

Meaning Visualization: A Saussurean Semiotic Analysis of the Film

Merry Riana

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ARTICLE INFO

DOI: 10.38043/commusty.v2i1.4806

Article history:

Received 2023-03-11

Revised 2023-05-01

Accepted 2023-05-23

Keywords:

Semiotic Analysis;
Representation of Meaning;
Qualitative methods;
Inspiration;
Movie;

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to determine the motivational messages that are sent in the movie "Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream" to identify the inspirational messages. The semiotic theory developed by Ferdinand de Saussure is used in this study. Through the use of this theoretical method, the meaning of signified and signifiers that are present in the movie Merry Riana is investigated. Identification of signified and signifier aspects in the film Merry Riana is carried out through variations of scenes that appear in the film. Apart from that, the method used is a qualitative approach by collecting data through observation and interviews with several sources who have insight into the film or were inspired by the film Merry Riana. The informants who conducted this interview included general audiences, film academics, and the film community, totaling nine informants. The result of the research finds that the film Merry Riana can inspire its viewers, and there are many inspirational messages for the audience in the film Merry Riana.

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1. Introduction

Films contain a message that can be conveyed to audiences who gather in specific locations, and films can be used as an audio-visual communication medium. Film is also considered a powerful mass communication tool because much information is conveyed quickly to the target audience through audio-visual format. When watching a film, the audience can travel through time and space, revealing things about life and impacting the audience. (Asri, 2020)

Some viewers may see films as entertainment, while others see them as teaching tools for the audience. When making films, some make films based on personal experiences or actual events that are adapted for the big screen by film directors. Films always reveal truths that emerge and change in society before the film is projected onto the screen. With films, someone can escape for a moment from the monotony of everyday life and can provide entertainment. In the era of globalization, watching films has become a necessity in one's life.

Various film genres have been created to entertain and spread messages to audiences when watching films. It is believed that the power of the audio-visual format in films can influence the emotions and morals of the audience. Films are also often used by their creators as a tool to express implicit moral messages to the intended audience. Therefore, a film also contains messages intended for the audience to interpret or decode, which can influence every film viewer.

In the year 2014, MD Pictures was the company that distributed the movie *Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream*. This film premiered on December 24, 2014. This film has a duration of 105 minutes. Manoj Punjabi and Dhamoo Punjabi direct the film. The synopsis of the film *Merry Riana* is that she is a 26-year-old Indonesian woman who made her first million dollars in Singapore.

Chelsea Islan plays *Merry Riana*, and she plays a high school graduate from Indonesia who is forced to be exiled to Singapore due to riots in Indonesia. *Merry Riana* needs a place to stay while she stays in Singapore so she can live on her own. At the time of its release, the film *Merry Riana* was watched by more than 600,000 viewers because it had a significant impact, and this film became popular in Indonesia.

Merry Riana also received the Biography Film Appreciation at the Indonesian Film Appreciation (AFI) in 2015 in Yogyakarta. This film is inspiring and contains various moral messages, including being a person who never gives up under any circumstances. When living our lives, we also have to be careful in calculating and analyzing; in making decisions, we also have to think carefully and not be in a hurry.

Visual communication is closely related to our daily lives, and visual design can also make our daily activities easier. The modernization definition of in-depth visual communication can include logic, knowledge-based reasoning, and pragmatic character (Habsari, 2016). Therefore, a person's dialogue in *Merry Riana*'s film can absorb many concepts and sentiments through visualization, which is always associated with visual displays. The main character in the film, *Merry Riana*, can also be easily understood by the audience and has an inspirational meaning Kevinia, C., putri syahara, putri sayahara, Aulia, S., & Astari, T. (2022).

Visualization usually conveys information through animation, diagrams, and engineering images. Visualization is related to representation, for example, in paintings, works of art, or three-dimensional models. Visualization is expressing something through visuals, writing, maps, charts, and other media (Qomariyah, 2023). The purpose of this visualization is to make concepts that are initially abstract and easy to understand (Hayadi, 2017).

