna dalam penemuan diri dan pertumbuhan pribadi yang disampaikan melalui representasi simbolik.

Kata kunci: semiotika, simbol, pemberontakan, remaja, *Along for the Ride*.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of rebellion through symbols in *Along for the Ride*, focusing on how adolescents navigate social expectations and restrictions that shape identity formation and encourage acts of resistance and self-expression. The analysis applies Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, which includes denotation, connotation, and myth. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through repeated viewing of the film, identification of relevant symbols, and analysis of key scenes, objects, settings, and character actions, supported by dialogue. The findings identify twelve central symbols of rebellion such as the bicycle, the school tradition, Colby, TIP, Clementine's, the quest, Hot Dog Party, coffee, reading spot, Abe's Bike Shop, character's outfit, and prom party. At the denotative level, these symbols are visible elements, at the connotative level, they represent resistance, freedom, and individuality, and at the myth level, they reflect adolescence as a time of self-discovery. Overall, the study concludes that rebellion in the film is portrayed as a meaningful process of self-discovery and personal growth conveyed through symbolic representation.

Keywords: adolescence, *Along for the Ride*, rebellion, semiotics, symbols.

A. INTRODUCTION

Rebellion among adolescents has increasingly been examined as a response to social expectations that shape identity and behavior, particularly within contexts that prioritize academic achievement and socially approved life paths. Contemporary studies highlight how such pressures may restrict individuality and contribute to stress, self-doubt, and emotional suppression, as young people are often evaluated based on standardized measures of success

(Ruiz & Lopez, 2024). In this context, rebellion emerges not merely as deviant behavior but as a form of resistance through which individuals assert autonomy and explore alternative identities (Mohr et al., 2023). These expectations are often reinforced by cultural norms and authority structures that define acceptable behavior, limiting personal freedom and shaping how young people perceive themselves and their future (Ganiron et al., 2017). Previous researches have also emphasized that symbolic forms of rebellion, expressed through actions, objects, and interactions, can function as meaningful communication of personal struggles, emotional states, and identity negotiation.

Within film studies, symbolic representation offers a valuable approach to understanding how rebellion is constructed and conveyed. *Along for the Ride* provides a relevant context for examining this phenomenon, as it portrays adolescent experiences of pressure, resistance, and personal growth through visually rich elements. While prior studies have explored themes of youth identity and transformation in film, fewer have specifically focused on rebellion as a symbolic process analyzed through semiotic frameworks. To address this gap, this study applies Roland Barthes' theory of semiotics, which interprets meaning through denotation, connotation, and myth, allowing for a deeper understanding of how visual elements communicate cultural and ideological messages.

Based on this context, the research focuses on how symbols of rebellion are represented and how they contribute to the construction of meaning within the film. The objective of this study is to examine and analyze these symbolic representations in order to understand how rebellion is expressed as a process of identity formation, self-discovery, and resistance to social and familial expectations. By doing so, the study contributes to the current development of semiotic analysis in film studies and offers insight into the broader cultural significance of youth rebellion as both a personal and social phenomenon.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and how meaning is produced and interpreted within communication systems. The term originates from the Greek word *semeion*, meaning "sign" (Saussure, 1959). Umberto Eco (1976) explains that semiotics examines how meaning is generated through cultural codes and shared systems of understanding, where individuals interpret signs based on social conventions. Similarly, Ferdinand de Saussure introduces the concept of the sign as consisting of the signifier and the signified, emphasizing that the relationship between them is arbitrary and constructed through collective agreement (Eco, 1976). Building on this, Charles Sanders Peirce categorizes signs into icon, index, and symbol, depending on how they relate to the objects they represent. This classification highlights that meaning is not inherent in the sign itself but is formed through interpretation and context. Semiotics is not limited to linguistic structures but extends to various forms of communication, including images, gestures, music, fashion, and film (Barthes, 1964). Therefore, semiotics provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how meaning operates across different cultural and communicative practices.

2. Roland Barthes' Semiotics

Roland Barthes explains that meaning is not fixed but is influenced by culture, context, and interpretation (Barthes, 1964). He develops the idea of two levels of meaning: denotation and

connotation. Denotation refers to the literal or direct meaning of a sign, which can be observed without interpretation. Connotation, on the other hand, refers to the additional meanings that come from cultural values, emotions, and shared experiences (Kristeva, 2024; Putri et al., 2023; Muchalif & Alfikri, 2022; Shu-Ping, 2017). This means that the same sign can have different meanings depending on how people understand it.

