

Representation of Mental Health Issues in the Film *Sleep Call* (John Fiske's Semiotic Analysis)

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ABSTRAKSI

Abstrak:

Film merupakan bentuk media massa yang kompleks. Film *Sleep Call* memberikan gambaran mengenai masalah kesehatan mental. Kesehatan mental adalah aspek penting dalam mewujudkan kesehatan fisik dan spiritual secara menyeluruh. Representasi depresi dan halusinasi dalam film *Sleep Call* merupakan upaya untuk memahami kembali kenyataan, yang tidak dapat dipisahkan dari berbagai masalah sosial yang saat ini berkembang di masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan menerapkan metode semiotika John Fiske untuk menganalisis film *Sleep Call*. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa teori semiotika John Fiske, yang menggunakan tiga tingkat kode televisi, khususnya tingkat realitas, menjelaskan masalah kesehatan mental Dina yang berasal dari penjaranya dalam kehidupan yang penuh tantangan dan kesendirian. Di tingkat representasi, Rumah Dina adalah satu-satunya lokasi yang digunakan dalam set, dengan teknik pengambilan gambar yang meliputi long shot, medium shot, high angle, eye level, dan slanted shots. Di tingkat ideologis, terdapat ideologi materialisme, yang menempatkan nilai lebih tinggi pada kepemilikan materi dibandingkan dengan akal sehat. Dina memilih untuk meminjam uang dari pinjaman online ilegal tanpa mempertimbangkan konsekuensi di masa depan.

Abstract:

A film is a complex form of mass media. The film *Sleep Call* provides an overview of mental health issues. Mental health is an important aspect of realizing comprehensive physical and spiritual health. The representation of depression and hallucinations in the film *Sleep Call* is an attempt to re-understand reality, which cannot be separated from various social issues that are currently developing in society. This research employs a descriptive-qualitative approach and applies John Fiske's semiotics method to analyze the *Sleep Call* film. The findings of this study demonstrate that John Fiske's semiotic theory, which employs three levels of television codes, specifically the reality level, clarifies Dina's mental health issues stemming from her imprisonment in a challenging and solitary existence. At the representation level, Dina's House is the only location where sets are used, and shooting techniques include long shot, medium shot, high angle, eye level, and slanted shots. At the ideological level, we have the materialism ideology, which places a higher value on material possessions over common sense. . Dina chose to borrow money from an illegal online loan without thinking about the future consequences.

Keywords:

Film Representation

Mental Health Issues

Analysis Semiotic

I. Introduction

Films are a highly complex form of mass media. Films are made up of audio and visuals, which have the ability to influence the audience's emotions through the visual images presented. People

often interpret films as a synthesis of live images. It is impossible to separate the emergence of this film from the advancements in technology and science, enabling it to achieve remarkable feats in the visual language of film art. Films are an alternative medium for conveying a message to the audience with the audio-visual arts that movies possess and their ability to capture the surrounding reality (Alfathoni & Manesah, 2020). Chapter 1, Article 1 of Law Number 33 of 2009 regulates film, defining it as a work of art and culture, a social institution, and a mass communication medium that adheres to film rules or does not display sound (Vera, 2022).

Issues related to mental health have received a lot of attention lately, particularly from youth. Understanding that mental health has a significant impact on overall health is crucial (Ridlo, 2020). Fakhriyani (2019) links mental health issues to a person's thoughts, feelings, and daily life. Secondly, the way a person perceives themselves and others also plays a significant role. Third, how a person assesses various alternative solutions and makes decisions based on the circumstances they encounter. Lack of awareness of mental health issues can make sufferers feel isolated and find it difficult to get treatment. Meanwhile, according to Comawati *et al.* (2021) mental health is defined as a condition of well-being in which individuals realize their own abilities, can overcome stress in life, can work productively, and can make contributions to their community.