Several strategies for visualizing certain aspects are also needed, so the film must have an interesting storyline (plot) to attract the audience's interest (Nugroho, 2017). The visualization starts from the film's visualization characteristics, communicates the film's message, and looks like a real character (Maulida, 2019). *Merry Riana* is considered to have an exciting and inspiring storyline, so viewers are interested in watching this film.

Based on previous research titled *Representation of Poverty in South Korean Films (Semiotic Analysis of the Saussure Model in the Film Parasite)* (Angela & Winduwati, 2019), the results showed that the film *Parasite* explains the meaning of poverty by depicting a family living with difficulties, a house that is small, dirty and cramped and the struggle to find decent work. So, the results of this study can be differentiated from this research.

The results obtained from this research regarding Ferdinand de Saussure's theory emphasize audio visualization of the meaning contained in the film *Merry Riana*. Then, many inspirational messages are contained in the scenes in the film *Merry Riana*, for example, being independent, hardworking, never giving up, and open-minded. The audience can use this as an example so that they can still do positive things in life and face all obstacles.

By researching *Merry Riana*, it can be concluded that this film can provide an inspirational message to its audience. Several inspirational messages can be used as examples in everyday life, such as being independent, hardworking, never giving up, and open-minded. Viewers of the film *Merry Riana* can also feel a positive impact after watching it.

2. Method

The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative research method. This descriptive qualitative research collects the data studied through words or images. Our research uses the theory of Semiotic Analysis, one of the theories commonly used with qualitative methods. Several stages in the qualitative method used in this research are observation, documentation, and interviews.

The research carried out examined nine informants. This research interviewed general viewers of the film Merry Riana, film experts, the film community, and people who were directly inspired by the film Merry Riana. The researcher chose this informant to get information about the inspirational meaning of the film Merry Riana, which could be used as a supporting reason behind this research.

The research paradigm carried out in this research is the critical paradigm, which means that science can help and improve people's lives to make them better. This critical paradigm emphasizes the constellation of forces involved in creating and transmitting meaning.


3. Results and Discussion

In the Independent section, we delve into the intricate process of analyzing inspiration in the Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream video, as elucidated by the findings derived from our comprehensive analysis presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

1. Independent

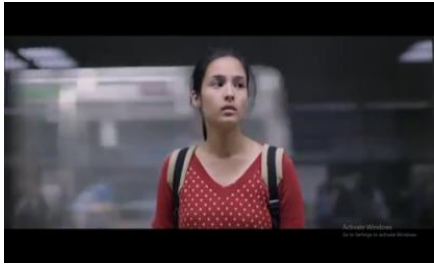
In the Independent section, we focus on a comprehensive analysis of inspirational elements portrayed in the video "Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream." This scrutiny stems from a meticulous examination, the results of which are succinctly presented in Table 1 and Table 2. The table is a valuable reference, delineating key inspirational factors evident in the video. Our investigation aims to unravel the intricate layers of Merry Riana's journey, providing insights into the inspirational nuances that contribute to the overarching theme of pursuing dreams and aspirations, as depicted in the cinematic narrative. The subsequent discussion will delve deeper into the specific inspirational components highlighted in our analysis, offering a nuanced understanding of the impactful elements that shape the overall inspirational tone of the video.

Table 1. Scene 1: When Papa Merry Orders Merry to go to Singapore

	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Visual</i>
<i>Sign</i>	Papa: This is your ticket to Singapore. Merry: Papa, Mama, how are your siblings? Papa: Papa only got one ticket, you know Uncle Hans, right? You are looking for him, this is his business card. Merry: What is wrong with Papa? Ria does not want to; either we go or not go! Papa: You cannot be here. Now you are safer there even though you are alone.	Duration: 03.14-04.20 Shooting technique using close-up 
	<i>Signifier</i>	<i>Signified</i>
	The atmosphere at the airport was bustling, and people wanted to travel abroad to leave Indonesia because there had been riots due to the monetary crisis in 1998. Merry and his family arrived at the airport to order Merry to move to a safer country, namely Singapore.	When Papa Merry told Merry to go to Singapore alone, Merry denied Papa Merry's order because he disagreed. However, in the end, Merry had to go to Singapore alone on Papa's orders.

