

Analysis Semiotics *Of The Abadi Nan Jaya* Film Poster Based On Charles Sanders Peirce's Theory

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Abstract

A film poster is a visual communication medium that not only functions as a promotional tool, but also as a sign system capable of constructing meaning, shaping perceptions, and directing audience expectations towards the film's content. This study aims to analyze the meaning contained in the Abadi Nan Jaya film poster using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory which includes representation, objects, interpretants, and the classification of signs in the form of icons, indexes, and symbols. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a semiotic analysis method. The primary data is the official Abadi Nan Jaya film poster which is analyzed based on visual elements such as color, typography, character expressions, image composition, and cultural background. The results show that the poster is effective in constructing a representation of the post-plague world through the dominance of dark colors, zombie visuals, and the characters' expressions of fear. In addition to presenting a horror film image, the poster also contains a deeper meaning about the misuse of traditional knowledge, human ambition for immortality, and the collapse of the social order due to the exploitation of culture and scientific knowledge. The use of a village background and traditional herbs strengthens the local Indonesian identity, thus distinguishing this film from zombie films in general. Thus, the Abadi Nan Jaya poster not only functions as a promotional medium, but also as a cultural communication medium that conveys social criticism through a visual sign system. The findings of this study are expected to enrich semiotic studies in the field of visual communication and Indonesian film.

Keywords: Semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce, Film Poster, Visual Communication, Local Culture, Horror, Zombies.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the Indonesian film industry in recent years has shown significant improvement, both in terms of production quality and the diversity of themes covered. Film is no longer understood solely as a medium of entertainment, but also as a communication medium capable of representing social, cultural, and ideological realities, and even critiquing social life. Every element in a film, including the poster as a promotional medium, is designed to build a connection between the filmmaker and potential audience through various visual signs that carry specific meanings. According to Hall (2021), representation in media is the process of producing meaning through the use of socially agreed-upon language and visual signs. A film poster can be understood as a form of representation that conveys a specific message before the audience watches the film online (Hall, 2021).

Film posters have a strategic function in the film industry because they are the first medium to introduce a film's identity to the public. Poster designs not only contain information about the title, cast, and release date but also convey atmosphere, conflict, characters, and genre through various visual elements such as color, composition, typography, lighting, and expression. Lester (2022) visual communication works through the relationship between design elements and the audience's experience, allowing each visual component to construct a specific interpretation. Analyzing film posters is important because the meaning conveyed is not always explicit but often hidden behind the use of symbols and visual signs (Lester, 2022).



Picture 1. Poster Abadi Nan Jaya



In the study of knowledge communication, the process of conveying meaning through signs, studied in the field of semiotics, observes that every form of communication consists of a system of reciprocal signs that are interconnected, producing a specific meaning for the recipient. One of the main figures in semiotic studies is Charles Sanders Peirce, who developed a triadic model consisting of representamen, object, and interpretant. According to Chandler (2022), Peirce's model allows researchers to understand how meaning is formed through the relationship between the physical form of the sign, the object it refers to, and the interpretation that arises in the audience's mind. This approach is widely used to study visual media because it can explain the process of meaning production more comprehensively than semiotic approaches that focus solely on the relationship between two elements (Chandler, 2022).

Semiotic theory also groups signs into three main categories: icons, indices, and symbols. An icon is a sign that bears a direct resemblance to an object, an index indicates a causal or existential relationship with the object, while a symbol derives its meaning through social and cultural conventions. Danesi (2023) these three types of signs are almost always present simultaneously in visual media, forming a complex communication system. Analyzing icons, indices, and symbols is crucial for uncovering the hidden meanings in film posters (Danesi, 2023).

The horror film genre is one of the fastest-growing genres in the Indonesian film industry. Unlike conventional horror films, which are dominated by supernatural elements, recent developments demonstrate the combination of horror with local culture, science, and even zombie themes. This change demonstrates the existence of narrative innovation aimed at providing new experiences for audiences. The modern horror genre increasingly uses social, cultural, and humanitarian crises as metaphors to construct conflicts that are more relevant to contemporary public life (Keller, 2024).

The films *Eternal* and *Victorious* are interesting examples of this development, combining the concept of zombies with traditional Indonesian culture, particularly through the use of herbal concoctions or herbal remedies as central elements in the stories. The presence of local cultural elements sets this film apart from typical Western zombie films, which associate epidemics with laboratory experiments, biological viruses, or scientific disasters. In the Indonesian cultural context, herbal medicine is currently understood as a symbol of health, ancestral heritage, and traditional healing practices. In this film, the meaning of experiential transformation becomes a source of disaster. Cultural symbols are constantly reinterpreted according to evolving social contexts, so their meaning can shift when placed within different narratives (Geertz, 2021).