The discussion regarding depression and hallucinations attracted the attention of director Fajar Nugros, who highlighted this issue in a film entitled *Sleep Call*. Laura Basuki portrays the main character, Dina. This film tells the story of depression and hallucinations experienced by several characters, including the character Dina. Dina finds herself ensnared in an illicit online loan, enduring daily harassment from debt collectors that fuels her frustration. Eventually, Dina found herself employed at a different online loan company. Dina transitioned into a role as a debt collector, grappling with a substantial debt load. He found himself enmeshed in a challenging and solitary existence. She turns to sleep calls as a means of escape from her challenging life and the anxiety of online loans, finding solace in the warmth of these conversations with Rama (portrayed by Juan Bio One), a man Dina has met through a dating app.

According to (Maulana & Yulianti, 2023) representation refers to a picture or depiction of something. The representation of depression and hallucinations in the film *Sleep Call* is an attempt to re-understand reality, which cannot be separated from various social issues that are currently developing in society. An understanding of mental health is important to help overcome problems related to stress, anxiety, trauma, and depression, which can affect a person's quality of life. The film *Sleep Call* also uses visual symbols to show the state of mental health from Dina's point of view. Changes in atmosphere distinguish the fluctuations in Dina's mental health condition, while different lighting conveys her mood. Color also plays an important role in the visual representation of mental health in this film. The use of contrasting or monotonous colors can depict mood changes or intense feelings. For example, the use of red may indicate deep anger or depression, while the use of cool blue may convey sadness or emotional emptiness. Additionally, one can use visual effects like viewpoint changes or unusual camera movements to depict distorted perceptions or unstable psychological states.

Setioningtyas (2022) conducted previous research on mental health issues under the title *Representation of Depression in the Film "Later We Tell About Today."* The analysis semiotics distinguish this research from this one. Setioningtyas' research employed Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic analysis, which concentrates on signifiers and signifieds, whereas this research employs John Fiske's semiotic analysis, which clarifies the social codes present in television shows. Divides the codes into three levels: the reality level, the representative level, and the ideology level (Fiske, 2018). Another piece of research was written by Haquq, R. & Pramonojati (2022), with the title *Representation of Terrorism in Two Scenes of the 1990 Dilan Film with John Fiske's Semiotic Analysis.* The similarity between this research and the previous one lies in their use of the same semiotic analysis, specifically John Fiske's version of semiotics. Meanwhile, the difference lies in the issues raised. This research raises the issue of terrorism, while this research raises the issue of mental health.

Semiotics is a science that discusses objects and all events as signs. People often identify signs as a means of communication to better understand each other. Human senses, such as the sense of hearing, the sense of sight, the sense of taste, and the sense of smell, can perceive these signs. The formation of signs ranges from easy to difficult. People create signs, and special systems and rules are easy for others to understand (Sobur, 2017).

Given the previously described background, we can formulate a problem: how to use John Fiske's version of semiotic analysis to represent mental health issues in the film *Sleep Call*.

II. Research Methods

Researchers use research methods to gather information, process it, and analyze it. We can also interpret this as meaning that a researcher uses research methods to create a comprehensive picture (Sahir, 2021).

This study makes use of qualitative and descriptive research techniques to gather in-depth data. A descriptive explanation of the data analysis's meaning and purpose will follow. This study's focus is on the portrayal of the movie *Sleep Call* in signs and symbols, with the film *Sleep Call* serving as the main subject of investigation. We collect data by making observations while watching the *Sleep Call* movie and examining sequences that contain clues or symbols related to mental health problems. We will analyze the data for this study using John Fiske's definition of semiotics. Next, we will examine the gathered data using John Fiske's semiotic model theory, specifically the codes of television, which comprise the levels of ideology, representation, and reality.