Based on the scene above, we can explain the representation of the inspirational meaning in Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream, namely independence. Based on this scene, it can be seen that there was a monetary crisis in 1998 in Indonesia, as a result of which ethnic Chinese became the targets of the riots. Therefore, Merry and her family had to flee because her family was of Chinese ethnic descent. However, due to limited money and economic constraints, Papa Merry finally decided that only Merry would go.

Table 2. Scene 2: Merry arrives in Singapore

	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Visual</i>
<i>Sign</i>	Merry: (monologue to himself) I am in a strange place; I have no one. I never imagined living alone like this.	Duration: 04:25-05:40 The shooting technique uses a medium shot
		
	<i>Signifier</i>	<i>Signified</i>
	When he arrived in Singapore, Merry seemed lost and did not know where he wanted to go.	Merry felt like her life was a mess; she never thought her life would be like this. Merry is faced with circumstances that require her to live independently.

Based on the scene above, it can be seen that Merry has taken a big step in her life; she has arrived in Singapore. Based on the scene above, Merry thinks he did not expect his life to turn out like this. Merry has to live in a foreign country she does not know, without her closest friends and family. Even though Papa Merry was not sure what would happen to Merry in Singapore, Merry finally tried to muster up the courage and carry out the instructions given by her parents, namely visiting Uncle Han's house. How surprised he was that he did not find Uncle Han and had been told that Uncle Han had moved house. Merry was finally confused about where to go and followed her footsteps without knowing the direction or destination.

Merry is forced to live independently to survive in another country without her family. Even though Papa Merry only gave him a little money, he persisted in trying hard to meet his needs in Singapore. Merry only eats 1 to 2 times daily; Merry only eats bread and instant noodles. However, Merry also thought she could not continue living in such a situation. Finally, Merry considered finding a job because she would live in Singapore for a long time.


Researchers conducted interviews to strengthen the inspirational values regarding the Merry Riana scene, namely independence. According to the informant, he thought the most inspiring scene was when Merry had to go to Singapore alone and was not accompanied by her family. It is clear from this that Merry must face the challenge of surviving without anybody else's assistance.

2. Hard worker

In the realm of diligence and determination, the diligence exhibited by the characters within the analyzed video, "Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream," becomes a noteworthy aspect, particularly in the context of the Hard Worker section. As evidenced by our comprehensive analysis in Table 3, this section delves into the intricate details of inspirational patterns observed in Merry Riana's

journey, offering a nuanced perspective on the tenacity and industrious spirit encapsulated within the narrative. This analysis aims to unravel the intricacies of the hardworking ethos portrayed in the video, shedding light on its significance in the broader inspirational framework.

Table 3. Scene 1: Merry joins a social organization and works by distributing flyers to people passing by in Singapore

	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Visual</i>
<i>Sign</i>	Merry: Excuse me	Duration: 04:25-05:40
	Organization Member: Oh, hello, do you want to donate?	The shooting technique uses the longshot method
	Merry: No, I need a job	
	Organization Member: Are you sure you want to work here? Like them?	
	Merry: Yes, that is okay!	
	Organization Member: But we are a social organization, our pay is minimal	
	Merry: It is okay, I will take it!	
	<i>Signifier</i>	<i>Signified</i>
	Merry is looking for work to survive while in Singapore.	Merry finally joined a social organization and worked hard by distributing flyers to others passing along the streets in Singapore.


Based on the scene above, Merry works hard to survive in Singapore. Specifically, it has been shown that Merry is prepared to do whatever is necessary to get the funds necessary to maintain her life while she is in Singapore. What follows is a continuation of the situation that was presented before. On the trip to Singapore, Merry encountered a social group for the first time and attempted to become a member of the organization. Merry distributed flyers to passersby along the road, hoping someone would want to donate.