The posters for the films "Eternal" and "Victorious" visually display the dominant colors





of black, red, and gray, creating a tense atmosphere. The visualization of zombies with their decaying bodies, aggressive expressions, and the traditional village backdrop demonstrates a combination of global horror elements and local culture. The poster's composition not only aims to attract potential viewers but also builds expectations about the central conflict that will be presented in the film. Rose (2022) explains that each visual element in media has a reciprocal representational function that supports the development of overall meaning, allowing for separate analysis (Rose, 2022).

In addition to creating a horror atmosphere, these posters also convey various social messages that can be interpreted through a semiotic approach. The presence of zombies can be understood as a symbol of societal destruction, while the elixir of youth symbolizes human ambition to transcend the limits of nature. From a cultural communication perspective, the use of local symbols allows Indonesian audiences to connect their cultural experiences with the narrative presented in the film. Storey (2021) states that popular culture consistently utilizes symbols familiar to the public, making the message more easily accepted and interpreted by the audience.

Previous researchers have studied movie posters. Most studies focus on semiotic analysis of posters for horror films, superhero films, and dramas using the approaches of Roland Barthes or Ferdinand de Saussure. Research shows that movie posters can construct meaning through the relationship between visual elements and sociocultural context. However, research specifically examining zombie-themed movie posters within an Indonesian cultural context using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory is still relatively limited. Emphasize that each culture has a distinct visual system, so semiotic analysis must consider the cultural context in which signs are produced and interpreted (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021).

The uniqueness of the Abadi Nan Jaya poster lies in its ability to combine two distinct systems of representation: traditional Indonesian culture and modern horror. This complex combination of product systems creates a sense of meaning, as viewers interpret zombies not only as a biological threat but also as a metaphor for moral decay, the misuse of knowledge, and the breakdown of social solidarity. Signs never have a single meaning, but are always open to possible interpretations influenced by the experience, culture, and knowledge of the message recipient (Eco, 2022).

Based on the description above, this study observes that the "Abadi Nan Jaya" film poster is a relevant object for analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Analysis of the representamen, objects, interpretants, icons, indexes, and symbols are expected to uncover the various hidden meanings behind the poster's visual elements. This study also seeks to





demonstrate how film posters can function as a cultural communication medium that not only promotes the film but also represents Indonesian values, social critiques, and cultural identity. Argues that meaning is always born through a continuous process of interpretation, so that each sign itself has the potential to generate new meanings according to the social and cultural context (Atkin, 2024).

Based on the above background, this study aims to analyze the sign system present in the "Abadi Nan Jaya" film poster using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Specifically, this study will identify the forms of representation, objects, and interpretants that appear on the poster, classify the signs into icons, indexes, and symbols, and interpret the cultural meanings and social critiques represented through these visual elements. The research results are expected to contribute to the development of semiotic studies, visual communication, and Indonesian cinema studies, as well as serve as a reference for further research examining film-based promotional media in local culture (Danesi, 2023; Hall, 2021).

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative study method with an analytical approach based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics. Qualitative methods were chosen because this research aims to deeply understand, interpret, and explain the meaning of the visual signs found on the film poster for Abadi Nan Jaya, rather than statistically measuring relationships between variables. Qualitative research focuses on exploring the meanings constructed by individuals and groups regarding social or cultural phenomena. In the context of this research, this phenomenon is the visual representations found on film posters as a medium of cultural communication (Creswell & Poth, 2022).

A semiotic approach was used because film posters incorporate visual signs that carry various denotative and connotative meanings. This research specifically utilizes Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic model, which views signs as a triadic relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant. This study also identifies the classification of signs based on three main categories: icon, index, and symbol. Peirce's approach was chosen because it explains the relationship between visual form, the objects represented, and the process of meaning formation in the minds of viewers more comprehensively than semiotic models that focus solely on the relationship between these two elements (Chandler, 2022).

The object of this research is the official poster for the film "Abadi Nan Jaya," published as a promotional medium for the film. This poster was chosen because it is the first visual representation potential viewers receive before watching the film online. The poster contains





various visual elements, such as illustrated characters, color, lighting, typography, background, facial expressions, image composition, and cultural symbols, which are the primary focus of the analysis. All of these visual elements are understood as a reciprocal system of signs that are interconnected in constructing a message of communication to the audience (Rose, 2022).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. The primary data, the official poster for the film "Abadi Nan Jaya," was analyzed directly using Peirce's semiotic theory. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various relevant scientific references, including books, national and international journal articles, proceedings, and previous research on semiotics, visual communication, poster design, popular culture, and Charles Sanders Peirce's theory published between 2021 and 2026. Secondary data was used to strengthen the interpretation of visual signs and compare the research results with previous research (Danesi, 2023).