Table 1. John Fiske's Television Codes

First Level	Reality Actions, including appearance, clothing (costumes), make-up, movements, environment, behavior, manner of speaking, gestures (body language), and expressions, serve to convey reality.
Second Level	Representation Technical codes such as camera, lighting, editing, music, and sound, along with conventional representation codes like narrative, conflict, character, conversation/dialogue, and place, must indicate electronically coded content.
Third Level	Ideology Basic concepts like individualism, race, class, materialism, capitalism, feminism, and so forth incorporate various elements. Source.

^a Source: (Fiske, 2018)

III. Data Analysis and Result

A. Analysis Semiotic of *Sleep Call* Movie

IDN Pictures produces the thriller-genre film *Sleep Call*. Fajar Nugros directed this film. The film *Sleep Call* will premiere in cinemas on September 7, 2023. The 100-minute film employs a complex narrative that culminates in melancholy, accompanied by a plot twist that defies the audience's expectations.

Hearing the title, the writer initially thought that the thriller story presented in this film was based on a love relationship. Indeed, the film *Sleep Call* features a love story, but it also addresses important topics such as mental health, stress in life, the issue of debt from online loans (pinjol), the significance of maintaining privacy, and the importance of friendships, all of which are crucial for educating today's youth. This 100-minute film succeeds in summarizing all these issues concisely and clearly. Despite the film's intense emotional content, director Fajar Nugros manages to incorporate elements of comedy, particularly dark comedy, into the narrative. This dark comedy successfully evoked a sense of sadness in the audience, as they laughed at the tragic nature of life.



Fig. 1. Sleep Call Film

Figure 1 is a poster for the film Sleep Call, which received 8 nominations for the horror genre at the 2023 Indonesian Journalist Film Festival and 3 nominations for the Citra Cup at the same festival. Observing the film Sleep Call, I found several scenes that portray depression and hallucinations experienced by various characters. I will apply John Fiske's semiotics to analyze these scenes.

B. Reality Levels

The levels of reality presented in this research data include appearance, make-up, environment, behavior, way of speaking, gestures/body language, and expressions.



Fig. 2. Dina's mother is suffering from mental illness

Figure 2 in this scene shows Mrs. Dina's expression as she struggles with mental illness. The body suddenly struggled and screamed incoherently when it heard someone dressed as a nurse reading a book about Rama and Sita, which reminded Mrs. Dina of the terrible memories she had experienced. Dina's father broke Dina's mother's heart into pieces, causing her to suffer a mental breakdown.



Fig. 3. Dina gets a call from a debt collector

Figure 3: In this scene, Dina experiences constant terror from debt collectors, leading to feelings of sadness and despair. With a depressed expression, Dina said, "Sir, I don't have any money yet; I just took my mother to the hospital." However, this debt collector even threatened to share Dina's personal data if she did not immediately pay off her debt. Dina's sad facial expression, teary eyes, and shaky speaking tone indicate that she is stressed by the threat of the debt collector.



Fig. 4. Dina feels scared

Figure 4: In this scene, Dina felt scared after realizing that she was being followed and held at knifepoint by someone who owed a debt to the company where Dina worked, and Dina was the collector. Dina managed to escape with a gasping breath and a shaking body. Arriving home, Dina immediately closed the door and curtains, then tried to contact her friend Bella with a frightened expression on her face. However, Dina was unable to reach Bella, so she loudly shouted to alleviate her anxiety and fear.



Fig. 5. Dina feels guilty for causing casualties

Figure 5 In this scene, the person holding Dina at gunpoint ended his life by committing suicide because he was unable to pay his debts. Dina, the person's debt collector, felt guilty and afraid. Dina crouched, leaning her body against the wall, crying, and covering her mouth with shaking hands and a facial expression full of fear. Dina did not think that her work could cause casualties.