Barthes also introduces the concept of myth, which is a deeper level of meaning that reflects cultural beliefs and ideologies (Azizah & Erwhintiana, 2023; Pasya & Rahayu, 2024). At this level, meanings created by society can appear natural or normal, even though they are actually constructed. Myth works by building on denotation and connotation, turning simple signs into broader cultural messages (Barthes, 1957).

Barthes also highlights that meaning is influenced by the relationship between signs and the role of the audience. People actively interpret signs based on their background and experience (Fernandi & Kartiningsih, 2024). This makes his theory especially useful for analyzing visual media such as film, where meaning is often shown through symbols rather than direct explanation. In this study, Barthes' theory is used to analyze symbols of rebellion by examining their literal meaning, cultural meaning, and deeper ideological message.

3. Film

Film is a complex medium that combines moving images, sound, and narrative elements to communicate meaning (Hornby, 2005 as cited in Yulfani & Rohmah, 2021). Beyond its function as entertainment, film serves as a cultural text that reflects and shapes social values, beliefs, and realities (Wibowo, 2006 as cited in Panjaitan et al., 2024; Gardner, 2010 as cited in Mizan et al., 2023). Through its visual and auditory components, film creates a constructed reality that invites interpretation from audiences, making it a powerful tool for conveying messages and ideologies (Ramadhan et al., 2023). Key elements such as plot, character, and setting work together to form the narrative structure, guiding the audience's understanding of the story (Yuliyana et al., 2024). In addition, cinematic techniques such as lighting, color, camera angles, and sound design contribute to the creation of meaning, often functioning symbolically. As a result, film can be analyzed as a form of text similar to literature, where meaning is layered and open to multiple interpretations.

4. Symbol

Symbols are essential components of literary and visual texts, representing meanings that go beyond their literal form (Johnson & Arp, 2016). They may take the form of objects, actions, characters, or settings, and their meanings are shaped by context, cultural background, and their relationship with other elements in the narrative. Symbols often require careful interpretation, as their meanings are not always immediately apparent and may develop through repetition or emphasis within the text (Boggs & Petrie, 2017). In film, symbols are particularly significant because visual representation allows abstract ideas to be communicated in subtle and indirect ways (Fitria, 2021). Furthermore, symbols may carry multiple meanings, depending on the perspective of the audience and the cultural framework in which they are interpreted. This flexibility makes symbols a powerful tool for expressing complex themes such as identity, conflict, and resistance.

5. Rebellion

Rebellion is generally understood as an act of resistance against authority, norms, or expectations imposed by society, particularly during adolescence, a period characterized by identity exploration and the desire for independence (Harris & Harris, 2008). At this stage, individuals often experience emotional and social pressures that encourage them to question authority and assert their individuality (Zhang & Li, 2022). Rebellion can take several forms. According to Kautilya's theory (as cited in Adriati et al., 2024), it includes violent rebellion, nonviolent rebellion, social rebellion, political rebellion, cultural rebellion, economic rebellion, ideological rebellion, and digital rebellion. Rebellion can also manifest in various forms, including social, cultural, and behavioral resistance, reflecting the tension between personal identity and societal expectations (Ganiron et al., 2017). Rather than being viewed solely as negative or deviant behavior, rebellion can also be understood as a constructive process through which individuals develop autonomy, self-awareness, and personal values (He, 2024). In the context of this study, rebellion is approached as a symbolic phenomenon that is expressed through visual elements in film, representing not only resistance but also self-expression, emotional exploration, and personal growth.

6. Previous Studies

Previous studies have applied semiotic theories to analyze meaning in films and other media. Nafis and Fauziyah (2024), in *A Semiotic Analysis of Sewu Dino Film*, used Peirce's theory to identify icons, indices, and symbols, finding that these signs appear throughout the film, including the dialogue. Smith and Budianto (2024), in *Semiotics of Roland Barthes on Lana Del Rey Song Lyrics*, applied Barthes' theory to *A&W* and found meanings related to women's sexuality, consent, victim-blaming, and social pressure. Ramadhani et al. (2024), in *Meaning Visualization: A Saussurean Semiotic Analysis of the Film Merry Riana*, used Saussure's theory to examine signifiers and signifieds and found inspirational meanings in the film. Although these studies use semiotic and qualitative approaches, they focus on different themes, leaving youth rebellion relatively unexplored. This study addresses the gap by applying Barthes' theory to *Along for the Ride* (2022) to examine rebellion through symbolic objects, settings, and actions.

C. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design to examine the representation of rebellion through symbols in the film *Along for the Ride* (2022). Qualitative research is appropriate because it focuses on non-numerical data such as images, texts, and interpretations, allowing for a deeper understanding of meaning (Creswell, 2018). Film, as a visual medium that combines moving images and sound, provides rich material for analyzing cultural meaning and symbolic representation. The study applies a semiotic approach based on Roland Barthes' theory, which explains how meaning is constructed through signs. This approach is used to analyze visual elements such as objects, settings, and character actions, in order to understand how they function as symbols of rebellion (Chandler, 2002). Through this framework, the analysis focuses on three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth.

The data in this study consisted of visual symbols identified in the film, while dialogue and other narrative elements are used as supporting references. The primary data source is *Along for the Ride* (2022), directed by Sofia Alvarez and accessed through Netflix. The researchers act

as the main instrument in collecting and interpreting the data, supported by tools such as note-taking and screenshots of selected scenes. Data collection is conducted through qualitative observation by repeatedly watching the film to gain a comprehensive understanding of its content. The researchers identify symbols related to rebellion, records recurring or significant elements, and selects relevant scenes for further analysis. The collected data are then organized and reduced by focusing on key symbols that are most relevant to the research objectives.

Data analysis is carried out using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. The researchers first examine the denotative meaning of each symbol, followed by its connotative meaning, and finally interprets the myth or deeper cultural and ideological message. Through this process, the study aims to explain how rebellion is represented symbolically and how these symbols reflect broader meanings related to identity, resistance, and self-expression.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of *Along for the Ride* (2022) using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. It explores the symbols of rebellion that were found in the film, including the bicycle, school tradition, Colby, TIP, Clementine's, the quest, Hot Dog Party, coffee, reading spot, Abe's Bike Shop, characters' outfits, and the prom party.

Data 1

The bicycle is one of the most dominant symbols identified in the film. At the denotative level, it is a two-wheeled vehicle used for transportation, appearing in the nighttime journeys of Auden and Eli. At the connotative level, it carries meanings of freedom, independence, and personal agency. For Auden, learning to ride a bicycle later in life symbolizes her resistance to the perfectionist expectations imposed by her mother and represents her attempt to reclaim a childhood experience she was denied. For Eli, the bicycle initially signifies grief and emotional avoidance following Abe's death, as seen in his refusal to ride. This refusal functions as a form of withdrawal and resistance to healing. When Eli eventually rides again, the meaning shifts into one of recovery and liberation, indicating his willingness to confront trauma. At the myth level, the bicycle reflects a broader cultural belief that adolescence involves breaking free from parental control and forming an independent identity, positioning rebellion as a necessary step toward self-definition.

Table 1. Bicycle signification

1. Signifier  Bicycle	2. Signified A road vehicle with two wheels that you ride by pushing the pedals with your feet.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER A two-wheeled vehicle used for transportation.	II SIGNIFIED Freedom of movement, independence, and personal agency in choosing one's own path.
III MYTH Rebellion	

Data 2

The school tradition, involving the ringing of the bell and the throwing of tissues after graduation, appears denotatively as a recurring ritual marking the end of the academic year. Connotatively, it represents release from structure, collective celebration, and emotional expression. The bell, typically associated with discipline and control, is recontextualized as a symbol of liberation, while the tissues symbolize letting go of pressure and expectations. For Auden, observing rather than participating emphasizes her distance from shared teenage experiences and highlights her suppressed desire for spontaneity. This creates a subtle form of rebellion, expressed through her awareness of what she has been denied. At the myth level, the tradition aligns with the cultural concept of rites of passage, reinforcing the idea that adolescence involves transition, social belonging, and the symbolic crossing into independence.

Table 2. School Tradition

1. Signifier  School Tradition	2. Signified The fact of finishing a degree or other course of study at a university or school, or the ceremony at which you are officially said to have finished.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER The school bell and scattered tissues as symbols of graduation.	II SIGNIFIED Celebration, release, marking an ending.

