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Older By Sasha Sloan Perspective Semiotic Roland Barthes and Islamic Family Law

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ABSTRACT

Lyrics in music are a form of communication that need to be interpreted. Uncovering their meaning naturally requires a method called semiotics. Analyzing the lyrics of "Older" by Sashara is essential to grasp the message intended. This study is a literature review discussing the song "Older" from Roland Barthes' semiotics perspective and Islamic family law within the concept of a sakinah family. The denotative meaning of "Older"s lyrics relates to aging. The connotative meaning suggests that aging should be accompanied by maturity in facing life, especially in family life. The myth in the song pertains to the dynamics of family life. The Islamic family law perspective is used as a specific framework within the social approach to Muslim communities. This song offers an illustration of how to realize a *sakinah* (happy) family when interpreted wisely and learned from the song.

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INTRODUCTION

Literary works are one way to convey social and emotional messages to their audience, including in song lyrics (Setyawati, 2025). Song lyrics often use metaphors to describe emotions and personal experiences, especially in the topic of romance and relationships between people (Fitri, 2024). These song lyrics are then supported by a series of tones and sounds into a unity called a song (Lagu, 2025) and this song cannot be separated from everyday human life as a form of expression and a means of communication.

Music has become an important means for humans to convey social, emotional, and personal experiences. Because music can influence a person's mood and perspective (Marito, 2024). One of the moving musical works is the song Older by Sasha Sloan. Sasha Sloan, known as "Sadgirl", wrote Older which discusses the themes of family relationships, self-reflection, and regret. Through its lyrics, this song describes a person's emotional journey in facing the reality of a family that is far from perfect, making it relevant to many people.

The song Older by Sasha Sloan is included in the category of text studies in Islamic family law. Because, this song describes the journey of family formation and the dynamics within it. The song describes how two people who love each other choose to get married but over time eventually separate.

The semiotic approach provides an analytical tool that allows the disclosure of the meaning behind the symbols and signs contained in the lyrics. In this study, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is used to explore layers of meaning, including denotative, connotative, and ideological meanings.

Semiotics helps understand how cultural and personal elements influence the message conveyed in this song. The lyrics of Older not only reflect individual experiences, but also represent the challenges of family relationships in a broader social context. This song shows how music can be a powerful medium for channeling emotions and building relationships with listeners. This study will explore the deeper meanings of the song's lyrics, especially those related to family relationships.

Islamic family law, as part of Islamic studies, can be examined through various approaches, one of which is the sociological approach. This perspective focuses on how Islamic family law interacts with societal structures, cultural norms, and social dynamics, providing insight into how legal principles shape and are shaped by real-life human experiences (Nasution, 2017). The sociological approach differs from other religious studies perspectives as it primarily focuses on the interaction between religion and society. Rather than analyzing religious doctrines in isolation, this approach examines how religious beliefs, practices, and institutions influence and are influenced by, social structures, cultural dynamics, and everyday human experiences (Connolly, 2016).

Including contemporary communication patterns through songs that are challenges of the contemporary era. Thus, the study of the song Older by Sasha Sloan in the context of Islamic family law is a sociological study, which examines the relationship between song lyrics and family life. With this approach, research can explore the themes in the song Older in a cultural and spiritual context, as well as explore the meanings relevant to the concept of a sakinah family. The combination of semiotics and Islamic family law provides a richer understanding of the issues raised in this song.

Research on Roland Barthes' semiotics has been widely explored in various contexts. Fadhil Maulana Rais and Dani Fadillah suggest that one way to understand song lyrics is through semiotic analysis (Rais et al., 2025). Similarly, Rahmawati et al.

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argue that semiotic studies can also be applied to memes, particularly those presented in textual form (Rahmawati et al., 2024) since song lyrics themselves are essentially text-based. Additionally, Simanungkalit et al. have examined the traditions of the Batak Toba tribe using Barthes' semiotic framework. (Simanungkalit et al., 2025) However, from various existing studies, no study has been found on the song Older by Sasha Sloan and added with another approach, namely Islamic Family Law. This study is expected to open up new discussion spaces about how music can reflect social and family values in human life.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative methodology with a normative-empirical perspective to explore the meaning in the song "Older" by Sasha Sloan. This descriptive qualitative study emphasizes a close relationship with the data. This study involves a focused analytical approach with an interpretive framework that aims to clarify the data and identify recurring themes (Creswell, 2022).