Fig. 6. Dina feels angry with her boss

Figure 6 in this scene begins with Dina rejecting the love of her boss, Mr. Bayu. Then, Mr. Bayu caught Dina alone with the head of the company, Mr. Tomi, during a celebration of Mr. Tomi's wife's birthday. On the way home, Mr. Bayu harassed Dina, asking why Dina rejected Mr. Bayu. Pak Bayu also cornered Dina, accusing Dina of approaching Pak Tomi only because she needed money from Pak Tomi. Dina, who did not accept Mr. Bayu's statement, felt angry. This feeling of anger carried over to his work. The furious expression on her face, accompanied by teary eyes, revealed Dina's anger and disappointment at Mr. Bayu's dismissive attitude towards her that evening. A non-smiling face, a retracted jaw, and the veins in his neck express this feeling of anger, giving the impression that he is ready to pounce on anyone who provokes him.



Fig. 7. Dina screams and cries in the bathroom

Figure 7: In this scene, Dina becomes aware that Mr. Bayu is harassing her. Dina felt devastated. Dina's body gestures depict a woman who is scared and devastated. Dina squatted down, holding her hands, her expression filled with sadness, and her voice was a mixture of crying and screaming. In addition, during this scene, Dina soaked the garments she was wearing with hot water, indicating her intense distaste for her boss's harassment.



Fig. 8. The moment he learned about Pak Tomi's death

Figure 8: In this scene, Dina feels confused about the criminal events that occur in a row. First, it happened to Mr. Bayu, until he fell into a coma in the hospital. The next day, reports surfaced of Pak Tomi's death. These two people are the ones who harassed Dina. Dina's facial expression showed confusion, and she fell silent, thinking about who was behind all this. Dina's thoughts turned to Rama. Was Rama doing all this to protect Dina? Has Rama been following Dina all this time, so that he knows who the people who hurt Dina are? Was Rama the one who avenged Dina against the person who had oppressed Dina? That's roughly what Dina was thinking.



Fig. 9. Dina tries to kill Rama

Figure 9: In this scene, Dina is angry and disappointed with Rama because it turns out that he already has a wife. Dina's facial expression depicts anger; her eyes are sharp and piercing, like someone who has a bitter grudge. Dina's gesture of raising a knife with her hand, ready to stab anyone who hurts her, indicates that she is not playing around with her anger and hurt.

In this scene, Rama explains that he only met Dina via a sleep call and never met her in person. Dina accused Rama of spreading personal data, even though Rama never did anything. All of Dina's accusations against Rama were just her hallucinations. But Dina still showed an angry expression; she didn't want to believe Rama's explanation, and in the end, Dina still killed Rama.



Fig. 10. Dina experiences hallucinations

In this scene, Picture 10 depicts a flashback in which Dina experiences a hallucination. At that moment, Dina felt as though she was conversing with Rama, despite the fact that she was actually alone. Dina was talking to herself, laughing as if someone were in front of her. Dina's face looked happy because, in Dina's view, she was with Rama, the man who accompanied Dina on the sleep call activity. Meanwhile, from the perspective of the catfish pecel seller, Dina appeared to be talking to herself like a crazy person.

C. Advertisement, Public Relation and Marketing Mix

This research presents information about the camera (taking pictures), lighting, music, sound, and place or set at this level.



Fig. 11. Illustrates Dina and Rama's sleep call activity

Figure 11 In this scene, Dina does sleep-call activities every night with Rama. This sleep-call activity marked the beginning of Dina's hallucinations. Rama's presence always appears in Dina's dreams, and it will end when Dina's cellphone alarm goes off. The sound of the alarm in this film is a sign that Dina returns to the real world to carry out routine activities, namely work. In this scene, Dina's room is the set location.