III MYTH

Ritual

Data 3

The TIP hangout is presented denotatively as a place where teenagers gather at night. Connotatively, it represents spontaneity, social freedom, and the chaotic energy of youth culture. Its informal and lively atmosphere contrasts with structured environments such as home and school, allowing characters to interact without supervision. For Auden, TIP symbolizes her entry into a social world that she had previously avoided, marking a shift toward openness and belonging. At the myth level, TIP reflects the concept of a “third space,” where identity formation occurs outside institutional control, positioning rebellion as the exploration of peer relationships and social autonomy.

Table 3. TIP Signification

1. Signifier  TIP	2. Signified A local hangout spot in Colby, described humorously as absurd or strange.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER A social place where young people in Colby gather.	II SIGNIFIED Noisy, chaotic, youthful atmosphere.
III MYTH Rebellion	

Data 4

Clementine’s boutique is introduced denotatively as a clothing store where Auden works during the summer. Connotatively, it represents femininity, social interaction, and emotional openness. The colorful and expressive environment contrasts with the restrained, intellectual world associated with her mother. Through her work at the boutique, Auden learns to engage with others, navigate social dynamics, and explore aspects of herself that were previously suppressed. This shift signifies a form of rebellion against a purely academic identity. At the myth level, the boutique reflects the cultural belief that spaces of fashion and aesthetic expression allow individuals to construct and experiment with identity.

Table 4. Clementine’s Signification

1. Signifier  Clementine's	2. Signified A small shop that sells fashionable clothes, shoes, jewellery, etc.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER A clothing boutique owned by Heidi, where Auden works over the summer.	II SIGNIFIED Organized racks, colorful outfits, and Heidi's management style.
III MYTH Femininity	

Data 5

The quest, consisting of nighttime tasks shared by Auden and Eli, appears denotatively as a series of activities designed to help Auden experience aspects of adolescence she missed. Connotatively, it symbolizes freedom, risk-taking, and emotional healing. For Auden, each task represents a step toward reclaiming spontaneity and resisting the rigid structure of her previous life. For Eli, the quest functions as a coping mechanism that allows him to reconnect with others and gradually process his grief. The shared nature of the quest emphasizes relational growth, showing that identity is shaped through interaction. At the myth level, it reflects the cultural narrative of self-discovery through journey and experience, reinforcing rebellion as a process rather than a single act.

Table 5. The Quest Signification

1. Signifier  The Quest	2. Signified A long search for something that is difficult to find, or an attempt to achieve something difficult.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER The nighttime missions Eli and Auden undertake.	II SIGNIFIED Checklists, games, shared goals.
III MYTH Discovery	

Data 6

The hot dog party is presented denotatively as a Fourth of July celebration involving food, games, and fireworks. Connotatively, it symbolizes belonging, inclusion, and emotional release. The playful chaos of the food fight represents a break from control and the acceptance of spontaneity. For Auden, attending the party marks a significant shift from isolation to social participation, reflecting her willingness to embrace experiences she previously avoided. At the myth level, the event aligns with the cultural image of summer as a time of communal joy and personal transformation, framing rebellion as participation in shared social rituals.

Table 6. Hot Dog Party Signification

1. Signifier  Hot Dog Party	2. Signified A long-standing Fourth of July tradition in Colby. The event brings the community together to celebrate with hot dogs, fireworks, and late-night activities by the beach.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER Auden and Eli joining the carefree beach party.	II SIGNIFIED Firelight, messy food, laughter.
III MYTH Cultural Community	

Data 7

The recurring symbol of coffee appears denotatively as a drink consumed during nighttime scenes. Connotatively, it represents wakefulness, self-discipline, and introspection. Rather than engaging in social activities, Auden uses coffee to sustain solitary reading and reflection, highlighting her preference for controlled and inward experiences. This represents a quieter form of rebellion, expressed through the creation of personal routines outside conventional expectations of teenage behavior. At the myth level, coffee reflects the cultural association with productivity, focus, and autonomy, reinforcing the idea that independence can be achieved through self-regulation.