The stages of the research begin with dividing the lyrics into several semiotic criteria (Lantowa & Rahayu, 2017). These divisions are based on music rules or song lyrics writing conventions. The data in this study are secondary data obtained from literature related to the lyrics of "Older" by Sasha Sloan, Roland Barthes' semiotics, and Islamic family law. The lyrics are then analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotics concept to reveal the meaning of denotation, connotation, and ideology or myth, alongside the approach of Islamic family law in the concept of a sakinah family.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Sasha Sloan, also known as Sasha Alex Sloan, is an American singer and songwriter born on March 11, 1995. Her birth name is Alexandra Artourovna Yatchenko. She has worked with musician King Henry. The two were friends for a couple years before they began dating. They got engaged in March 2022 and married in November that same year (Sloan, 2025)

Sasha began learning music at the age of 5 through her mother, who taught her to play the piano. At 19, she moved from Boston to Los Angeles to pursue her dream of becoming a songwriter (Padila, 2021). Self-Portrait played a significant role in his musical career by enabling him to express himself unapologetically and create relatable, meaningful songs for his fans. This EP addresses themes such as anxiety, depression, and uncertainty (Betancourt, 2019).

Most of the songs sung by Sasha were her own creations. Sasha's life experiences from childhood to adulthood became an inspiration in creating lyrics and music. Some listeners who are fans are really able to enjoy the songs sung by Sasha because of the relevant lyrics and established music. Sasha is known as a singer and songwriter with music and deep meaning.

Table 1. The Lyric of Older by Sasha Sloan

Lyrics	Description
I used to shut my door while my mother screamed in the kitchen	Verse 1
I'd turn the music up, get high and try not to listen	
To every little fight, 'cause neither one was right	
I swore I'd never be like them	Pre-Chorus
But I was just a kid back then	
The older I get the more that I see	
My parents aren't heroes, they're just like me	
And loving is hard, it don't always work	
You just try your best not to get hurt	Chorus
I used to be mad but now I know	
Sometimes it's better to let someone go	
It just hadn't hit me yet	
The older I get	
I used to wonder why, why they could never be happy	Verse 2
I used to close my eyes and pray for a whole 'nother family	
Where everything was fine, one that felt like mine	
I swore I'd never be like them	Pre-Chorus
But I was just a kid back then	

Discussion

Older by Sasha Sloan Perspective Semiotic Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes, as a linguist, believes that a particular language or text can be understood by examining the signs and markers contained in a particular text or language(Fauzan, 2021). This is important for assessing the meaning of language as a means of communication. Barthes then had a concept in meaning through semiotics. Barthes divides his semiotics into four important things, namely: 1) Denotation: the most literal interpretation of a sign. 2) Connotation: the secondary meaning created culturally from a sign. 3) Ideology: a series of codes linked together to create meaning that reinforces the power structure of society. 4) Myth: A recurring story rich in cultural associations (Barthes, 2020).

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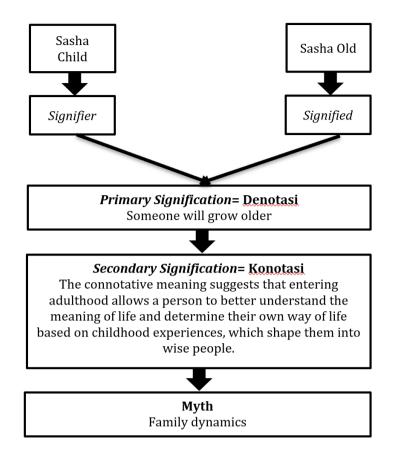


Figure 1. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis in Older by Sasha Sloan

Song lyrics often use metaphors to describe emotions and personal experiences, especially in the topic of romance and relationships between people. That is the pattern that Sahsa took in creating the lyrics of the song Older. The creation of the song Older by Sasha Sloan was motivated by her parents' marriage life. The marriage was hit by quarrels that led to divorce so that little Sasha's life (child) became neglected, afraid and traumatized. Little Sasha did not want to see the commotion that occurred between her mother and father.

I used to shut my door while my mother screamed in the kitchen I'd turn the music up, get high and try not to listen To every little fight, 'cause neither one was righ" (Verse 1)

Sasha considered not wanting to have a family relationship like what her parents built later when she was an adult. But she could only witness various "fights" quarrels, disharmonious relationships, to divorce and in her childhood and could not do anything. This indicates that the child is a victim of a divorce.

"I swore I'd never be like them But I was just a kid back then" (Pre-Chorus)

Increasing age signifies maturity of mind in thinking, Sahsa believes that everyone will do the same thing when faced with a "fight" condition in the family. The keyword is love. An action that demands responsibility (Fromm, 2006) and not

everyone is able to do it but must try their best not to hurt themselves or their partner. However, if the relationship cannot be maintained, separation can be a solution to the "fight". And various wise things in dealing with anger from relationships that will not be obtained as you grow older into adulthood.