Fig. 12. Shows Dina experiencing depression



Fig. 13. Dina's Dream Scene

Figure 12 In this scene, Dina undergoes an internal conflict that causes her to feel depressed and humiliated due to her boss's harassment. The film's added value lies in the audience's perception, enhanced by the striking cinematography. Viewers will find various shots that look artistic, one of which is when Dina and Rama are in a subconscious or dream state (image 13). Behind the visual beauty displayed in this scene, the audience can also feel the eerie nuance of the visual. The image editing in the film *Sleep Call* uses a non-linear concept, so it will present questions to the audience. This film employs image editing that intertwines the realms of dream and reality, thereby guiding the audience's subconscious understanding of the question's true answer, which emerges either in the conclusion or in the midsection, serving as a plot twist.

This scene employs three different shooting techniques: a long shot from a high angle, a medium shot from eye level, and a slanted shot. A long shot is a shooting technique that captures a wide and expansive area of the frame. Meanwhile, a medium shot is a shooting technique that clearly shows the object's figure from head to waist. High-angle shooting is a shooting technique that shows a person's face with the object positioned above. This aims to capture the dramatic impression of the characters in the film. The technique of shooting at eye level involves positioning oneself parallel to the object. This aims to show Dina's depressed expression very clearly. Lastly, we use the slanted image-taking technique, which captures the object at a 45° angle. This technique aims to create a dramatic impression that complements the film scene and accurately conveys the message in the shot.

In the scene above, sad-themed instruments provide the background sound. This aims to convey Dina's feelings of sadness and shock. This melancholic instrument accentuates the dramatic impact

of Dina's tears, intensifying the audience's sense of sadness. Dina's house provides the dim lighting in this film, evoking a gloomy and sorrowful life.

D. Ideology Level

The film *Sleep Call* represents the depression and hallucinations experienced by the main character, Dina. This film delivers a plot twist, in which it turns out that the person who committed the crime against Pak Bayu and Pak Tomi was Dina herself, not Rama. But Dina did not realize what she had done. This film gives a message to the audience about how dangerous it is when someone intentionally or unintentionally accumulates problems. In the field of psychology, we refer to a defense mechanism as a self-defense or subconscious reaction that shields an individual from anxiety. In essence, this is good because the aim is to reduce anxiety. However, if we allow this to turn into a habit, it can lead to significant issues. An example that falls into the defense mechanism category is repression. Repression occurs when an individual frequently postpones resolving issues for days, months, or even years, leaving them oblivious to the problems they've accumulated. It's as if a pile of unresolved issues is already accumulating, and the individual is unsure of which problem is causing anxiety. Therefore, when questioned, the individual struggles to respond or provide an explanation. All he can do is cry, his body aches, and he feels empty. Some people even experience sudden triggers from accumulating problems, leading to the urge to commit suicide or kill someone else to alleviate the ongoing anxiety.

The film *Sleep Call* demonstrates the ideological dimension of materialism, asserting the existence of matter and the accompanying phenomenon of reason. This aspect of materialism ideology is shown in the scene in the first few minutes, which tells the story of the dark-eyed character Dina, who chooses to enter the world of illegal online loans because she is pressured to pay for the treatment of her mother, who is being treated in a mental hospital, without thinking about the future consequences. Due to the persistent financial difficulties caused by the online loans Dina took out, she was forced to work for an illegal online loan company in order to pay off her debts from previous loans. The path that Dina chose turned out to not be as smooth as she thought. In fact, this online loan is where the problem started. Debt collectors' constant terror of Dina created a sense of pressure, disrupting her mental health and ultimately leading to her death.

IV. Conclusion

The data analysis and discussion above yielded the following conclusions: Reality Level: There are several scenes that show representations of depression and hallucinations through Dina's expressions, body gestures, and the way she speaks. Level of Representation: This includes the use of the set, specifically Dina's room; the use of sound, specifically the alarm sound that signals the need to wake up and begin routine activities; and the use of various shooting angles in the film *Sleep Call*, such as long shot, medium shot, high angle, eye level, and slanted. The ideology of materialism, which prioritizes material possessions over common sense, is evident in the film *Sleep Call*. Dina demonstrated this by choosing to borrow money from illegal online loans without thinking about the future consequences.

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