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation and bibliographic studies. The documentation study involved a thorough observation of the poster, then identifying each visual element that emerged, such as the use of color, character illustrations, facial expressions, backgrounds, typography, lighting, supporting objects, and the poster's overall composition. Next, each element was documented and categorized according to the concepts of representation, object, interpretant, icon, index, and symbol. The literature review involved collecting various scholarly literature related to Peirce's semiotic theory, visual communication, popular culture, and studies of film posters to support the analysis process (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021).

The data analysis technique followed Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis model through several stages. The first stage was representation identification, which involved an inventory of all visual signs directly visible on the poster, including the dominant color, zombie illustration, character expressions, title typography, lighting, and the village background, the primary visual element. The second stage was object identification, which involved determining the design or reality referred to by each representation, such as a zombie outbreak, societal collapse, local culture, and the human ambition for immortality. The third stage is interpretive analysis, which involves interpreting the meanings that emerge from the relationship between representation and object based on the cultural context, social aspects, and narrative of the film. This stage allows researchers to understand how viewers construct their perceptions of the poster before watching the film (Atkin, 2024).

Next, the study classifies each sign into Peirce's three main categories: icon, index, and symbol. Icons are identified based on their visual resemblance to the object they represent,





indexes are analyzed through the causal or existential relationships indicated by the sign, while symbols are understood based on the meanings constructed through cultural conventions and social agreements. The classification results are then comprehensively interpreted to explain how the Eternal Nan Jaya poster constructs a representation of horror, local cultural identity, and social critique through a system of interconnected, reciprocal visual signs (Danesi, 2023; Chandler, 2022).

To ensure the credibility of the research results, theoretical triangulation was conducted, comparing the interpretation of the results based on Charles Sanders Peirce's theory with various literature on visual communication, popular culture, and contemporary semiotic research. The resulting interpretations are also linked to the Indonesian cultural context as the background of the main film, so that the meaning obtained is not only textual but also contextual. Thus, the research findings are expected to have adequate academic validity and contribute to the development of semiotics, visual communication, and Indonesian cinema studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that the poster for the film Abadi Nan Jaya utilizes various visual elements as a sign system that collectively constructs meanings about horror, local culture, and social criticism. Based on an analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, the signs contained in the poster can be identified through three main components: representamen, object, and interpretant. They are classified into three types: icon, index, and symbol. All of these elements are interconnected, forming the audience's initial perception of the film's story before they experience the entire narrative.

In general, the poster features predominantly black, red, and gray colors with minimal lighting, creating a dark and tense atmosphere. The main visual, a zombie figure with a decomposing body, combined with the frightened expressions of the human characters, reinforces the representation of the film's central conflict. Furthermore, the background, decorated with village elements from traditional Indonesian culture, serves as a distinctive feature, indicating that the story embraces not only horror but also integrates local cultural identity. These findings demonstrate that the poster functions as a visual communication medium capable of conveying narrative information while building emotional engagement among viewers through the use of complex visual signs (Rose, 2022).



DISCUSSION

Representational Analysis

In Charles Sanders Peirce's theory, representation is a form of physical sign that can be directly observed by the senses. The representation on the poster for Abadi Nan Jaya is manifested through various explicit visual elements, establishing the film's identity as a zombie-themed horror film. The dominant black color on the poster conveys a sense of mystery, death, and threat, while red associates' blood, violence, and danger. Gray is used to reinforce the gloomy atmosphere and depict environmental destruction, the consequences of an epidemic. Color in visual communication has both representational and interpersonal functions because it can simultaneously influence emotions, influencing the audience's perception of the message (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021).

Beyond the use of color, the illustration of a zombie is the most dominant representation. The decaying corpse, empty eyes, pale face, and aggressive movements are visual forms universally associated with living beings who have lost their humanity. This immediate depiction of the audience in the horror genre and the conflict surrounding the zombie outbreak. Representation functions as a physical form of a sign, serving as the starting point for the semiotic process before the audience connects it to a specific object (Chandler, 2022).

The expressions of the human characters also serve as important representations. Fearful faces, bodies poised to flee, and defensive postures signal an emergency situation. Body language suggests that the film's main conflict is not simply about confronting zombies, but also about surviving amidst the chaos. The bold, sharp typography of the film's title further reinforces the sense of threat while providing a visual identity that is easily recognizable to the audience.