The older I get the more that I see
My parents aren't heroes, they're just like me
And loving is hard, it don't always work
You just try your best not to get hurt
I used to be mad but now I know
Sometimes it's better to let someone go
It just hadn't hit me yet
The older I get (Chorus)

The implications of a marriage should bring goodness. Happiness in family life, harmonious relationships and offspring are its forms. This is a general picture of society in assessing relationships born from marriage. However, it is also necessary to realize that each person's family life has its own path and does not necessarily go according to the expectations mentioned earlier.

"I used to wonder why, why they could never be happy I used to close my eyes and pray for a whole 'nother family Where everything was fine, one that felt like mine" (Verse 2)

Denotative Meaning

Denotation refers to the literal meaning of the words in the lyrics. For example, when Sloan talks about "getting older," denotatively, it refers to the process of aging. The lyrics in "Older" literally discuss childhood memories, relationships with parents, and how those experiences shape one's personality and outlook on life. There is a reflective sentiment toward the past, which is often perceived as simpler but is, in fact, full of complexities.

In general, the denotative meaning of Older is Sasha's outpouring of her heart towards her parents' married life. Little Sasha at that time considered love to be a great thing, but difficult to do. As a result, anger arises and gradually she will understand the life choices she has made.

Connotative Meaning

Connotation is a deeper or symbolic meaning. In this context, "getting older" can symbolize a profound understanding of life, relationships, and human struggles. Barthes teaches that signs have deeper meanings. In "Older," the experience of growing and beginning to understand the humanity of parents carries connotations of emotional transformation, self-acceptance, and reconciliation with past trauma. Sloan conveys that we do not only look back on the past with nostalgia but also with recognition of the struggles and weaknesses of those around us.

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Sasha realized that being a child is not the time to fully understand life. Sasha wants to make "Older" a learning medium in living life, especially in family life. She shared this experience because she thought that other families might experience similar things. In the end, she wants this song to have a positive impact as a life lesson (Genius, 2020).

Myth

Barthes also discusses "myth," which refers to how signs in popular culture can reflect certain ideologies. Sloan's song often reflects emotional struggles and introspection, which can be seen as a modern myth about the search for identity and self-acceptance. The song portrays the modern myth of family as both a place for the formation of identity and a source of emotional challenges. Sloan touches on the universal theme that family is often a place to learn to love, forgive, and overcome mistakes together.

The dynamics of family life must be understood as a necessity. Every family has its own conditions. Sahsa compares the family life of her parents who are fighting and divorcing with the family life of her friend who is happy. This is normal for a child to do, but not wise for an adult to do. The meaning that Sasha wants to convey is that a marriage should always bring happiness to all family members. Of course, this concept is believed by all existing social and religious systems.

It takes a wise attitude in enjoying this song. Don't let enjoying music get lost in the lyrics or stories in the song. Including this Older song. This song should be enjoyed enough and as a form of nostalgia about family life that may not always go well, or even change the way of looking at family life.

Older by Sasha Sloan Perspective Islamic Family Law

The objects of discussion in Islamic family law include sources of Islamic law, namely the Qur'an, Sunnah, certain events that require legal provisions, and texts on family life (Nufus & Silmi, 2024). The formation of a Muslim family that develops into a Muslim society requires knowledge of various Islamic legal principles (Herlina, 2025) respect, kindness, responsibility, and open communication. (Shakhboz & Student, 2025) Transformation of the relationship between husband and wife is very necessary in realizing a harmonious family as the goal of marriage in Islam. This transformation is expressed in the perspective, the existence of gender justice, the loss of patriarchal culture and supporting equality (Hadjar, 2025).

Islamic family law must provide certainty and benefits, especially in the digital era (Musarrofa & Muttaqin, 2024) These efforts must be accompanied by the renewal of Islamic jurisprudence as an analysis of Islamic family law that is able to answer socio-cultural problems in the modern era (Aslati et al., 2024). The order of social life must also be considered in determining Islamic family law (Zayyadi et al., 2023). These rules are still within the framework of their principles, namely to

compile a family system and its harmony (Arfiansyah et al., 2023) as well as a human social system based on Islamic law (Nasohah, 2024).

Islamic family law, which begins with the bonds of marriage, aims for a sakinah family or a happy family as the goal of marriage. This purpose is stated in QS Ar-Rum (30):21. A sakinah family, meaning a peaceful or calm family, is enveloped by mawaddah (love) and rahmah (affection). M. Quraish Shihab explains that the meaning of mawaddah is love based on certain reasons, such as physical attraction or specific qualities. Meanwhile, rahmah refers to feelings of compassion or mercy, arising from empathy or life shared together, ultimately leading to tranquility (sakinah) (Fauzan, 2020).