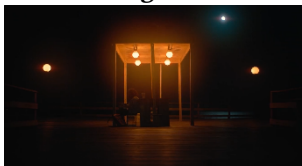
Table 7. Coffee Signification

1. Signifier  Coffee	2. Signified A dark brown powder with a strong flavour and smell that is made by crushing the dark seeds of a tropical bush and used to make a drink.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER A cup of coffee in the quiet nighttime setting.	II SIGNIFIED Private time, self-control, and personal curiosity
III MYTH Productivity	

Data 8

The reading spot functions denotatively as a quiet, secluded place where Auden spends time alone. Connotatively, it symbolizes isolation, emotional distance, and self-protection, while also serving as a space of transition. It is here that Auden begins to shift from solitude to connection through her interactions with Eli. The physical structure of the bridge further reinforces this meaning, symbolizing movement between two states. At the myth level, the reading spot represents a threshold, reflecting the broader cultural idea that adolescence is a period of transition between identities.

Table 8. Reading Spot Signification

1. Signifier  Reading Spot	2. Signified A small, often decorated shelter with no walls, usually in an open space, where people rest and relax.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER A quiet, secluded reading shelter overlooking the water.	II SIGNIFIED Isolation, late-night quiet, ambient ocean, loneliness, introspection.
III MYTH Threshold	

Data 9

Abe's Bike Shop appears denotatively as a named bicycle repair shop. Connotatively, it represents grief, memory, and emotional continuity, particularly in relation to Eli's loss of Abe. The act of naming the shop after Abe transforms it into a shared symbol of remembrance, allowing his presence to persist within everyday life. This reflects a form of resistance to forgetting and emotional closure. At the myth level, it represents the idea that memory can be integrated into daily existence, positioning rebellion as the refusal to erase emotional connections.

Table 9. Abe's Bike Shop Signification

1. Signifier  Abe's Bike Shop	2. Signified The name of a bicycle repair shop associated with an individual called Abe.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER A place named after someone who has passed away.	II SIGNIFIED Remembrance, emotional continuity.
III MYTH Resistance	

Data 10

The characters' outfits are presented denotatively as everyday clothing worn by individuals in the film. Connotatively, they function as visual indicators of personality, emotional state, and social belonging. Auden's initial muted and layered clothing signifies emotional restraint and distance, while her gradual shift toward lighter and more expressive outfits reflects her integration into the group and her evolving identity. This transformation represents a form of rebellion against the expectations imposed on her. At the myth level, clothing reflects the cultural belief that fashion serves as a medium for self-expression and identity formation.

Table 10. Characters' Outfit Signification

1. Signifier  Characters' Outfit	2. Signified A set of clothes worn for a particular occasion or activity.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER Clothing items such as jackets, cardigans, t-shirt, and dresses are literal garments worn by the characters.	II SIGNIFIED Personality, self-expression.
III MYTH Identity	

Data 11

Finally, the prom party is presented denotatively as a celebratory event marking the end of high school. Connotatively, the beach setting redefines the traditional meaning of prom, emphasizing openness, inclusion, and authenticity rather than formality and social pressure. For Auden, participation signifies acceptance of experiences she previously rejected, marking the completion of her transformation. At the myth level, the prom reflects the cultural belief that such events function as rites of passage, shaping identity and social belonging, while also suggesting that these traditions can be redefined.

Table 11. Prom Party Signification

1. Signifier  Prom Party	2. Signified A prom party is a formal party held at the end of the school year for older students in high school.
3. Sign I SIGNIFIER An improvised prom celebration on the beach.	II SIGNIFIED Inclusion, celebration, new identity.
III MYTH Relationship	

The discussion shows that Along for the Ride constructs rebellion through a network of symbolic elements, including objects, places, and shared activities. These symbols are not

isolated; they are interconnected and repeatedly appear throughout the narrative, reflecting the characters' resistance to social expectations, parental control, and emotional constraints. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, rebellion is revealed as a layered meaning that develops across denotation, connotation, and myth.

The bicycle functions as a central symbol of rebellion. While denotatively it is a simple vehicle, connotatively it represents freedom and independence, particularly in Auden's effort to break away from her mother's rigid expectations. For Eli, it also carries emotional weight related to grief and trauma. At the myth level, the bicycle reinforces the cultural idea that adolescence involves distancing oneself from parental authority and establishing autonomy, positioning rebellion as a natural developmental process.

The school tradition highlights rebellion through absence and realization. Although it is denotatively a common graduation ritual, connotatively it represents the teenage experiences Auden has missed. This absence becomes meaningful, as it leads her to question her controlled upbringing. At the myth level, the tradition aligns with rites of passage, emphasizing that rebellion can emerge from the desire to participate in socially shared transitions into adulthood.