Researchers conducted interviews to strengthen the inspirational values regarding the Merry Riana scene, namely hard. According to the informant, he thought the most inspiring scene was when Merry worked hard by distributing flyers on the side of the road to people passing by in Singapore. When this incident confronted Merry, Merry did not feel proud or embarrassed and would continue to work hard to earn money and survive in Singapore. Then, Merry was also willing to do anything to get money to pay for her studies in Singapore.

3. Never give up


In the pursuit of success, the journey is often marked by challenges and setbacks. As we delve into the intricate analysis of inspirational factors portrayed in the video 'Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream,' our study, meticulously outlined in Table 4 and Table 5, unveils a profound exploration into the unwavering determination encapsulated by the sentiment 'Never Give Up.' This section elucidates the comprehensive findings and insights derived from our analysis, shedding light on the resilience and inspirations that define Merry Riana's remarkable journey towards realizing her million-dollar dream, emphasizing the enduring lesson of perseverance. Through our examination, we aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the inspirational intricacies, showcasing how the 'Never Give Up' ethos plays a pivotal role in overcoming challenges and forging a path to success.

Table 4. Scene 1: Merry tries again to find work elsewhere

	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Visual</i>
<i>Sign</i>	Merry: Excuse me, is this the Success Forever office?	Duration: 41.00-43.38
	Manager: Yes, who are you?	The shooting technique uses a medium shot
	Merry: I am Merry; I got this address from an internet site	
	Manager: Ooh Merry! Let us go in. So what do you need? Finance?	
	Merry: I have student loans that I have to pay	
Manager: What else do you need?		
Merry: Income! I need a good income		
	<i>Signifier</i>	<i>Signified</i>
	Merry went to the address of a stock investment company called Success Forever.	Merry never gave up on achieving her dream, so she went to the Success Forever company address to invest.

Based on the scene above, Merry never gives up on getting money from her hard work. This scene shows Merry trying to find a job and then finding a stock investment company called Success Forever. Merry was finally interested and tempted and decided to visit the address of the stock investment company called Success Forever. When he arrived at the Success Forever company, Merry immediately met the company's manager. Merry immediately invested \$200 into the company.

Table 5. Scene 2: Merry finally tries to work at an insurance company and works as an insurance agent

	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Visual</i>
<i>Sign</i>	CEO: Are you sure you want to try this company?	Duration: 1.19.20-1.21.02
	Merry: Yes, I am sure!	The shooting technique uses a close-up medium
	CEO: Are you ready for any rejection?	
	Merry: Yes, maybe I am not the smartest, not the strongest, but I am very persistent. I will fight tooth and nail and will not give up.	
	CEO: okay, we will help you get a license and train you to become an insurance agent. However, you will not get a basic salary, but you will get a commission	
Merry: okay, ma'am, I am ready!		
	<i>Signifier</i>	<i>Signified</i>
	Merry tried to find another job and worked as an insurance agent.	Merry is very persistent and never gives up; she is looking for another, better job to achieve her dreams.


Based on the scene above, Merry finally accepted another new job; this time, Merry was accepted at an insurance company. Merry will not give up even if she has to endure ups and downs fighting for her life. Merry worked hard to make her dream come true. The most essential thing in life is to be enthusiastic about living as a good human being. Age, appearance, and physique are considered not to determine everything because success is a long process, which must be done with dedication, hard work, and never giving up when facing an obstacle. The twists and turns of life are considered standard throughout the life process.

Researchers also interviewed informants to strengthen why there is an inspiring scene in the film Merry Riana, namely, never giving up. According to the informant, this scene was inspiring because even when Merry experienced repeated failures, he still rose from his downturn and never gave up on achieving success.

4. Broad-Minded

In the "broad-minded" section, we delve into the comprehensive analysis of inspirational factors in the video presentation of 'Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream.' As evidenced by our findings in Table 6, this segment explores the spacious dimensions of inspiration, providing a detailed and thorough explanation of our analytical process.