To build a harmonious and sakinah family, every couple preparing for marriage should start early, ensuring they develop strong moral, material, mental, and spiritual foundations. Their commitment to creating and sustaining a lasting family must be firmly rooted in religious teachings and social values, guiding them in shaping a stable and meaningful life together (Fauzan & Amroni, 2020). Family communication is a significant factor in shaping a sakinah family. Open, honest, and meaningful interactions help strengthen bonds, foster understanding, and create a peaceful and harmonious household (Herni et al., 2024).

Islamic family law, as part of Islamic studies, can be examined through various approaches, one of which is the sociological approach. This perspective focuses on how Islamic family law interacts with societal structures, cultural norms, and social dynamics, providing insight into how legal principles shape and are shaped by real-life human experiences (Nasution, 2017). The sociological approach differs from other religious studies perspectives as it primarily focuses on the interaction between religion and society. Rather than analyzing religious doctrines in isolation, this approach examines how religious beliefs, practices, and institutions influence and are influenced by, social structures, cultural dynamics, and everyday human experiences (Connolly, 2016), including contemporary communication patterns through songs that are challenges of the contemporary era. Thus, the study of the song Older by Sasha Sloan in the context of Islamic family law is a sociological study, which examines the relationship between song lyrics and family life.

Islamic family law views that family life will determine the lives of its members. That is why Islam makes a harmonious family the goal of marriage. The goal of a harmonious family needs to be pursued by minimizing conflict in the family. So that the impact of realizing a harmonious family can be felt by all family members until they are old which is used as a pattern of life.

"I swore I'd never be like them" It is a form of awareness in perceiving the ideal concept of a family, where conflict within the family (syiqaq) is something that ideally should not occur, as reflected in the lyrics. "I used to shut my door while my mother screamed in the kitchen, I'd turn the music up, get high and try not to listen, To every little fight, 'cause neither one was righ". Aligned with the concept

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in Islamic family law, which states that realizing a sakinah or happy family requires genuine effort from all family members, especially the husband and wife, as expressed in the lyrics "You just try your best not to get hurt"

The mature attitude that grows with age and the understanding of which concepts are good and ideal in family life can lead to the wise conditions stated in the lyrics "The older I get the more that I see". The lyrics "My parents aren't heroes, they're just like me" from Sasha Sloan's song Older reflect the realization that parents are not perfect or flawless. As children, we often see them as figures who know everything and are always right. However, as we grow older, we begin to understand that they are also human beings—with mistakes, struggles, and emotions just like we do. This line reflects a shift in perspective in family relationships, where one begins to accept that parents are not always strong heroes, but individuals trying to navigate life with all its challenges. This reflects maturity in understanding that every family has its own complexities.

The lyrics "*loving is hard*" indicate that love as a foundation in a marriage relationship requires responsibility, where the rights and obligations of each family member must be fulfilled. Seeing parents fight is not a reason not to get married. The more mature a person is, the more they will understand why husband and wife can fight which in Islam is called syiqaq. While the definition of "older" as maturity becomes the basis for a person's attitude and behavior in family life.

Islam views divorce as permissible under certain conditions. For example, when the family's living conditions are no longer harmonious and are worried about having a negative impact. This is what Sahsa seems to want to describe in the lyrics "I used to be mad but now I know, Sometimes it's better to let someone go". Overall, this again describes the journey of family life that is relevant to Muslim family life. Marriage is expected to bring happiness, have children, and a lasting family life is the expected norm.

CONCLUSIONS

"Older" by Sasha Sloan, analyzed through Roland Barthes' semiotics concept, has a denotative meaning about the life of an individual continuing to progress, eventually leading them to adulthood. Its connotative meaning suggests that entering adulthood enables one to understand the meaning of life better and to decide their own way of living based on childhood experiences, which shape them into being wise. Meanwhile, the myth derived from the song lyrics revolves around the concept of family dynamics.

Islamic family law interprets each family as having its own unique relationships, dynamics, and harmony. Islam does not allow the comparison of one family's life with another. This is acceptable if the intention is to emulate good values and abandon bad ones. Islam emphasizes the concept of a "sakinah" family, which must be pursued by all family members to achieve mutual happiness. This study

recommends that further research be conducted on efforts to explore the meaning of song lyrics and their influence on a person and the impact caused by the song. This is necessary because songs can be accessed and listened to by anyone across ethnicities, cultures, social systems and even religions.

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