The setting of Colby is significant as a symbolic space of transformation. Denotatively, it is the location where Auden spends her summer, but connotatively it represents escape, freedom, and the possibility of change. In contrast to her mother's structured environment, Colby allows for emotional openness and experimentation. At the myth level, it reflects the cultural narrative of summer as a time for discovery and renewal, framing rebellion as the act of stepping outside restrictive environments.

The TIP hangout represents rebellion within social space. Denotatively, it is simply a gathering place for teenagers, but connotatively it symbolizes spontaneity, freedom, and independence from adult supervision. For Auden, TIP introduces a new form of social interaction that contrasts with her previous isolation. At the myth level, it reflects the idea of a "third space," where identity is developed outside institutional control, reinforcing rebellion as social exploration.

Clementine's boutique serves as a symbol of identity transformation. While denotatively it is a workplace, connotatively it represents femininity, self-expression, and emotional openness. Through her experience there, Auden moves beyond an identity defined by academic achievement and begins to engage socially. This shift represents rebellion against her previous constraints. At the myth level, the boutique reflects the belief that appearance and social environments play a key role in shaping identity.

The quest symbolizes rebellion as a process of growth. Denotatively, it consists of a series of nighttime activities, but connotatively it represents self-discovery, risk-taking, and emotional healing. For Auden, it challenges her structured lifestyle, while for Eli, it provides a way to confront grief. At the myth level, the quest aligns with the coming-of-age narrative, where identity is formed through experience and personal challenges.

The hot dog party represents communal rebellion through participation. Denotatively, it is a social event, but connotatively it symbolizes belonging, spontaneity, and emotional release. For Auden, attending the party marks a shift from isolation to inclusion, reflecting her willingness to engage with others. At the myth level, it supports the cultural image of youth gatherings as spaces where identity and belonging are negotiated.

Coffee represents a quieter form of rebellion. While denotatively it is a drink, connotatively it symbolizes wakefulness, independence, and emotional reflection. Its association with

nighttime routines places it outside conventional expectations, allowing Auden to create personal space and autonomy. At the myth level, it reflects cultural associations with maturity, discipline, and self-control.

The reading spot highlights rebellion through introspection. Denotatively, it is a place for reading, but connotatively it represents emotional safety, solitude, and self-reflection. It initially reinforces Auden's isolation, but also becomes a space where connection begins. At the myth level, it supports the idea that personal spaces are essential for identity development, positioning rebellion as the creation of one's own space.

Abe's Bike Shop represents rebellion through memory and resistance to emotional closure. Denotatively, it is a physical location, but connotatively it symbolizes grief and the ongoing presence of loss. Eli's attachment to the shop reflects his struggle to move forward. At the myth level, it reinforces the idea that places can preserve memory, framing rebellion as resistance to forgetting.

The characters' outfits function as visual indicators of identity. Denotatively, they are simply clothing, but connotatively they represent personality, emotional state, and social belonging. Auden's changing style reflects her transformation and growing confidence, marking her movement away from imposed expectations. At the myth level, fashion reflects the cultural belief that appearance expresses individuality, positioning clothing as a visible form of rebellion.

Finally, the prom party represents the culmination of rebellion and transformation. While denotatively it is a formal event, connotatively it symbolizes inclusion, acceptance, and the willingness to embrace previously rejected experiences. For Auden, participation marks her shift from isolation to belonging. At the myth level, prom functions as a rite of passage, reinforcing the idea that adolescence involves redefining identity through shared social experiences.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that rebellion in the film is constructed through interconnected symbolic meanings across multiple layers. These symbols collectively show that rebellion is not expressed through direct opposition, but through gradual changes in behavior, environment, and relationships. It is portrayed as a necessary process of self-discovery, emotional growth, and identity formation.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Along for the Ride* represents rebellion through symbolic elements that convey meaning beyond their literal forms. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, the findings show that rebellion is constructed across denotative, connotative, and myth levels, where ordinary objects, places, and events reflect resistance, freedom, and identity exploration. The film portrays rebellion as a gradual and meaningful process of self-discovery rather than direct conflict. Future research could examine dialogue, soundtracks, and camera techniques, while applying other perspectives to provide broader insights into youth, rebellion, and adolescence.

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