The representations on the Abadi Nan Jaya poster form an effective visual communication system because all design elements complement each other in creating a horror atmosphere. The combination of color, character illustrations, image composition, and figure expressions successfully build audience expectations regarding the film's genre, conflict, and atmosphere.

Object of Analysis

An object in Peirce's semiotics is the reality, concept, or idea referenced by a representation. Based on the analysis, the primary theme represented in the poster is the threat of a zombie outbreak to society. The presence of zombies not only depicts monsters but also represents a social situation in crisis, uncertainty, and destruction.

Another object that emerges is the villages with traditional Indonesian culture that serve



as the main story setting. The use of simple houses, ornamental culture, and a rural atmosphere demonstrates that the film emphasizes local identity as a key element in the narrative. This distinguishes *Eternal and Prosperous* from typical Western zombie films, which use metropolitan cities or laboratories as their settings. Cultural representation in media allows audiences to understand the identity of something public through collectively recognized visual symbols (Hall, 2021).

The next object is the elixir of youth that is the cause of the epidemic. In Indonesian culture, herbal medicine is a symbol of health, balance in life, and ancestral heritage. However, this film reverses this meaning, portraying the elixir as a source of disaster. This transformation of meaning demonstrates an existential critique of the ambitions of those who attempt to transcend the limits of nature in order to attain eternal life.

The objects depicted also encompass the collapse of the social order. The panicking society, the spread of infection, and the struggle for survival illustrate the loss of security, solidarity, and social order. Thus, the objects in the poster are not only related to a horror story but also depict broader humanitarian issues.

Interpretive Analysis

Interpretive is the meaning formed in the viewer's mind when connecting the representation with the object. Based on the analysis, the first interpretation that emerges is fear. The dominant dark colors, the zombie illustrations, and the panicked expressions directly evoke the perception of danger threatening human life.

The next interpretation is the theme of the struggle for survival. The characters' positions supporting each other to protect and evade the zombie attack indicate that this film presents not only horror elements but also human conflict. The audience can understand that the characters in the film will face difficult choices to maintain their lives.

Beyond fear, the poster also raises an interpretation of social criticism of human ambition. The original potion intended to achieve immortality turns into a source of destruction. This interpretation suggests that the exploitation of inherited knowledge and the misuse of cultural heritage can have uncontrollable consequences. That visual signs often contain ideological meanings that are not directly visible but are understood through the process of cultural interpretation (Danesi, 2023).

Another interpretation is the breakdown of society. Zombies are understood not simply as monsters, but rather as metaphors for moral decay, the loss of social solidarity, and the fragility of the structures of public life in the face of crisis. Thus, the poster conveys the message



that the greatest threat is not just the epidemic itself, but also the loss of human values.

Analysis of Icons, Indexes, and Symbols

An icon is a sign that bears a direct resemblance to the object it represents. In the Abadi Nan Jaya poster, the zombie image is the primary icon because it directly resembles the general description of a living creature that has turned undead. Open wounds, rotting skin, blank eyes, and aggressive expressions are visual characteristics universally recognized in the horror genre.

The backdrop of simple traditional village houses and local cultural attributes are also icons because they resemble the conditions of real Indonesian rural communities. The cultural celebration decorations depicted in the poster resemble community rituals, reinforcing the film's local identity.

Indexes indicate a causal or existential relationship with an object. In the poster, the elixir of youth serves as an index connecting cause and effect, namely the emergence of a zombie outbreak. Zombie bites serve as an index of the spread of infection because physical wounds indicate the process of disease transmission.

The atmosphere of public panic, environmental damage, and the characters' expressions of fear are all indicators of the onset of a major disaster. Furthermore, the presence of a group of survivors sheltering in a place serves as an indicator of the state of emergency and the collapse of the community's security system. This relationship demonstrates how visual signs can explain the story without the need for verbal explanation.

A symbol is a sign whose meaning is constructed through cultural conventions. In the poster for Abadi Nan Jaya, herbal medicine becomes a symbol of Indonesian cultural identity. Traditionally, herbal medicine has been understood as a means of healing and ancestral heritage, but in the film, its meaning is transformed into a reason for disaster. This change conveys a critique of the misuse of traditional knowledge for personal gain.

Zombies also serve as a symbol of social collapse. In various works of popular culture, zombies are often interpreted as representing greed, the loss of morality, and the collapse of civilization. In this poster, this symbolism is reinforced through the visual transformation of the village into a place of chaos.

The disintegrating families and communities depicted in the poster symbolize fragility and social solidarity in the face of crisis. Symbols are understood not only through their visual form, but also through the audience's cultural experiences.