Table 6. Scene 1: Congratulations on being cheated by the Success Forever company.

	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Visual</i>
<i>Sign</i>	Merry came to the Success Forever office with Alva, which was destroyed. Merry: (while sobbing) Va, did you see there was a car in front? That is the manager's car I met yesterday, Va. Alva tries to calm Merry, who looks very sad because the company cheated him; he invested in	Duration: 44.52-47.06 Shooting technique using a longshot 
	<i>Signifier</i>	<i>Signified</i>
	Merry and Alva visited the location of the Success Forever office, which turned out to be destroyed	The Success Forever company cheated Merry; she was unfortunate and devastated because she had invested \$200.

Based on the scene above, Merry and Alva went straight to the location of the Success Forever company and arrived there. After arriving at the company, it turned out that the manager and his team had run away. Then, Merry confirmed that he was a victim of fraud at the Success Forever company. Merry began sobbing because she was under much stress and was struck with a tremendous sense of loss and devastation. Merry did not think that the stock investment company had deceived him. In the end, Merry lost \$200. Amid the bad events happening to Merry, Alva still tries to comfort and support Merry.

Merry tried to get back up even though he felt as if he was almost giving up and did not want to think about this failure for too long. After that, Merry tried to get up and was enthusiastic again to look for work with Alva. Merry felt that next time, he had to think carefully about his decision and not be careless so that this could not happen again Suyasa, I. M., Putri, P. I. D., & Suparna, P. (2022).

Researchers also interviewed informants regarding the scene of Merry trying to be calm with all the trials she had experienced. According to the informants, this scene can be inspiring because it can be used as a lesson in life regarding the steps to be taken in the future: as humans, you must remain patient, not rush, and not be careless. Then, in this scene, even though Merry has been deceived, he does not give up and give up. The lesson that we, as human beings, must continue to attempt to rise and be patient when we fall and are devastated is another thing that we learn from this.

This film also tells the story of Merry Riana, who lives a life alone in Singapore. In this film, Merry is required to become an adult and think carefully. Therefore, humans are encouraged to learn to be mature in accepting trials, such as those in the film Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream. This Merry Riana film also teaches that humans must be consistent and robust, which is the key to everything.

The film Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream also teaches that we have to believe that the most extensive support system for achieving all the dreams we want is ourselves. In the film Merry

Riana, every human being is also taught to be a person who never gives up and should never give up. Merry Riana, the main heroine in this movie, is going to be successful if she is able to do this successfully.

There are many positive messages contained in the film Merry Riana, as viewers realize there is a critical quote in this film, namely, "I will overcome doubts, fears, feelings of inferiority and exchange them for courage." so even though we come from a simple family, we do not need to feel inferior and must remain brave in facing obstacles and problems in life.

Merry Riana can also be recommended for viewers because it contains inspirational, inspirational meaning and many positive messages. The Merry Riana film also has an interesting storyline, good cinematography, and character development for each character in the Merry Riana film.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of Ferdinand de Saussure's Semiotic Theory applied to the film "Merry Riana: Million Dollar Dream" reveals the presence of signifiers and signified meanings, indicating the motivational value embedded in the film. The positive values portrayed, such as independence and hard work, serve as inspirations for viewers to emulate in their daily lives. Merry Riana's character exemplifies traits like resilience, positive thinking, and altruism, encouraging audiences to remain patient, persevere through challenges, and maintain a helpful attitude. The film's visual representations further reinforce these inspirational messages, serving as a reference for achieving success despite adversity. Interviews with nine informants affirm the film's positive impact, highlighting themes of independence, hard work, resilience, and open-mindedness as valuable lessons viewers can apply in their lives. Additionally, the film's dialogue, character development, and cinematography contribute to its effectiveness in conveying these messages, making it a recommended viewing for all audiences seeking motivation and inspiration in their lives.

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