The results of this study align with those of Kress and van Leeuwen (2021), who stated that visual communication is built through the relationship between color, composition,



perspective, and object placement to create meaning. The posters for the films *Eternal* and *Victorious* demonstrate that all visual elements work in an integrated manner to create a horror atmosphere while guiding the audience's interpretation of the film's central conflict.

Hall's (2021) argument regarding cultural representation in media. The use of village traditions, herbal remedies, and local rituals demonstrates that Indonesian cultural identity plays a significant role in constructing the poster's meaning. Cultural symbols not only serve as a backdrop for the story but also serve as a means to convey social critiques about the exploitation of tradition and the human ambition for immortality.

Chandler (2022) and Danesi (2023), who argue that Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory can reveal the complex relationship between visual form, the objects represented, and audience interpretation. An analysis of the representation, objects, and interpretants indicates that the posters for *Eternal Nan Jaya* not only convey promotional information but also construct an ideological narrative about human relationships, culture, scientific knowledge, and social collapse.

Compared to previous studies that generally analyzed Western horror film posters, this study provides a new contribution through an analysis of zombie films rooted in Indonesian culture. The integration of local cultural elements with the modern horror genre produces a unique sign system, enriching the study of visual communication semiotics in the context of Indonesian cinema. Thus, the *Abadi Nan Jaya* poster can be understood as a medium of cultural representation as well as a critical medium for social construction through a visual sign system according to Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic perspective.

IMPLICATION

The results of this study have theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of semiotics, particularly the application of Charles Sanders Peirce's theory in the analysis of visual media and Indonesian film posters. The findings demonstrate that Peirce's triadic model is able to reveal the relationship between visual form, the object represented, and the audience's interpretation process, thus providing a deeper understanding of the meaning-making process in visual communication.

Practically, this research can serve as a reference for graphic designers, filmmakers, visual communication practitioners, and the creative industry in designing film posters that are not only aesthetically appealing but also rich in cultural meaning and social messages. The use of local cultural elements combined with popular genres has proven to produce a unique visual identity and increase the communication's appeal to the public.





This research is expected to serve as a reference for future researchers developing semiotic studies in various other visual media, such as film trailers, digital advertising, social media, comics, animation, and other audiovisual works. Future research could also combine Charles Sanders Peirce's theory with a multimodal approach or audience reception analysis to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the internal visual communication process within the Indonesian film industry.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to uncover the meaning contained in the poster for the film Abadi Nan Jaya through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the poster functions not only as a promotional medium for the film but also as a visual communication medium that conveys various cultural, social, and ideological messages through a complex system of signs. The relationship between representation, object, and interpretant shows that each visual element on the poster has a complementary communicative function, thus forming the audience's initial perception of the film's content and theme.

In this representational aspect, the poster is dominated by the use of dark colors, zombie illustrations, the characters' frightened expressions, bold typography, and the backdrop of a traditional Indonesian village. All of these elements successfully create a horror atmosphere while providing a strong visual identity for the film. The use of integrated visual composition demonstrates that the poster design is not only oriented towards aesthetics but also serves as a means of conveying narrative messages.

In this object aspect, the visual signs refer to various concepts, namely the zombie outbreak, the collapse of society, the misuse of traditional potions, human ambition leading to immortality, and the collapse of social values. The presence of local culture in the form of traditional villages and herbal remedies indicates that the film emphasizes Indonesian cultural identity as a crucial part of its narrative construction. Thus, this poster not only represents a horror conflict but also raises cultural and humanitarian issues.

Emerging interpretations indicate that the poster is able to evoke fear, tension, curiosity, and awareness of the negative impacts of uncontrolled human ambition. Zombies are interpreted not only as terrifying creatures but also as a metaphor for moral decay, the loss of social solidarity, and the collapse of public life structures as a consequence of the misuse of inherited knowledge and culture.

Analysis of icons, indices, and symbols shows that the poster utilizes all three types of signs simultaneously. The icon emerges through the visualization of the zombie and the village



environment, which resemble real objects. The index examines the cause and effect relationship between plants, infection, and the spread of the plague. The symbol is embodied through the cultural meaning of herbal medicine, concepts of immortality, family, and zombies, as well as representations of social collapse. The combination of these three types of signs within this system produces effective visual communication in conveying messages to audiences.

This study demonstrates that Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory can comprehensively explain the process of meaning formation in visual media. The Abadi dan Berjaya poster not only communicates the horror genre, but also presents representations of local culture as well as social criticism about human ambition, misuse of traditional knowledge, and fragile social life when facing a crisis.

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